

West Kowloon Cultural District

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On December 22, 2016, then Chief Secretary for Administration, Carrie Lam, told the press at the Hong Kong International Airport before her trip to Beijing that “there will be a collaborative cultural project between Hong Kong SAR Government and Palace Museum, Beijing.”¹ Then, on the following day, she announced in Beijing that “Hong Kong Palace Museum” (HKPM) would be built in West Kowloon Cultural District. It will be operated and managed by West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA/ Authority).² HKPM will display artifacts from the imperial collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing. Design, construction and exhibition planning expenses will be supported by a donation of HK\$3.5 billion from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

The majority of Hong Kong people only learnt about HKPM project as it was announced. In the society there was mixed opinions on the fact that the collaboration decision had been made in the absence of public consultation. Controversy was thus stirred up in the Legislative Council, the political circle, among arts practitioners, and the public.

On June 29, 2017, a *Collaborative Agreement* was signed by the WKCDA and the Palace Museum, Beijing on the development of the HKPM,³ scheduled to complete in 2022.

Information:

- Local newspapers.
- Press release of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
- West Kowloon Cultural District Authority website <https://www.westkowloon.hk/>.

January, 2017

• January 1

Chiu Kwong-chiu, Director of “Division of Cultural Research and Development of the Forbidden City” and the Deputy Director of “China Research Institute for Culture and Design, China Academy of Art,” was interviewed by *Ming Pao*. On the controversy triggered by the collaboration announcement made by the end of 2016, Chiu said that “it has a good side as there had never been so much attention on culture. As far as I understand, the new Director of the Palace Museum is an aggressive person. In the past there had been very tight censorship and (artifact loan application) procedure was complicated. It is much simpler now. (The collection) could be more frequently exhibited in Hong Kong.” Chiu also said that “Palace Museum is just a name. Its essence is being a museum. I think there exists a higher level on which we can look into what we have got.”⁴

1 “Speech made by the Chief Secretary for Administration to the press at the Hong Kong International Airport,” HKSAR Government press release, December 22, 2016. <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201612/22/P2016122200382.htm>.

2 See WKCDA website: <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/the-district/architecture-facilities/hong-kong-palace-museum>.

3 *The Collaborative Agreement* (in Chinese): <https://www.westkowloon.hk/tc/hkpmcollaborativeagreement>.

4 Press coverage, *Ming Pao* P04-P05, January 1, 2017.

- **January 4**

Vivienne Chow wrote in *South China Morning Post*⁵ that “those who support the project accuse detractors of failing to understand the cultural and historical significance of the Palace Museum...The problem here...is about how the deal was reached...The *West Kowloon Cultural District Ordinance* states that the Authority should consult the public on matters concerning the development or operation of the facilities.” The deal to build the HKPM with HK\$3.5 billion of funding from the Jockey Club, and the appointment of architect Rocco Yim Sen-kee to build it, had been reached in the absence of public consultation. Chow also reported that “even Ada Wong, a consultative panel member, said that she had only found out about the plan on the day it was announced to the press.”

- **January 5**

Oscar Ho from the Department of Cultural and Religious Study, Chinese University of Hong Kong, wrote in *The Stand News*⁶ that “the harsh criticism from Michael Lynch, ex-CEO, on the imposition of PMHK in WKCD, expresses his strong reaction to the indiscreet disrespect to professionalism.” Ho described WKCD’s explanation on the incident “reduces all requirements, especially those related to cultural development, to the bare minimum of legally compatible.” He believed that “Hong Kong people are cultured enough to choose their perspective and are open-minded enough to embrace different points of view. Openness and plurality are what make Hong Kong likeable. The incident has become messy because it shows how our openness and plurality are being impacted. Such a hasty decision is a result of the speculation of the possible embarrassment Beijing might face, and the misconception of equating opposite opinions in Hong Kong to resistance or hatred.”

Mathius Woo, Associate Creative Director of “Zuni Icosahedron,” wrote in *Ming Pao* on the same day.⁷ He said that ten years ago, he had already “raised the need to build a Palace Museum in WKCD,” because “there should be a society-facing, integrated cultural and art museum in every metropolitan.” In *South China Morning Post*,⁸ Bernard Chan wrote that he admitted the announcement had been sudden, being a member of WKCD himself. “Yet, if we had discussed this plan at LegCo, the process would have taken years. WKCD would take another fifteen years to complete even without PMHK, a project which might have been used (at LegCo) as a political weapon to insult Beijing.” He didn’t think anyone would seriously refuse the Palace Museum collection (to be shown in Hong Kong).

