

Speech by CE at opening ceremony of HK Arts Centre 40th Anniversary Flagship Exhibition cum celebration ceremony of reopening of HK Arts Centre (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC) 40th Anniversary Flagship Exhibition cum celebration ceremony of the reopening of the HKAC this afternoon (September 29):

Mrs Yang (Chairman of Board of Governors of HKAC, Mrs Dominica Yang), Connie (Executive Director of HKAC, Ms Connie Lam), Anthony (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Anthony Chow), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I'm delighted to be here for the opening of the 40th Anniversary Flagship Exhibition and the reopening of the Hong Kong Arts Centre. It is certainly a time for celebration.

The Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong's sole independent, non-profit, multi-arts institution, reopens following a sweeping renovation of nearly three years. The result, I'm pleased and proud to say, is an Arts Centre that is more environmentally friendly, more accessible and more sustainable. It is poised and primed to promote Hong Kong and Asian contemporary arts and culture to our community, to the region, and to the world. For that, I'm grateful to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The Trust, together with private donations, led the way in funding the refurbishment.

The reopening of the Hong Kong Arts Centre is marked by a major exhibition which will be open to the public tomorrow – "Wan Chai Grammatica: Past, Present, Future Tense". For that, my congratulations to the exhibition's guest curator, Valerie Doran. Rooted in the creative district that is Wan Chai, the exhibition is multi-generational, multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural, featuring some 20 artists either from Hong Kong or intimately connected with our city. The exhibition marks the return of the Arts Centre's flagship exhibition series, an annual event designed to enrich our art scene. As someone who was brought up in Wan Chai, in a tenement building on Gloucester Road not far from here, the theme of this exhibition carries some personal attachment.

On several previous occasions of speaking at the Arts Centre's functions, I mentioned my personal experience, not so much as a neighbour to this wonderful facility, but as a mother bringing her young children to come to the Arts Centre for different types of extra curricula activities. I was

therefore pleased to be able to offer some tangible support for the Arts Centre by hosting its anniversary fundraising gala at Government House in March this year, during which outstanding artwork was auctioned to raise funds in support of the Arts Centre and its community programmes. I did so because I believe in the Arts Centre and its mission. I also believe in the power of the arts to make Hong Kong as culturally vital as it is economically vibrant.

My Government is determined to realise that goal. In this year's budget, we set aside HK\$20 billion to develop and expand our cultural facilities. We also added HK\$500 million to boost our museum collections and holding exhibitions.

And one of the world's biggest cultural projects, the West Kowloon Cultural District is rising by the waterfront here in Hong Kong. By end of the year, I'm pleased to say, the Xiqu Centre, the Cultural District's dedicated Chinese opera house, will open. This will be followed by the Art Park and the Freespace outdoor performance venue which is targeted to open in 2019. The East Kowloon Cultural Centre now under construction is due for completion in late 2020. Meanwhile, the foundation works for the Lyric Theatre Complex, a performing arts venue for a wide variety of events including drama and musical performance with a focus on dance, have started with a target of opening in 2022.

On the visual arts side, the West Kowloon Cultural District will feature two world class museums as well, namely the M+ Museum and the Hong Kong Palace Museum. Together with the renovated Hong Kong Museum of Art which is due to reopen next year, we do expect a very vibrant art and cultural scene in the future, right here in Hong Kong.

The reopening of the Hong Kong Arts Centre, with its renovated space and facilities, will no doubt be an important part of the picture. We wish Arts Centre every success in the next 40 years, and will continue to count on the Arts Centre to, as stated in its vision statement, enhance Hong Kong's position as an artistically vibrant city through the promotion of contemporary arts and arts education for the whole community.

I am sure you will enjoy the Hong Kong Arts Centre's 40th Anniversary celebration. I wish you all a memorable day. Thank you very much.

