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West Kowloon Cultural District

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For years the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) has been criticized for its slow development progress. With the completion of its first exhibition venue M+ Pavilion, the opening of M+ Pavilion's first exhibition "Tsang Kin-Wah: Nothing" and the implementation of M+'s first major school outreach program "M+ Rover: Travelling Creative Studio," the WKCD Authority's (WKCDA) effort to building Asia's arts hub began to take shape. However, what came as a disturbing decision was the decision to drop the proposal for the mega performance venue in the second half of 2016 for a medium-sized, multi-purpose facility. More astonishing was the sudden announcement at the end of the year to build the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM) in WKCD, which caused much controversy in the arts field and beyond. The seemingly step-by-step realization of WKCD's plans hence face increased uncertainty surrounding its future development.

Carrie Lam, Chairman of the WKCDA Board who signed a cooperation agreement with Beijing's Palace Museum to build HKPM, played a significant facilitating role. Some members of the public raised concerns and queried whether she used the museum project to gain the Central Government's confidence and to increase the odds of running for Chief Executive. On January 11, 2017, she resigned as Chief Secretary and announced her plan to run in the Chief Executive election. Cheung Kin-chung Matthew succeeded Carrie Lam as Chairman of the WKCDA Board. Having drawn criticism for the lack of consultation in the decision-making process of the HKPM, WKCDA launched consultation and presented an eight-week exhibition in Central to introduce the project to the public in January 2017. WKCDA said that the comments and submissions received during the consultation period would be reported to the Board for consideration. Carrie Lam was voted in as Hong Kong's next Chief Executive on March 26, 2017. The controversies around the HKPM project is still to be settled, its development now in the hands of the government and WKCDA.

Information:

- Local news coverage and online media. For details please refer to the Chinese version.
- WKCDA website <http://www.westkowloon.hk>
- HKSAR Government Press Releases

January, 2016

• On January 6

M+, the museum for visual culture, announced that the tenth edition of the Mobile M+ exhibition series "M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art" would take place at ArtisTree in Taikoo Place from February 23 to April 5, 2016. With the support of leading sponsor Credit Suisse, the exhibition comprises more than eighty works of various formats and medium, telling the stories behind the emergence and the development of Chinese contemporary art in the past forty years.¹

1 "M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition Comes to Hong Kong," WKCDA press release, January 6, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-sigg-collection-four-decades-of-chinese-contemporary-art-exhibition-comes-to-hong-kong>

- **On January 13**

WKCD announced that the 18th meeting of the Consultation Panel would be held on January 19.² The proposed agenda items were:

1. Update on the progress of WKCD
2. Youth engagement activities of WKCD

- **On January 15**

The WKCD Board announced the re-appointment of existing co-opted members and the appointment of two new co-opted members to its committees. The term of appointment runs from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. New members include Cheung Hau-wai and Ng Yuen-ting Yolanda.³

February, 2016

- **On February 15**

WKCD announced that the second M+ Screenings would begin in March. M+ launched “M+ Screenings: Forty Years” in conjunction with the exhibition “M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art.” The program comprised eight moving images works and examined the evolution of Chinese contemporary art over the last forty years. It would take place from March 11 to 13 at Broadway Cinematheque in Yau Ma Tei, presenting works by seven film makers and artists.⁴ The above news was covered in the *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* on February 21 and in *Ta Kung Pao* on February 24 respectively.⁵

- **On February 23**

Ta Kung Pao reported that “M+ Sigg Collection: Four Decades of Chinese Contemporary Art” opened at ArtisTree on February 22. Guests at the opening ceremony included Carrie Lam, Chief Secretary and Chairman of the WKCD Board; Ronald Arculli, Vice-Chairman of the WKCD Board; Uli Sigg, donor of the Sigg Collection; and Lars Nittve, former M+ Executive Director. The exhibition displayed works of oil painting, ink painting, sculpture, photography, video and installation from the M+ Sigg Collection.⁶

2 “Eighteenth Meeting of the Consultation Panel of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to Be Held on January 19,” WKCD press release, January 13, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/eighteenth-meeting-of-the-consultation-panel-of-the-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-to-be-held-on-19-january>