However, also according to *South China Morning Post*,⁹ Tanya Chan, LegCo member, called the six-week public consultation promised by Carrie Lam “fake”: “The real question to ask is whether there should be PMHK in WKCD.” Oscar Ho urged the government to explain the reason for building HKPM in WKCD and for Rocco Yim to be appointed as chief architect. Indy Lee, representative of arts interests (drama) of Hong Kong Arts Development Council, was apprehensive that participation in the public consultation would be mistaken as implied consent to the PMHK project.

5 Vivienne Chow. “Broken trust,” *South China Morning Post*, January 4, 2017.

6 An article by Ho Hing-kay Oscar in *The Stand News*, January 5, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 原本是件美好事情 / 。

7 An article by Mathius Woo in *Ming Pao* D04, January 5, 2017.

8 Bernard Chan. “No reason to reject Palace Museum gems,” *South China Morning Post*, January 5, 2017.

9 “Carrie Lam offers to consult public on museum project,” *South China Morning Post*, January 5, 2017.

- **January 6**

The Stand News reported that in a special meeting of LegCo House Committee, Carrie Lam described her presence at the meeting as “a responsible behavior.”¹⁰ She stressed that the incident did not violate any procedural justice, and said, “I don’t see any reason why I should apologize for the outcome.”

- **January 9**

Tanya Chan told *Apple Daily* that she found (*the Agreement*) a violation of the existing procedures for the sake of following the leader’s will. Chan “will not rule out the possibility of setting up a special committee, according to the *Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance*, to investigate the incident.”¹¹ “The Professional Commons” and “Hong Kong Cultural Monitor” co-organized a seminar on this day, during which Albert Lai, convenor of The Professional Commons, criticized the Government as “avoiding public consultation, overriding WKCD and appointing the architect.”

Ada Wong told *South China Morning Post*¹² that “the project itself was not a bad thing, but the Government should explain how the decision had been made, and the procedures to follow.” She said that the six-week consultation period was too short and was not optimistic about it. *The Post* contacted Kan Tai-keung, member of WKCD, about the sudden postponement of the public consultation.¹³ Kan said that he could sympathize with the expectation for a public consultation, “yet this time around it is different. Public consultation is impossible.”

- **January 10**

The Stand News reported¹⁴ that Rocco Yim, in a public consultation briefing session, described his appointment “a usual practice and is ‘relatively effective and objective’ for this project.” Yim stressed that he had been “open, candid, and at ease.”

A piece of commentary in *hk01* suggested that with the piece of land intended for large-scale performance venue in WKCD repurposed for HKPM, can one regard the installation of a “political and cultural landmark” such as HKPM WKCD a political consideration? The article also pointed out that the Communist Party of China would have regarded museums as political manifestation and totems of solidarity. Yet in the U.S. people did not call the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument “museums.”¹⁵

10 Press coverage, *The Stand News*, January 6, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/politics/ 直播 – 到立法會為 – 香港故宮 – 解畫 – 林鄭 – 下周諮詢非補鑊 – 早計劃 /.

11 Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A02, January 9, 2017.

12 Oliver Chou. “Public participation on Hong Kong Palace Museum needed, but undisclosed details may overshadow process, advocate warns,” *South China Morning Post*, January 9, 2017.

13 Joyce Ng, Oliver Chou. “Hong Kong Palace Museum consultation delayed as authority moves to address public criticism,” *South China Morning Post*, January 9, 2017.

14 Press coverage, *The Stand News*, January 10, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 香港故宮 – 回應欽點設計博物館 – 建築師嚴迅奇 – 直接委聘 – 有效客觀 /.

15 An article by Chung Kim-wah in *hk01*, January 10, 2017. <https://www.hk01.com/01> 博評 – 藝 · 文化 /64418/從西九故宮爭議看文化的政治.

- **January 11 and 12**

For two consecutive days, *Wen Wei Po* reported the public consultation and exhibition of HKPM as “important news.”¹⁶

- **January 12**

A few people of different backgrounds wrote in local newspapers to express their support to the HKPM project.

Patrick Lau, ex-Director of Lands, pointed out that “there are a lot of similarities in the perspectives and arguments for the HKPM controversy,” and made comparison with those of Museumsinsel, Berlin, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, and Louvre Pyramid, Paris.¹⁷ Wilson Or, LegCo member, wrote that “the *West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance* grants WKCD the required authority to develop WKCD. The decision to build HKPM in WKCD has been approved by the Board of Directors of WKCD and it is a decision that entirely complies with the procedure, whether there is public consultation or not.”¹⁸ Karson Choi, Director of “Federation of Hong Kong Guanxi Community Organizations,” wrote that “there are different thematic museums in Hong Kong but a world-class one is still lacking...HKPM is a world-class museum brand and is the perfect supplement to this inadequacy of Hong Kong’s.”¹⁹

South China Morning Post reported that today’s WKCD Consultation Panel meeting had been set up at very short notice. Only ten out of sixteen members could make it there. During the meeting, Ching Cheung-ying was the only member to criticize the lack of transparency of the project.²⁰

It was reported in *The Stand News*²¹ that the appointment of Rocco Yim as design consultant on the consideration that Yim being a Chinese might imply racial discrimination. “Equal Opportunities Commission declared that there is a possibility of violation of *Race Discrimination Ordinance*.” Another piece of coverage²² reported that after the meeting about consultation had ended, Chairman John Leong told the press that “there was unanimous support to the development of HKPM.” However a number of members had been absent.

