

Speech by CE at opening ceremony of “Mythologies: Surrealism and Beyond – Masterpieces from Centre Pompidou” exhibition (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony of the "Mythologies: Surrealism and Beyond – Masterpieces from Centre Pompidou" exhibition today (May 20):

Consul General (Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, Mr Alexandre Giorgini), Andrew (Chairman of the Board of the French May Arts Festival, Dr Andrew Yuen), Philip (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Philip Chen), ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a great pleasure to be here with you for the opening ceremony of "Mythologies: Surrealism and Beyond – Masterpieces from Centre Pompidou". I'm pleased, as well, that this extraordinary exhibition, designed especially for Hong Kong and featuring more than 100 pieces of distinctive works of art, is being held at our newly renovated Museum of Art.

The exhibition opens at the same time when Art Basel Hong Kong takes place. These major arts events remind us of what a wonderful cultural city Hong Kong is, and that our determined efforts to fight COVID-19 have paid off by making it possible for these events to happen. This exhibition, which runs till mid-September, also serves as a welcoming treat to many art lovers in Hong Kong after a prolonged period of social distancing. And, as if this wasn't enough of a blessing, the world-class exhibition is in fact one of some 80 cultural events – featuring music, theatre, dance, film, food and more – at this year's 29th French May Arts Festival, which runs through the end of June.

Since its first edition in 1993, the Festival has been the Hong Kong Government's close partner in bringing the best of French culture to Hong Kong. This year is a departure, in that the vast majority of artists and performing-arts companies are based right here in Hong Kong, a grand collaboration of French citizens who call Hong Kong home and our local performers. Festival highlights include "Larger Than Life", a contemporary French play performed in Cantonese and directed by our own Tang Shu-wing. Another winning collaboration is the "Jazz in French Films" concert, featuring the Patrick Lui Jazz Orchestra playing with big-band gusto during the screening of some of France's greatest movies. Through these two splendid months of French arts and culture, some of Hong Kong's major performing arts groups, including the Hong Kong Ballet, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, are all taking part.

Co-operation, in culture and other areas, has long marked relations

between Hong Kong and France. And I am thrilled to see it displayed so creatively at this year's French May Arts Festival. For that, I am grateful to the organiser, the Association Culturelle France – Hong Kong, as well as the French May team and of course the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong. My thanks, too, to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for its significant support of this welcome exhibition, and its continuing support of French May's Community Outreach and Arts Education Programme.

Last month, I outlined a new direction in our fight against COVID-19, under which we seek to control the epidemic with targeted measures while allowing activities to resume as far as possible. The French May Arts Festival is yet another remarkable event marking Hong Kong's gradual return to normality. I know you will enjoy it, and I wish it every success. I hope full normality will resume next year when the Festival hosts its 30th edition to help celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Thank you very much.