3 “Appointment of Committee Members under the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority,” WKCD press release, January 15, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/appointment-of-committee-members-under-the-board-of-the-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-900>

4 “M+ Screenings: Forty Years Reveals History of Chinese Contemporary Arts,” WKCD press release, February 15, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-screenings-forty-years-reveals-history-of-chinese-contemporary-arts>

5 News coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* T03, February 21, 2016

News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* B06, February 24, 2016

6 News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* A21, February 23, 2016

March, 2016

• On March 4

WKCDA announced the appointment of twelve existing members and the appointment of four new members to its Consultation Panel for a period of one year from March 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017. Leong Chi-yan John was re-appointed as Chairman of the Panel. New members include Ip Ngo-tung Chris, Chan Chi-chiu Henry, Christopher Wicky Cheung and Ho Wing-cheong Andy.⁷

• On March 14

In the *Stand News*, Ho Hing-kay Oscar, Program Director of MA in Cultural Management, CUHK, raised the questions of what Hong Kong's position was in the "M+ Sigg Collection" exhibition and what significance the exhibition held for local Hong Kong people. Ho criticized the exhibition as having no "Hong Kong perspective," of which M+ stated in its proposal in the curating of the show, and that it could not possibly illustrate the development of Chinese contemporary art in the past forty years with just eighty exhibits. He pointed out that what M+ has been doing is just like sewing the wedding gown for another bride. M+, originally identified as a museum for the Hong Kong people, had distorted what it set out to do even before its opening.⁸

• On March 22

The WKCDA Board announced the appointment of William Chan as its Chief Operating Officer. Chan would assume duty on July 4, 2016, supporting the CEO in overseeing the infrastructural development and construction delivery of the WKCD project, such as the Xiqu Centre opening in 2018 along with areas of the park, and M+ and Freespace in 2019.⁹

• On March 24

M+ announced the acquisition of two works by Vietnamese-American artist Tiffany Chung, *HKSAR statistics on yearly arrivals and departures of V-refugees from 1975-1997* and *flotsam and jetsam*. This year's jury committee comprised Tina Pang, Curator, Hong Kong Visual Culture, M+, with outside jurors Mami Kataoka, Chief Curator, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, and Reto Thüring, Curator of Contemporary Art, Cleveland Museum of Art.¹⁰ The acquisition echoes what Doryun Chong said last year that the M+ Collection had been gradually expanding its purview to include South and Southeast Asia.

7 "Appointment of Consultation Panel Members under the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority," WKCDA press release, March 4, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/appointment-of-consultation-panel-members-under-the-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-921>

8 Ho Hing-kay Oscar. "Just a filler for others." (in Chinese) *The Stand News*, March 14, 2016.

9 "WKCDA Announces the Appointment of New Chief Operating Officer," WKCDA press release, March 22, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/wkcda-announces-the-appointment-of-new-chief-operating-officer>

10 "M+ of West Kowloon Cultural District Acquires New Work by Tiffany Chung with the Brown Family Annual Acquisition Fund," WKCDA press release, March 24, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-acquires-new-work-by-tiffany-chung-with-the-brown-family-annual-acquisition-fund>

April 2016

• On April 9

“M+ Rover: Travelling Creative Studio,” M+’s first major school outreach program, had its first pop-up exhibition and learning space in the Sha Tin Town Hall Plaza. M+ commissioned two local artists Tang Kwok-hin and Siu Wai-hang to guide secondary school students through a participatory creative process and to share art and cultural experiences with the public on campuses and in different communities between March and July.¹¹

• On April 14

WKCD announced that the 19th meeting of the Consultation Panel would be held on April 22.¹² The agenda items were:

1. Update on the progress of the WKCD development
2. Update on Culture Mixer
3. Progress report of the working group on youth and community engagement

• On April 26

The WKCD Board held its 51st meeting. CEO Duncan Pescod reported to the Board that the design and construction activities had continued to move forward at a steady pace, and that “M Plus Museum Limited” had been incorporated with effect from April 14, 2016.¹³