16 Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A02, January 11, 2017; Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A05, January 12, 2017.

17 An article by Lau Lai-chiu Patrick in *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A13, January 12, 2017.

18 An article by Or Chong-sing Wilson in *Sing Tao Daily* A22, January 12, 2017.

19 An article by Karson Choi in *Sing Tao Daily* A22, January 12, 2017.

20 Nikki Sum, Oliver Chou, Christy Leung. “Lone panel member speaks out over Hong Kong Palace Museum controversy at consultation meeting,” *South China Morning Post*, January 12, 2017.

21 News coverage, *The Stand News*, January 12, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 香港故宮 – 回應委聘涉種族歧視指控 – 栢志高 – 本地建師有優勢 – 但非要求 .

22 News coverage, *The Stand News*, January 12, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 香港故宮 – 諮詢會一致贊成建館 – 主席梁智仁 – 起唔起係極化嘅討論 .

- **January 13**

Dennis Kwok, LegCo member, wrote in *South China Morning Post* to criticize the lack of public consultation on HKPM.²³

The Stand News reported the skepticism of (then) WKCD Consultation Panel member Ada Wong on CEO Pescod's remark that M+ team would be handling the early-stage tasks of HKPM. "M+ team's expertise is geared towards contemporary arts instead of Chinese art history. This team therefore should not lead the discussion."²⁴ In another piece of coverage,²⁵ it reported Pescod's statement made yesterday that "a subsidiary wholly-owned by the Board of Directors will be set up for HKPM. An independent team will be responsible for the curatorial and managerial work." Pescod estimated that the subsidiary would be set up in three to four months. The appointment of the board of directors for that subsidiary would be completed before the *Agreement* was signed with Beijing.

There were a few pieces of news coverage reporting positively on HKPM in *Wen Wei Po*²⁶ and *Tai Kung Pao*.²⁷

- **January 14**

Yiu Si-wing, LegCo member of the Tourism Functional Consistency, wrote in *Oriental Daily*²⁸ that "there are 1.8 million items in the Beijing Palace Museum collection, a number much higher than that of National Palace Museum, Taipei. Two of the well-known 'Three Rarities' of Calligraphy, namely *Mid-Autumn Model Book* (*zhongqiu tie*) and *Bayuan Model Book* (*bayuan tie*) are in Beijing. Wang Xizhi's *Timely Clearing After Snowfall Model Book* (*kuaixue shiqing tie*) is in Taipei...considering the international fame of Palace Museum, HKPM will soon establish itself as tourism landmark."

- **January 15**

Ming Pao reported Kan Tai-keung's remark made in a radio program the day before.²⁹ Kan said that "only with confidentiality could HKPM be realized. If public consultation had taken place beforehand, it would not be the first to be built." Vincent Ng, ex-president and Marvin Chen, Chairman of "Hong Kong Institute of Architect," openly supported the appointment of Rocco Yim.

- **January 17**

LEE Chack-fan, Chief Curator of Jao Tsung-I Petite Ecole, The University of Hong Kong, said in an interview by *Sing Tao Daily*³⁰ that "Hong Kong scholars integrate artifact research into historical research. The nation's collection exhibiting in Hong Kong will be beneficial to the local academia." He found the current Chinese history education curriculum geared towards political history. Palace Museum artifact exhibition would reveal cultural and daily life aspects, inducing students' interest in Chinese history.

23 Kwok Wing-hang Dennis. "Museum plan puts politics above the people," *South China Morning Post*, January 13, 2017.

24 News coverage, *The Stand News*, January 13, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 香港故宮 - 團隊兼做前期工作 - 黃英琦 - 非專業不宜主導 - 何慶基 - 盡快培養本地人才 .

25 News coverage, *The Stand News*, January 13, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 香港故宮 - 以節省資源為由 - 故宮館將與 - 共用 - 中央服務 / .

