

# Speech by CE at M+ Opening Ceremony in West Kowloon Cultural District

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the M+ Opening Ceremony in the West Kowloon Cultural District today (November 11):

Let me now say a few words in English. It gives me great pleasure today to witness the grand opening of M+. With construction commenced in 2015, the M+ building has encountered various challenges. But Rome was not built in a day – standing in this iconic building overlooking another icon of Hong Kong, the Victoria Harbour, I think it's worth the wait.

The West Kowloon Cultural District is an unprecedented investment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in arts and culture. Sitting on a 40-hectare prime waterfront site, it is developed as an integrated district with world-class arts and cultural facilities. The District started operation in 2019 with the opening of the performing arts venue of Freespace and the Xiqu Centre for Chinese opera, and a modest arts pavilion for visual arts. With the grand opening of M+, Hong Kong's new museum for visual arts and culture, not only will the West Kowloon Cultural District welcome a key new member, but Hong Kong will be on par with cities like London and New York with a sizeable and significant contemporary arts museum. Indeed, before its opening, M+ has, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, been participating in the Venice Biennale since 2013. I was there in 2015 in my capacity as the Chief Secretary for Administration cum Chairman of the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority. At that time, I could already tell from the art sector's response that M+ was much anticipated.

That interest on M+ would not have been possible without the staunch support from our friends, donors and patrons. First and foremost, I must express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr Uli Sigg for his generous donation of artworks to M+ in 2012. The M+ Sigg Collection is the solid foundation of M+'s visual arts collection. It also signifies an important vote of confidence in M+ in its early years of establishment. And I must also express my sincere appreciation to the renowned Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron, whom I had worked with for a second time – the first being the conservation of the Central Police Station Compound, now Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts. I still remember Jacques and Pierre (Founders of Herzog & de Meuron, Mr Jacques Herzog and Mr Pierre de Meuron) sharing with me their mission of creating buildings that are welcomed by the local community and I have no doubt that the M+ building will meet this goal with flying colours. It's a great pity that Jacques, Pierre and Ascan (Senior Partner of Herzog & de Meuron Mr Ascan Mergenthaler) could not be here with us because of our stringent quarantine requirements. I would like to pay tribute also to TFP Farrells and Ove Arup & Partners HK, for presenting this spectacular landmark to the people of Hong Kong, and to Suhanya (the Museum

Director of M+, Ms Suhanya Raffel), whom I first met in Sydney, for her tireless efforts all these years. I am sure the podium of M+, which houses a public roof garden against the backdrop of the stunning cityscape and skyline of Hong Kong, as well as the striking media façade, will become yet another must-visit attraction for both local and overseas visitors.

My Government's ambitions in arts development are not confined to the West Kowloon Cultural District. Beyond this district, Hong Kong has been featuring the world-renowned Art Basel since 2013 with over 100 prominent galleries participating from around the world every year. Art Central showcases avant-garde work by emerging artists from over 100 contemporary art galleries annually. International art galleries and reputed artists continue to expand their presence in Hong Kong. And our art trading industry is booming in recent years – for example, in 2020, Hong Kong became the second largest art trading centre in the world, after only New York. Under the "One Country, Two Systems" policy and the explicit support for our positioning as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange in the nation's 14th Five-Year Plan promulgated in March this year, Hong Kong will continue to thrive as an international cultural hub. My Government will continue to roll out policies and measures to develop facilities, nurture talents and establish international and Mainland collaboration.

As the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I sincerely welcome visitors from all over the world to come to Hong Kong once COVID-19 is under control and visit the M+ museum to immerse themselves in the extraordinary cultural experience that embraces the best of both the East and the West. Finally, I hope you will enjoy the exhibitions and have a very memorable day. Thank you very much.