May 2016

• On May 10

Members of the Board of “M Plus Museum Limited” met for the first time since its incorporation as a wholly owned subsidiary of WKCD on April 14.¹⁴ Board members are: Lo Chung-wing, Lo Wing-sang, Cheng Chi-kong, Ip Ngo-tung, Kan Tai-keung, Kung Lin-cheng, Wan Man-yee, Roger Garcia, Hsu Man-kai, Lau Ka-ming, Lo Kai-yin, Pong Chun-yee, Uli Sigg, Yim Sen-kee, and two ex-officio members, the Chief Executive Officer of WKCD and the Museum Director of M Plus Museum Limited.

11 “M+ Rover Embarks on a Creative Journey to Campuses and Community spaces om Hong Kong,” WKCD press release, April 9, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-rover-embarks-on-a-creative-journey-to-campuses-and-community-spaces-in-hong-kong>

12 “Nineteenth Meeting of the Consultation Panel of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to Be Held on April 22,” WKCD press release, April 14, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/nineteenth-meeting-of-the-consultation-panel-of-the-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-to-be-held-on-22-april>

13 “51st Board Meeting of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Held Today,” WKCD press release, April 26, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/51st-board-meeting-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-held-today>

14 “Members of the M+ Board Appointed,” WKCD press release, May 10, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/members-of-the-m-board-appointed>

- **On May 16**

The “M+/Design Trust Research Fellowship” program was launched to recruit researchers with design and architecture expertise. The Authority hoped that the findings from the fellowship would inform future acquisitions and other programs at M+. Successful applicants would conduct full-time research for M+ for three to six months in 2017.¹⁵

July 2016

- **On July 14**

Hong Kong Arts Development Council and M+ announced the recommendation of Samson Young as Hong Kong’s submission to participate in the 57th Venice Art Biennale and the appointment of Ying Kwok as the guest curator, with Doryun Chong as consulting curator. The Biennale would open on May 13, 2017.¹⁶

- **On July 20**

WKCD announced the appointment of Suhanya Raffel to the position of Executive Director, M+. Her appointment would be effective on November 1, 2016. She was the Deputy Director and Director of Collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Australia. She held many senior executive positions at the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane from 1994, including Deputy Director of Curatorial and Collection Development in 2010 and Acting Director in 2012.¹⁷

At the media session after the 53th Board meeting of the WKCD, Carrie Lam said that the Board needed to reconsider the original proposal of a Mega Performance Venue (MPV) and Exhibition Centre in the western part of the WKCD.¹⁸ The land might now be used solely for exhibitions and conventions, and the capacity for the prime waterfront site to hold large-scale music and entertainment events has been greatly reduced.¹⁹

- **On July 22**

WKCD celebrated the completion of “M+ Pavilion,” the first permanent venue for exhibitions and arts events in WKCD. M+ Pavilion would host a series of exhibitions in the run-up to the opening of the M+ Building in 2019.²⁰

15 “M+ / Design Trust Research Fellowship 2017,” WKCD press release, May 16, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-design-trust-research-fellowship-2017>

16 “M+, West Kowloon Cultural District to Collaborate with HKADC at 57th Venice Art Biennale Artist Samson Young and Curator Ying Kwok Selected as Hong Kong’s submission for Participation,” WKCD press release, July 14, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-west-kowloon-cultural-district-to-collaborate-with-hkadc-at-57th-venice-art-biennale-artist-samson-young-and-curator-ying-kwok-selected-as-hong-kongs-submission-for-participation>

17 “WKCD Names International Arts Professional to the M+ Executive Director Post,” WKCD press release, July 20, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/wkcd-names-international-arts-professional-to-the-m-executive-director-post>

18 “Opening Remarks by CS and Chairman of Board of WKCD,” HKSAR Government Press Releases, July 20, 2016, <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201607/20/P2016072000907.htm> (Chinese version only)

19 “Mega Performance Venue Scrapped at Long-delayed Hong Kong Arts Hub,” *South China Morning Post* online news, July 20, 2016.