26 News coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A06, January 13, 2017.

27 News coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A06, January 13, 2017.

28 An article by Yiu Si-wing in *Oriental Daily* E06, January 14, 2017.

29 News coverage, *Ming Pao* A07, January 15, 2017.

30 News coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A11, January 17, 2017.

- **January 23**

South China Morning Post reported³¹ that WKCD “had tried to perform ground investigation works at the future museum site in the West Kowloon Cultural District, but the Board of Directors only learnt about it more than two months after the contract was awarded.” Six firms were invited to submit bids last September, a HK\$1.74 million contract was awarded to French geotechnical contractor Bachy Soletanche Group on October 28. Tanya Chan said that details was not available when she accessed the WKCD website on January 3.

- **January 24**

The Board of WKCD announced the reappointment of existing co-opted members and seven new co-opted members to its committees for a one-year term from January 1 to December 31, 2017. New co-opted members are: Li Kwok-tso (retired director of Accounting Services), Wong Hang-ye Sandy, Franklin Yu of the Audit Committee; Chan Chi-chiu, Chan Kin-sek (retired director of Geotechnical Engineering Office) of the Development Committee; Yeung Wai-shing of Performing Arts Committee; Li Yun-tai of Remuneration Committee.³²

- **January 25**

Yeung Suet-ying, member of “ARTicipant,” told *The Stand News*³³ that the criteria of the “non-open invitation” to the two practitioner consultation sessions was unclear. A large number of people concerned with the development of WKCD had been denied access to the consultation. They worried that their rights to participation would thus be deprived. *The Stand News* made a written inquiry to WKCD, who did not elaborate through what channels had the arts practitioners been invited but stressed that “the consultation sessions were organized by areas of expertise, district councils, professional groups, etc, for the purpose of fully understanding the opinions on and suggestions to HKPM from the Hong Kong society.”

- **January 26**

Chris Chan, representative of arts interests (visual arts) for Hong Kong Arts Development Council, told *The Stand News*³⁴ that there had been limited front-line arts practitioners present at the consultation sessions. The variety of opinions was thus limited. Among those present, about one-tenth of them were art collectors. Chan described that ratio as unhealthy because the value of collection was closely related to the operation of museums. “This impacts the collector’s interest, hence the share of collectors in the consultation sessions must be limited.”

Mathius Woo told *South China Morning Post* that “world-class institutions like Musée du Louvre and Palace Museum, Beijing would definitely withdraw their offer if you asked them to go through prior public consultation.” Yet he agreed that it was proper for the WKCD Consultation Panel to discuss the matter (prior to public consultation).³⁵

31 Raymond Yeung. “Secret study on Hong Kong’s Palace Museum site revealed in new twist,” *South China Morning Post*, January 23, 2017.

32 “Appointment of committee members under the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority,” WKCD press release, January 24, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/appointment-of-committee-members-under-the-board-of-the-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-1119>.

33 News coverage, *The Stand News*, January 25, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 西九建故宮辦業界諮詢會 – 獲邀出席條件不明 – 楊雪盈 – 好事變壞事 .

34 News coverage, *The Stand News*, January 26, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 故宮諮詢會 – 前線文化界未獲邀 – 藝發局委員質疑成效 .

35 Oliver Chou. “Museum may act as ‘steroid’ for hub, critic says,” *South China Morning Post*, January 26, 2017.

- **January 27**

Ming Pao covered the conversation between Yeung Chun-tong, ex-Director of University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong, and Kurt Chan, artist and art educator.³⁶ Chan said that, “from a skeptic’s perspective, there exists a sensitive relationship between the collector and the museum, because the collector’s collection is endorsed once placed in a museum. The value of the collection will rise thereafter. It invites a biased perception (on the museum’s) operation.” Yeung thinks that “one should regard ‘Palace Museum’ and ‘culture’ as separate notions. ‘Palace Museum’ explains the source of the exhibits. ‘Culture’ refers to the macro Chinese culture.” When asked if public consultation was mandatory, Yeung felt that “while it is fine (to conduct consultation), it is not a bad thing to not do it.” Chan said that “Consultation has been done for about two decades in WKCD and it has developed into a habit...the sudden realization of the collaboration is hard to swallow, which explains the current controversy.”

February 2017

- **February 8**

Suhanya Raffel, new Executive Director of M+, was interviewed by *South China Morning Post*.³⁷ Raffel supported the development of HKPM as it will amplify what a cultural district means.” However, she acknowledged that it was unclear if or how M+ would be involved in the development of HKPM. She said that “politics is not something that has stopped me for the last 30 years.” Raffel said she would “refine” the already sizeable M+ collection by adding more works by female, Southeast Asian and South Asian artists, architects and designers.

