

Speech by CE at opening ceremony of Fine Art Asia 2018 and Ink Asia 2018 (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony of Fine Art Asia 2018 and Ink Asia 2018 this evening (September 28):

Andy (Founder and Director of Fine Art Asia and Ink Asia, Mr Andy Hei), David (Vice-Chairman of the Ink Society, Mr David Chun-Yee Pong), Consul General Giorgini (Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, Mr Alexandre Giorgini), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure to join you all here this evening to witness the opening of Fine Art Asia 2018. This year we have a bonus, because it's not just Fine Art Asia, it's also Ink Asia. The two events together create a lot of synergy in terms of inviting over 100 galleries from over 10 countries and regions to come to Hong Kong, and provide a lot of convenience to buyers of these valuable art pieces and also for people of Hong Kong to come in to look at all these wonderful treasures. Fine Art Asia is not just a fair, it's also an occasion for us to appreciate art, because some of the pieces are actually of museum quality.

As Andy has told you, this is my sixth consecutive year in a row in opening the Fine Art Asia here in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, so when we came in I jokingly said that perhaps people of Fine Art Asia will get bored with me or fed up with me so next year you'd better invite another official to open this very fine event. But I just want to tell you why, year after year, I come back to the Fine Art Asia. First is in 2012, as the Chief Secretary for Administration of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, I was also Chairperson of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, so I have an obligation to support arts events in Hong Kong. In those days I was working with Art Basel. Of course we were very fortunate to have Art Basel in Hong Kong year after year, but after all, Art Basel was an import from another place. So when Fine Art Asia, a home-grown art fair, came to my attention, I said I should definitely support our home-grown event. So that is the number one reason.

The second reason is I want to support Andy, Susanna (Chief Executive Officer of Fine Art Asia, Mrs Susanna Hei) and Calvin (former Co-Chairman and Director of Fine Art Asia, Mr Calvin Hui) as these young people are very passionate about arts and cultural development in Hong Kong, and I suppose it was not very easy in the early days to start Fine Art Asia in Hong Kong. Over the last six years, I have with much pleasure witnessed the successful development of Fine Art Asia, and also seen your children grow over these six years. I don't know whether they are here. They have grown into fine young teenagers with also an appreciation of art and music.

Looking ahead, I am very confident that Hong Kong's art and cultural scene will boom, because of several developments. One is, of course, the much talked about West Kowloon Cultural District which is about to materialise in a very visible way. I'm sure you can already see this iconic building, the Xiqu Centre, but it is on the performing arts. On the visual arts, we will have the M+ ready by the end of next year and perhaps open its doors to the people of Hong Kong and visitors in the year 2020. This will be followed by the Hong Kong Palace Museum in 2022. But prior to that, next year, we will reopen the Hong Kong Museum of Art with an expansion of 40 per cent in arts gallery exhibition space. Adding to that, in the last couple of months, the Hong Kong Government, and the arts museum in particular, has received two wonderful donations. One is from the Chih Lo Lou, which is a great collection of late Ming and early Qing paintings. The other is the outstanding works of the late Wu Guanzhong. So when the arts museum opens its doors again next year, you will be able to see these wonderful collections in their dedicated gallery.

At this point in time, it's really for us to congratulate Fine Art Asia and Ink Asia for being the pioneers in doing private art fairs in Hong Kong, and I'm sure that, together with the Government's efforts, Hong Kong's cultural scene will scale new heights in many, many years to come. With those remarks, I wish this year's Fine Art Asia and Ink Asia every success and hope that you will come back more often to support these fine people who are promoting Hong Kong's arts development.

Thank you very much.