20 “M+ Pavilion Dedication Ceremony Marks the First Permanent Venue for Art Exhibitions in WKCD,” WKCD press release, July 22, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-pavilion-dedication-ceremony-marks-the-first-permanent-venue-for-art-exhibitions-in-wkcd>

- **On July 23**

The completion of M+ Pavilion, which was built at the cost of HK\$30 million, was extensively covered in local news.²¹

- **On July 29**

Lee Wai-man Maurice, former Vice-chairman of the HKADC, wrote in *HK01* to discuss the long-term strategy to put Hong Kong art in a “leading position in Asia.” Lee said that WKCD was one of the stakeholders in promoting art development in Hong Kong and urged the government to foster a more effective collaboration among arts groups, HKADC, LCSD, Home Affairs Bureau, WKCD and the business sector for further art development in bringing art to a level that would be appreciated by the Hong Kong public. Also, although WKCD’s organization has been well-defined, most of the venues and facilities were still under construction and their cost-effectiveness remained to be seen.²²

September, 2016

- **On September 4**

Duncan Pescod, in response to the letter from Ken Wai of “Hong Kong Alternatives,” stated in *South China Morning Post* that there had been no plan to reduce the size of the park or open space within the cultural district and that the Art Park would be open to the public in phases as each section completed.²³

- **On September 5**

During its 54th meeting, the WKCD Board noted the feasibility study of a mega performance venue and an exhibition center sharing a site on the western part of the WKCD. Board members came to the opinion that the original proposal to build a MPV was no longer a suitable proposition and the Board agreed on further exploration into the development of a medium-sized, multi-purpose venue.²⁴

- **On September 8**

“Tsang Kin-Wah: Nothing” M+ Pavilion’s first exhibition opened as the artist responded to his solo exhibition at the 56th Venice Biennale “Tsang Kin-wah: The Infinite Nothing” with the newly commissioned work. The exhibition would be on display from September 9 to November 6, 2016.²⁵

21 News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* B08, July 23, 2016
News coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A12, July 23, 2016
News coverage, *Oriental Daily* A23, July 23, 2016
News coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A09, July 23, 2016
News coverage, *Apple Daily* A16, July 23, 2016

22 Lee Wai-man Maurice. "How to Make Hong Kong Asia's art hub," (in Chinese), *HK01* A13, July 29, 2016

23 “No Reduction in Size of Hong Kong’s Cultural District Park,” *South China Morning Post* online news, September 4, 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/2013045/no-reduction-size-hong-kongs-cultural-district-park>

24 “54th Board Meeting of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Held Today,” WKCD press release, September 5, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/54th-board-meeting-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-held-today>

25 “M+ Pavilion Unveiled with Solo Exhibition of Tsang Kin-Wah: Nothing” WKCD press release, September 8, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-pavilion-unveiled-with-solo-exhibition-of-tsang-kin-wah-nothing>

- **On September 20**

WKCD announced that the 20th meeting of the Consultation Panel would be held on September 23.²⁶ The agenda items were:

1. Progress report of the working group on youth and community engagement
2. Update on the progress of the WKCD development

- **On September 24**

Wen Wei Po reported that the Consultation Panel of WKCD held its meeting on September 23, during which it provided updates on the progress of the WKCD development, such as the Xiqu Centre, West Kowloon Art Park, M+ Building, Lyric Theatre Complex and the public infrastructure works. The Government would seek funding approval from the LegCo Finance Committee in 2017 to support the building of the bridge connecting the Artist Square, MTR Kowloon Station and the Elements shopping mall.²⁷

October 2016

- **On October 13**

M+ announced a donation of five artworks to the M+ collection from Hong Kong-based collector and patron Hallam Chow, which included artworks by five artists of South or Southeast Asian origin: Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba (b.1968, Japan), L.N. Tallur (b.1971, India), Sopheap Pich (b.1971, Cambodia), Jompet Kuswidananto (b.1976, Indonesia) and Eko Nugroho (b.1977, Indonesia). Pauline J. Yao, Lead Curator, Visual Art, at M+, said, “Contemporary Asian art already makes up a significant part of the M+ collection. The selection of these artists was made carefully to represent wide range of artistic traditions in the region and to help bring more awareness for South and Southeast Asian art in Hong Kong and amongst neighboring public museums. It is a donation that will form a valuable foundation for the museum to build upon.”²⁸