- **February 16**

In an interview by *The Stand News*,³⁸ Vivian Ting (local researcher) pointed out that while majority of museums had their collections, HKPM would have to loan its exhibits from Beijing. Therefore “it is just an ‘exhibition hall’ to display the artifacts of Palace Museum.” If HKPM were to follow the pattern of the collaborative projects between Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Palace Museum, Beijing, its role and responsibility would be geared towards execution and the nurturing of local cultural talents would be limited.

- **February 22**

Hong Kong Economic Times reported³⁹ that M+ would be presenting “Ambiguously Yours: Gender in Hong Kong Popular Culture” exhibition. Over ninety pieces of artworks created between 1960s and 2016, which are representations of androgyny and gender fluidity in Cantopop, fashion, film, photography, and graphic design, would be exhibited.

³⁶ News coverage, *Ming Pao* D05, January 27, 2017.

³⁷ “M+ museum head vows to fight off political interference,” *South China Morning Post*, February 8, 2017.

³⁸ News coverage, *The Stand News*, February 16, 2017. www.thestandnews.com/culture/ 專訪 – 博物館學者丁穎茵 – 香港故宮只算展廳 /.

³⁹ News coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Times* A16, February 22, 2017.

- **February 27**

hk01 invited three artists from different generations to express their views on HKPM.⁴⁰ Frank Tang, 2010 graduate of Academy of Visual Arts, HKBU, was skeptical of the location and necessity of HKPM. “Why build HKPM inside WKCD? Hong Kong Heritage Museum has been loaning artifacts from Palace Museum, Beijing for many years and supporting measures is in place. Why doesn’t Palace Museum, Beijing strengthen its collaboration with Heritage Museum?” 74-year-old Kan Tai-keung supported the development of HKPM as he found it an important heritage of Chinese culture. The citizens could delve into their culture there. “We will have curatorial autonomy. We will have the opportunity to approach and present good exhibitions from different perspectives. First we should make the best use of our own talent, then we will cooperate, with an open mind, with Palace Museum Beijing or National Palace Museum, Taipei. We need a museum for historical research, results of which will be archived.” Lam Tung-pang, born in 1978, believed that “Chinese culture is a fluid concept.” To him, world culture was mutual exchange. It would not mean much to move artifacts from one location to the next without adjustments in curatorial plan to resonate with local culture. He did not find it mandatory for the curatorial team to be made up of Hong Kong people only. It could be a collaborative arrangement.

Another news coverage reported that Ada Wong, a Consultation Panel member for eight years, “did not feel disappointed” for not being re-invited to a new term, because “the Panel is like an echo chamber,” “there is only one voice, the voice which the officials would like to hear.”⁴¹ She stated that cultural district was an outdated idea. For WKCD to pursue this approach meant that culture would have no choice but to give way to commercial purpose.

March 2017

- **March 3**

The first five Board of Directors of were appointed yesterday to “M Plus Collections Limited,” which had been incorporated on August 2016, by WKCD, namely, Tsai Wing-chung, partner of Deloitte & Touche and ex-chairman of Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Chan Shing-wai, Assistant Director of LCSD, David Clarke, Davide Erro, and Douglas So.⁴²

- **March 4 and 5**

Shan Jixiang, member of the “National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference” and Director of Palace Museum, Beijing, was interviewed by *Tai Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*. Shan mentioned that exhibits of the standing exhibitions in HKPM would be changed annually while it would be every three months for thematic exhibitions.⁴³

⁴⁰ News coverage, *hk01* B03, February 27, 2017.

⁴¹ “Hong Kong cultural advocate labels West Kowloon arts hub panel an ‘echo chamber’, says questions remain unanswered,” *South China Morning Post*, February 27, 2017.

⁴² “Board Members of the M Plus Collections Limited appointed,” WKCD press release, March 2, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/board-members-of-the-m-plus-collections-limited-appointed>.

⁴³ Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A11, March 4, 2017.
Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A09, March 5, 2017.

- **March 9**

WKCD announced the completion of public consultation on HKPM. The exhibition held at City Gallery received 22,244 visitors and its online version recorded 22,640 page views. 1,575 completed questionnaires had been collected at the exhibition venue and on the website, while fifty-eight had been submitted by post and email.⁴⁴

Local newspapers covered the survey results. Between February 20 and 28, “Young DAB” phone-interviewed 1,078 members of the public, among which 61.2% supported the development and over half agreed with the choice of location. However, Adrian Chow, member of “ARTicipant,” criticized it as “fake consultation”. He stressed that opposed not to the development of HKPM but to the choice of location and how the matter had been handled by WKCD.⁴⁵

