

[CE visits Art Basel Hong Kong \(with photos/video\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (May 20) visited the ninth edition of Art Basel Hong Kong, which is being held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) in Wan Chai for five days starting yesterday (May 19). Mrs Lam welcomed the return of the physical version of the event back to Hong Kong after it was cancelled last year.

Art Basel was held in Basel, Switzerland, for the first time in the 1970s and instantly became a major international event in the art world. It was then also held in Miami Beach and Hong Kong. Art Basel Hong Kong has been held every year since 2013 and has been well received by members of the public, attracting tens of thousands of visitors to appreciate art works from around the world. The physical exhibition in 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 and has returned this year, displaying art pieces from over 100 leading galleries from 23 countries and territories, including historical work from Asia in the fair's main sector. Also featured are works of emerging artists and galleries.

Accompanied by the senior management of Art Basel, Mrs Lam toured the exhibition and received briefings by the persons-in-charge of various galleries on their works and businesses amid the global epidemic. Mrs Lam was pleased to know that the event organiser has rolled out a series of new arrangements this year in view of the epidemic, including satellite booths by galleries which could not physically attend the fair, and the first digital initiative, "Art Basel Live: Hong Kong". The digital addition complemented the physical exhibition at the HKCEC, bringing audiences from around the world to Hong Kong through an online viewing room, virtual tours, live broadcasts and more.

Noting that the epidemic has been controlled with the concerted efforts of the Government and members of the public, Mrs Lam said that under the new direction in fighting the pandemic announced earlier, the Government hoped that members of the public can gradually resume their normal lives while large-scale international events continue to be held in Hong Kong. She pointed out that Art Basel Hong Kong, the concurrent French May Arts Festival and the UCI Track Cycling Nations Cup Hong Kong held last week have fully demonstrated Hong Kong's capability of holding major events safely amid the pandemic. She expressed the hope that more extravaganzas will be held in Hong Kong in the future to enrich people's cultural lives and their love of sports, and inject impetus to the economy.

Mrs Lam said that she strongly supports arts development in Hong Kong and has attended Art Basel Hong Kong many times. She also visited Basel when she paid her first visit to Switzerland in 2018 to strengthen co-operation between the two places. She pointed out that with Hong Kong's vibrant arts development, the city has continued to attract first-class galleries and

auction houses from around the world to establish a presence in recent years. According to a report from an art market analysis firm, Hong Kong's global art market share rose from 17.5 per cent in 2019 to 23.2 per cent in 2020, overtaking London for the first time, while the total value of imports and exports of works of art, collector's pieces and antiques in 2020 amounted to \$33.6 billion, which nearly doubled the value of \$17.3 billion in 2017 and is testimony to Hong Kong's status as an art trading centre in Asia.

"The Government has been committed to promoting arts development and arts infrastructure investment. The M+ Museum and the Hong Kong Palace Museum in West Kowloon Cultural District are expected to be opened at the end of this year and in the middle of next year respectively. By then, the two world-class museums, together with the expanded Hong Kong Museum of Arts, will become new cultural landmarks of Hong Kong, while the East Kowloon Cultural Centre, which is under construction, is expected to be commissioned in the second half of 2023, providing local artists with an incubation platform on Art Tech," Mrs Lam said.

"In the part about Hong Kong in the nation's 14th Five-Year Plan, it was mentioned for the first time that the Central Government supports Hong Kong to develop into a hub for arts and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world, which is full acknowledgement of the city's cultural position and brings about enormous opportunities for Hong Kong's integration into the overall development of the nation. In addition, with the proposal in the 2020 Policy Address for the Government to actively promote the development of Art Tech, I hope that the application of innovation and technology can help Hong Kong give full play to its cultural characteristics," she said.