- **On October 14**

The government announced that five new members from the business sector had been appointed to the WKCD Board by Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying for a two-year term from October 23, 2016 to October 22, 2018, with four veterans in the art and creative industries stepping down as the Board struggled with financing for the final phase of the arts hub project. The new members included Fu Yiming, Chairman of China Resources Holdings; Fung Yuen-mei Anita, Director of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing; Tam Wan-chi Winnie, Chairwoman of the Hong Kong Bar Association; accountant Fung Ying-wai Wilson, former group financial controller of Jardine Matheson; and Executive Councilor Bernard Chan, who was also President of Asia Financial Holdings.²⁹

26 “Twentieth Meeting of the Consultation Panel of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to Be Held on September 23,” WKCD press release, September 20, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/twentieth-meeting-of-the-consultation-panel-of-the-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-to-be-held-on-23-september>

27 News coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A10, September 24, 2016

28 “M+ of West Kowloon Cultural District Receives Donation of Artworks from Hong Kong Collector Hallam Chow,” WKCD press release, October 13, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-receives-donation-of-artworks-from-hong-kong-collector-hallam-chow>

29 “West Kowloon Arts Hub Gets New Board Members with Business Expertise,” *South China Morning Post* online news, October 14, 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/2028231/west-kowloon-arts-hub-gets-new-board-members-business>

November 2016

- **On November 7**

The M+ Board announced the re-appointment of six existing members by the WKCDA Board for a two-year term from October 23, 2016 to October 22, 2018. Following Rocco Yim's resignation from the M+ Board, the WKCDA Board endorsed the appointment of Ng Win-kong Daryl and Cha Yiu-chung Benjamin as new members to the M+ Board with effect from November 1, 2016 until the next Annual General Meeting of M Plus Museum Limited. The M+ Board consists of 17 members at present.³⁰

- **On November 8**

The WKCDA Board held its 55th meeting, which was the first meeting of the Board's new term. CEO Duncan Pescod reported to the Board progress of the various core arts and cultural facilities under construction or detailed planning, and highlighted the recent cultural programs undertaken.³¹

- **On November 29**

M+ launched "Shifting Objectives: Design from the M+ Collection," which would be open to the public from November 30, 2016 until February 5, 2017. As the second show mounted at the M+ Pavilion, the exhibition was an inaugural display of the museum's groundbreaking design collection and the first of its kind in Asia.³²

December 2016

- **On December 12**

The Oriental Daily revealed, based on WKCDA's annual report 2015/2016, that WKCDA spent 5.16 million dollars on the CEOs' salaries and the total salaries for the seven senior executives amounted to 19.21 million dollars. It was 17.75 million dollars in the financial year 2014/2015. The year 2015/2016 also saw the replacement of CEO Michael Lynch with Duncan Pescod and of Lars Nittve, M+ Executive Director, with Suhanya Raffel. The newspaper criticized WKCDA for the frequent senior executive turnover even before any facilities in WKCD was opened, and that the third CEO was just a retired senior government official with no arts background.³³

30 "55th Board Meeting of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Held Today," WKCDA press release, November 7, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/55th-board-meeting-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority-held-today>

31 "Members of the M+ Board Appointed," WKCDA press release, November 8, 2016.