In the meantime, M+ announced that “M+ Screenings: Genderfluid” would take place in the following month, exploring the transgressive and transformative representations of gender on screen. Ulanda Blair, Curator, Moving Image, stated that “gender fluidity is having a watershed moment. This iteration of M+ Screenings seeks to both contextualize and expand this global conversation, highlighting how artists and filmmakers from across different generations and geographies are dismantling traditional gender categories on screen. For these makers, gender is not tethered to the binary of male/female or masculine/feminine, as is often reinforced within mainstream culture. Rather, these artists harness the inherent dynamism of the moving-image form to present gender as a multidimensional, fluctuating force.”⁴⁶

- **March 23**

A few local newspapers⁴⁷ reported that ICAC had responded to the inquiry from LegCo member Claudia Mo by initiating an investigation of whether the direct appointment of Rocco Yim by Carrie Lam, as the design consultant of HKPM, should be considered misfeasance in public office.

44 “WKCD announces the completion of Public Consultation for Hong Kong Palace Museum,” WKCD press release, March 9, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/wkcd-announces-the-completion-of-public-consultation-for-hong-kong-palace-museum/news-type/press-release/page/4>.

45 Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A09, March 9, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A15, March 9, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* A17, March 9, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A14, March 9, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A14, March 9, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Sing Pao* A06, March 9, 2017.

46 “M+ Screenings: Genderfluid, presented by M+ in April, highlights filmic portrayals of transgressive gender identities,” WKCD press release, March 9, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-screenings-genderfluid-presented-by-m-in-april-highlights-filmic-portrayals-of-transgressive-gender-identities>.

47 Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A06, March 23, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Sing Pao* A01, March 23, 2017.
 Press coverage, *am730* A04, March 23, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Headline News* P16, March 23, 2017.
 Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* A19, March 23, 2017.

- **March 29**

Wen Wei Po reported⁴⁸ that the eight-week HKPM public consultation had finished on March 8 and that “the public opinion collected is in general positive.”

April 2017

- **April 9**

Quoting from Shan Jixiang, *Wen Wei Po* and *Ming Pao* reported⁴⁹ that since the consensus (to develop HKPM) had been reached last year by the Mainland side and Hong Kong side, the news “was announced at a very early stage.” He did not find the consultation happening too late. He also said that after many rounds of tallying, 1.86 million units of artifacts had been identified in Palace Museum, Beijing, among which less than 15,000 items were on display, explaining why more exhibitions were needed.

- **April 22**

A number of local newspapers reported the announcement made yesterday by WKCD on the public consultation survey result. Among the 1,800 members of the public taking the survey, 52% supported building HKPM.⁵⁰ Detailed data was available in *Hong Kong Economic Times*. Among the 1,528 interviewees who accepted face-to-face interview, 41.2% supported, 34.9% objected; among ninety-seven people who spoke during the consultation sessions, 34% supported, 11.3% objected; among 119 opinions expressed in writing by individuals or organizations, 73.1% supported, 22.7% objected. About one-third of the members of the public neither supported nor objected to the development of HKPM.⁵¹

Certain members of the Consultation Panel expressed that public members only found out about the consultation sessions shortly before they took place, rendering the public unable to delve into details. Pescod estimated that the final report would be finished and made public in one to two weeks' time.

May 2017

- **May 8**

Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary for Administration, published a blog entry in which he claimed that Hong Kong public in general supported HKPM.⁵² *Wen Wei Po* and *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* reported his opinion on May 10.⁵³

48 Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A11, March 29, 2017.

49 Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A05, April 9, 2017.
Press coverage, *Ming Pao* A04, April 9, 2017.

50 Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* A01, April 22, 2017.
Press coverage, *Headline News* P20, April 22, 2017.
Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A10, April 22, 2017.
Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A13, April 22, 2017.
Editor's note: According to the announcement made by WKCD on March 9, the total number of questionnaire received was 1,633.

51 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Times* A10, April 22, 2017.

- **May 12**

“Samson Young: Songs for Disaster Relief,” Hong Kong’s participation in the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, opened.⁵⁴

June 2017

- **June 13**

M+ announced that “Canton Express: Art of the Pearl River Delta” would take place between June 23 and September 10, 2017. Originally part of the historic exhibition “Zone of Urgency” curated by Hou Hanru in the 50th La Biennale di Venezia in 2003, this exhibition “is considered a major showcase of works by artists and non-profit cultural institutions active in the Pearl River Delta since the end of the 20th Century. Highlighting the impacts on the cultural landscape of the Pearl River Delta, this initial display emphasized the dynamic and unique conceptual contemporary art practices towards the everyday life from that area, which were in stark contrast to previous interpretations of Chinese contemporary art that placed emphasis on realism, figurative styles and various political dimensions.” The curatorial team was made up of curator Pi Li and assistant curators Isabella Tam and Ethan Cheng.⁵⁵

- **June 29**

Mathius Woo wrote in *Ming Pao*.⁵⁶ He criticized that “M+ was intended to be a new-breed museum with its roots in Hong Kong visual culture, supported by its focus on ink art, design, popular culture and movie. Yet all the above was subverted once funding had been secured. Locality disappeared. ‘Hong Kong’ was wiped out. ‘Internationalization’ was the excuse to wipe out Hong Kong. The senior management and curatorial team of M+ is made up of foreign people without any Hong Kong experience. What is most terrifying, saddest and shameful is that WKCD never explained clearly the reasons to wipe out Hong Kong.” He also wrote that “Lesley Ma, ink art curator, does not possess any background in ink art. She has never curated any ink art exhibition. Her background is being the daughter of Ma Yingjiu’s, ex-Taiwan President, and the assistant of artist Cai Guoqiang. M+ has never explained why Ma is a qualified curator of ink art.”

- **June 30**

Hong Kong Economic Times,⁵⁷ *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*,⁵⁸ *Sing Tao Daily*⁵⁹ reported President Xi Jinping attending and witnessing the signing ceremony of the *Collaborative Agreement on the Development of the Hong Kong Palace Museum*.

54 “Samson Young - Songs for Disaster Relief Opens,” WKCD press release, May 12, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/samson-young-songs-for-disaster-relief-opens>.

55 “M+ to Restage Historically Significant Exhibition ‘Canton Express’ Following Major Donation by Collector Guan Yi,” WKCD press release, June 13, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-to-restage-historically-significant-exhibition-canton-express-following-major-donation-by-collector-guan-yi>.

56 An article by Mathius Woo. *Ming Pao* D04, June 29, 2017.

57 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Times* A04, June 30, 2017.

58 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* A03, June 30, 2017.

59 Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A04, June 30, 2017.

July 2017

- **July 10**

The latest M+ Screening Series “M+ Screenings: City Limits” would take place between August 4 to 6, 2018. Fifteen artist videos, narrative films, documentaries and animations would respond to the rapid changes in city life over the past two decades.⁶⁰

September 2017

- **September 19**

It was reported in the majority of local newspapers⁶¹ that Henry Tang, ex-Chief Secretary for Administration, was appointed as the Chairman of WKCD Board of Directors by Carrie Lam. This was the second time Henry Tang being appointed as the Chairman. Tang’s two-year term would start on October 1. This appointment changed the practice of the Chairman being the in-office Chief Secretary for Administration. Carrie Lam stressed that Tang had been the first Chairman of WKCD Board of Directors. During that term WKCD made important progress. Moreover, Tang was a veteran civil servant who also possessed commercial and marketing experience, equipping him as the optimal candidate. Tanya Chan, Vice-Chairman of “Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project” of LegCo, believed that a more neutral figure should take the office. She questioned whether the government was trying to lessen its role in WKCD.

- **September 20**

The news of Henry Tang being appointed as Chairman of WKCD Board of Directors was widely covered in local newspapers.⁶² Tang said that WKCD should not apply for additional funding from the government and therefore it had to incorporate commercial elements to make up for its expenses. Yet its principle and mission anchored in cultural development would not change. He stressed that commercial facilities would be introduced fairly and openly according to procedures.

60 “M+ Screenings: City Limits to explore urbanization in Asia this August,” WKCD press release, July 10, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-screenings-city-limits-to-explore-urbanisation-in-asia-this-august>.

61 Press coverage, *Headline News* P22, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Times* A10, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Sky Post* P06, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Metro Daily* P06, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *am730* A04, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A16, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A08, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Ming Pao* A02, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A09, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A06, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A08, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Sing Pao* A04, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* A09, September 19, 2017.
Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A07, September 19, 2017.

62 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Times* A13, September 20, 2017.
Press coverage, *Ming Pao* A05, September 20, 2017.
Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A09, September 20, 2017.
Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A12, September 20, 2017.
Press coverage, *Tai King Pao* A19, September 20, 2017.
Press coverage, *Sing Pao* A06, September 20, 2017.

October 2017

- October 7

Rocco Yim introduced his design concept to the public. While Palace Museum, Beijing, was built according to Chinese traditional courtyard house style, Yim was planning to build the layers of the house vertically as a five-storey PMHK. Its surface area would span around 7,600 square meters. Three out of the five storeys were intended to be exhibition halls.⁶³ Yim was still considering the necessity to increase abstract or tangible Chinese elements inside the Museum. Foundation work of HKPM was to commence this month and construction next year. Pescod told the press that the HKPM Board of Directors would be convened in a few weeks' time. There would be twelve members and the list was to be determined.