32 "M+ Hosts Debut Showcasing Its Design Collections," WKCDA press release, November 29, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/m-hosts-debut-showcasing-its-design-collections>

33 News coverage, *Oriental Daily* A01, December 12, 2016

- **On December 23**

WKCD announced the collaboration with Beijing's Palace Museum to establish the "Hong Kong Palace Museum" (HKPM) in WKCD, exhibiting the Palace Museum's collection on long-term loan agreements. Carrie Lam signed the "Memorandum of Understanding of Cooperation for the HKPM Project" in Beijing with Shan Jixiang, Director of the Palace Museum. The HKPM, expected to open in 2022, will be a purpose-built museum in WKCD and its construction costs will be fully funded by a donation of HK\$3.5 billion from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The museum will be managed by a wholly-owned subsidiary of WKCD with its own governance structure, Board and its own team of staff including curatorial, conservation, registration, exhibition, management and learning teams of specialists. The WKCD Board has endorsed the appointment of Rocco Yim of Rocco Design Architects Limited to carry out the design of the HKPM.³⁴

- **On December 24**

The establishment of the HKPM was extensively covered by the local press.³⁵

Ta Kung Pao covered the excitement among the members of the WKCD Board for the Palace Museum project. Lo Wai-kiok said that the HKPM could complement M+ and the Xiqu Centre to bring diversified art elements into the cultural district. Ip Ngo-tung Chris stated that he was thrilled about the project, saying that the WKCD Board unanimously agreed to the implementation of the project at the board meeting last month. In relation to whether the addition of the new museum would change WKCD's original plan, Carrie Lam said in Beijing yesterday, "The building of the HKPM is entirely compatible with the use that is always permitted under the approved development plan for the WKCD."³⁶

- **On December 26**

South China Morning Post reported that the plan to build the HKPM was only made known to the WKCD Board a month ago. Ip Ngo-tung Chris said that preparations had begun for the HKPM when the Board members were first briefed about the plan during the meeting in November. Meanwhile, Tanya Chan, deputy chairwoman of a LegCo panel monitoring WKCD, said that the public should have been consulted before the plan was announced. She pointed to section 19 of the "WKCD Ordinance" which states "the Authority shall, in relation to matters concerning the development or operation of arts and cultural facilities, related facilities, ancillary facilities and any other matters as the Authority considers fit, consult the public at such time and in such manner as it considers appropriate."³⁷

34 "WKCD Announces Collaboration Arrangement with the Palace Museum to Establish a New Museum in Hong Kong," WKCD press release, December 23, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/wkcd-announces-collaboration-arrangement-with-the-palace-museum-to-establish-a-new-museum-in-hong-kong>

35 News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* A03, December 24, 2016
 News coverage, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* A09, December 24, 2016
 News coverage, *Sing Pao* A06, December 24, 2016
 News coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A13, December 24, 2016
 News coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A03, December 24, 2016
 News coverage, *The Stand News*, December 24, 2016

36 News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* A03, December 24, 2016

37 "Decision to Build Hong Kong Palace Museum at West Kowloon Cultural District Only Revealed to Board Last Month, Member Claims," *South China Morning Post* online news, December 26, 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/2057238/decision-build-hong-kong-palace-museum-west>

Sing Tao Daily reported that the HKPM project had drawn criticism for the government's lack of consultation and for its controversial procedures. Lo Wai-kwok denied that WKCD was circumventing procedures. He claimed that the project was itself a rare opportunity that Hong Kong should grab as quickly as possible. Yeung Suet-ying Clarisse, Chairwoman of Hong Kong Culture Monitor, believed that the government interfered with the planning of WKCD by building HKPM and the process was not transparent at all. She worried that Hong Kong people had lost their right to know. Fung Ho-keung Andrew, Director and CEO of Hong Kong Policy Research Institute, described the establishment of HKPM as a "good deed that there is no need to be secretive about it." He also questioned whether the WKCD Board decided to reconsider the original proposal of the performance venue in July because of the building of HKPM.³⁸

- **On December 27**

Carrie Lam's reply to the lack of public consultation for the HKPM project was widely covered in local news. She pointed out that the project took people by surprise because the confidentiality arrangements worked so well. She explained that it had taken the involvement of many stakeholders to ensure its success. It was difficult to conduct a public consultation and it would have been "embarrassing" if the consultation results showed opposition to the plan.³⁹