- October 10-20

M+'s first ink art exhibition, "The Weight of Lightness," would take place between October 13, 2017 and January 14, 2018, in M+ Pavilion. Local newspapers covered details of curatorial direction and the exhibits.⁶⁴ Lesley Ma, curator, told *Hong Kong Economic Times*⁶⁵ that "ink is more than a medium. It is aesthetic in itself." She said that, "MoMa and Tate Modern are presenters of contemporary art exhibitions but they are incapable of presenting ink art ones. Ink art is extremely oriental with distinguished development context. We have ink art in our collection, something which others do not have...the ink art perspective is almost impossible for other art museums to possess."

- October 21

WKCD yesterday opened a three-day exhibition to introduce the architectural style of HKPM. Members of the public found the design "too modern and lack the characteristic of Chinese architecture,"⁶⁶ "the outlook is just average and it does not convey the feeling that century-old exhibits are being shown inside. The design is too modern and too high-tech. It would take a lot for it to become a cultural landmark."⁶⁷

63 Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* A15, October 7, 2017.

Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A08, October 7, 2017.

Press coverage, *Headline News* P26, October 7, 2017.

Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A01, October 7, 2017.

Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A07, October 7, 2017.

Press coverage, *Sing Pao* A01, October 7, 2017.

Press coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* A10, October 7, 2017.

64 Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A08, October 10, 2017.

Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* E08, October 11, 2017.

Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* B12, October 13, 2017.

Press coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* A28, October 20, 2017.

65 Press coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Times* C07, October 16, 2017.

66 Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* A23, October 21, 2017.

67 Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A06, October 21, 2017.

- **October 29**

Rocco Yim elaborated his design concept in a talk presented by WKCDA. He said he “tends to reject” the idea of strengthening the resemblance to Palace Museum, Beijing.⁶⁸ He believed that “what is critical is for a museum to demonstrate its respect to the exhibits. The air and quality level of the building are but accessories. The essence is the exhibits. This is how a museum achieves the highest level.” He said that the largest challenge was the limited surface area. *Sing Tao Daily* and *Tai Kung Pao* covered Yim’s talk.⁶⁹

November 2017

- **November 4**

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Consultation Panel of WKCDA was held yesterday. Agenda items included the latest progress of HKPM.⁷⁰ WKCDA reported during the meeting that bidding for the foundation work had been completed in the previous month. Tendering for the building would take place next year. Construction would commence as early as next April and to be completed in 2022.⁷¹

- **November 26**

WKCDA placed an advertisement yesterday to recruit an “Administration Director of HKPM” to lead the management of the Museum. The candidate should possess minimum twenty years experience in planning, designing or running Chinese, Asian or ancient art museums, ten years of which should be in senior administration positions. The candidate should be fluent in Chinese, English and Mandarin, knowledge in Cantonese an advantage. The Administration Director would report directly to CEO.⁷²

68 Press coverage, *Apple Daily* A02, October 29, 2017.

69 Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A02, October 29, 2017.
Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A01, October 29, 2017.

70 “Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Consultation Panel of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to be held on 3 November,” WKCDA press release, November 2, 2017. <https://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/twenty-fourth-meeting-of-the-consultation-panel-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-to-be-held-on-3-november>.

71 Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A04, November 4, 2017.
Press coverage, *Sing Pao* A05, November 4, 2017.

72 Press coverage, *Tai Kung Pao* A05, November 26, 2017.
Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* A23, November 26, 2017.
Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A09, November 26, 2017.

December 2017

- December 8

Shan Jixiang said that a staff member of vice-director level would be sent from Beijing to join the HKPM Board of Directors, to assist in exhibition planning. He wished that the first storey of HKPM would represent the class of ancient royal palaces. Therefore, he planned to loan a set of emperor's seat to HKPM from the collection of Palace Museum, Beijing. He also said that the exhibits in the standing exhibitions would be renewed every two to three years, those of thematic exhibitions every three to six months. The calligraphy and paintings in the Beijing collection were too fragile for long-term display. Therefore the exhibition period would be around two months.⁷³

- December 16

Suhanya Raffel was interviewed by *Sing Tao Daily*.⁷⁴ This was the first interview she had with Chinese press since she reported duty last November. She said, "When I studied art history in the early 1980s, there was nothing (about Asian contemporary art) in the curriculum. So I started to self-learn and I regard myself as a pioneer." She said that the arts of different period of times was beautiful for different reasons while contemporary art was in "present tense" and constantly changing, making it very interesting. Raffel said that having to report progress to LegCo "is unusual in other parts of the world and I am acclimatizing. It could be described as additional responsibility."

⁷³ Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A06, December 8, 2017.

Press coverage, *Oriental Daily* A16, December 8, 2017.

Press coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A05, December 8, 2017.

⁷⁴ Press coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A18, December 16, 2017.