Sing Tao Daily reported that Carrie Lam would be pleased to see "people who were very knowledgeable and passionate about Chinese culture" to be appointed to the HKPM Board, yet to be set up. Woo Yan-wai Mathias, Co-Artistic Director of Zuni Icosahedron, believed that the government should invite more professionals to join the HKPM Board, such as art historians, experts who were experienced in museum management, specialists who understood the practice of the Mainland cultural authorities and people with related art administrative experience. Lo Wai-kwok suggested that the HKPM Board to be made up of members of the WKCD Board, representatives from related government departments, LegCo representatives and people who had a deep knowledge of culture and arts.⁴⁰

In addition, *Ta Kung Pao* reported that Ip Ngo-tung Chris did not agree with the necessity to consult the public on the building of the HKPM. He denied that there had been any "special arrangements" for not having a public consultation, attributing the lack to the privacy requirement of discussing the grade-one artefacts in the long-term loan.⁴¹

Chiu Kwong-chiu was interviewed by *Ming Pao Daily* about his views on the HKPM. Chiu, Director of Design and Cultural Studies Workshop, who has worked with the Palace Museum multiple times, believed that the new museum could raise public awareness of Chinese culture and serve as a connection hub with cultures of other countries. He was "anxious" to see the opening of the HKPM, and despite the controversy over the lack of public consultation, he thought that the public should encourage new attempts and improvements along the process.⁴²

38 News coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A02, December 26, 2016

39 News coverage, *Wen Wei Po* A04, December 27, 2016

News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* A04, December 27, 2016

News coverage, *Ming Pao Daily* A02, December 27, 2016

News coverage, *Sing Pao* A05, December 27, 2016

News coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A01, December 27, 2016

40 News coverage, *Sing Tao Daily* A01, December 27, 2016

41 News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* A04, December 27, 2016

42 News coverage, *Ming Pao Daily* A02, December 27, 2016

- **On December 28**

According to *Ta Kung Pao*, Lo Wai-kyok said that Carrie Lam had put out feelers to some WKCD Board members to gauge people's reactions before announcing the establishment of the HKPM and that there was no concern of the lack of consultation. Lo revealed that Lam had met some of the Board members and senior executives of WKCD to discuss the project before the Board meeting in November so those who took part in the preparation knew about the plan. Lam tried to have a meeting with Lo half a month before the November meeting but Lo could not meet her due to schedule conflict. As for the criticism from the architecture field for the lack of opportunity for public tender, Lo explained that it was reasonable for WKCD to handle the design and the implementation of the museum project differently because, as an integrated arts and cultural hub and a large compound, each venue in the WKCD possesses different characteristics.⁴³

Am730 reported that Kwan Siu-lun, founding member of ArchiVision, criticized that the way the agreement of building the HKPM has been reached as "absurd." Kwan pointed out that the "bottom-up" planning approach and public consultation had always been the spirit of the WKCD development as there was a principle of choosing the venue design through open competition, which was now overridden by the HKPM project. The direct appointment of Rocco Yim without tendering provoked outcry and disappointment from the industry. He asserted that even if the project did not involve public funds, the use of Hong Kong's land was a matter of utilization of public resources.⁴⁴

The Stand News reported that Ho Hing-kay Oscar spoke on a radio program "On a Clear Day." Ho criticized Carrie Lam sealed the museum deal as if she was "putting on a political show rather than handling cultural affairs." Ho raised doubts whether the plan was an undercover cultural consolidation task. If the government's sole intention had been to build a new museum, there was no need for Lam to do it personally. He believed that building the new museum in WKCD without any form of consultation was not only "a serious violation (of procedures)," but also an unfortunate precedent for the government to change the plan casually for the number of museums in WKCD.⁴⁵

- **On December 29**

South China Morning Post reported that Michael Lynch, former CEO of WKCD, questioned the politics of the HK\$3.5 billion deal of the HKPM. In reference to Carrie Lam's announcement last week, he said, "It fascinates me that a discussion on a project of this scale would not have gone through the scrutiny of (the Legislative Council). It seems to me it is related to politics rather than the overall development plan for West Kowloon." He also recalled it took years to chase money and "we found it difficult for the Jockey Club to commit to a project or event. It was a surprising turn of events I would say," referring to the \$3.5 billion pledge by the Hong Kong Jockey Club for the project.⁴⁶

⁴³ News coverage, *Ta Kung Pao* A03, December 28, 2016

⁴⁴ News coverage, *am730* A08, December 28, 2016

⁴⁵ News coverage, *The Stand News*, December 28, 2016

⁴⁶ "Former Chief of Hong Kong Arts Hub Questions HK\$3.5b Museum Deal," *South China Morning Post* online news, December 29, 2016. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2057951/hong-kong-no-2-carrie-lam-unveils-honour-list-tycoons>

According to *Sing Pao*, twenty-four non-establishment LegCo members wrote jointly to Lee Wai-king Starry, Chairman of LegCo's House Committee, requesting a special House Committee meeting to be called as soon as possible. They demanded access to the details about why the government put out feelers to only some of the WKCDA Board members and of the agreement signed with Beijing's Palace Museum. They also hoped that Carrie Lam and Duncan Pescod could attend the special meeting to respond to the LegCo members' questions.⁴⁷

Leong Kah-kit Alan wrote in *Ming Pao Daily* and criticized WKCD's decision to build the HKPM. He said that the government made the decision without going through public consultation as they tried to circumvent LegCo's monitoring team and the funding procedures, comparing it to the "construction of the three-runway system at the Hong Kong International Airport." To avoid the scrutiny of both the Legislative Council and the public, the government found their own financing methods outside the Legislative Council. People needed to be reminded that the precious collection of the Palace Museum and "public engagement," which Carrie Lam mentioned time and again, were two separate things. In Hong Kong, following proper procedures was more important than reaching the final decision, even if the result produced by public engagement remained the same and supported the establishment of the HKPM in WKCD.⁴⁸

- **On December 30**

Hong Kong Economic Journal and *Ming Pao Daily* reported Michael Lynch was gobsmacked that the HKPM project was pushed through without any public consultation. Lynch criticized in an interview with *i-Cable News* that the incident had wiped out WKCDA's practices of following the usual procedures and attaching importance to consultation. He further explained that there were already museums in Hong Kong displaying historical relics while WKCD intended to focus on contemporary arts and to provide performance venues, questioning the suitability of the new museum for WKCD's original plan.⁴⁹

- **On December 31**

The WKCDA Board issued a statement in response to the various comments on the Hong Kong Palace Museum project. The statement said that the building of HKPM in WKCD was unanimously approved by the Board members at a special board meeting on November 28, 2016, and that Carrie Lam consulted senior Board members including the Vice Chairman Ronald Arculli and Chairman of the then Museum Committee Lo Chung-wing Victor in the first half of 2016. She also joined senior Home Affairs Bureau officials to conduct two detailed briefings for Board members. The statement also responded to a comment on whether HKPM fitted into the vision and objective of WKCD and reiterated that the project did not require permission from the Town Planning Board and its related public consultation. Furthermore, it is said in the statement that "The Hong Kong Palace Museum should be designed by a local architect. Mr. Rocco Yim has very good understanding of the vision of WKCD, and is recognized for his expertise on the design and execution of world class museum buildings." The statement also described the decision for not proceeding with the MVP was linked to the HKPM project as "simply not true."⁵⁰

47 News coverage, *Sing Pao* A04, December 29, 2016

48 News coverage, *Ming Pao Daily* D05, December 29, 2016

49 News coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A15, December 30, 2016
News coverage, *Ming Pao Daily* A06, December 30, 2016

50 "Press Statement from the Board of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority," WKCDA press release, December 31, 2016. <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/newsroom/news/press-statement-from-the-board-of-west-kowloon-cultural-district-authority>

Sing Pao and *Hong Kong Economic Journal* reported that Lee Wai-king Starry would convene a special meeting of the House Committee on January 6, 2017 to discuss the process leading to the HKPM in WKCD, as requested by twenty-four non-establishment LegCo members. According to LegCo's notice, Carrie Lam, relevant government officials and Duncan Pescod would attend the meeting as scheduled.⁵¹

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⁵¹ News coverage, *Sing Pao* A04, December 31, 2016
News coverage, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* A14, December 31, 2016