

Speech by FS at HKDI Emerging Design Talents 2023: EMBRACE (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the HKDI Emerging Design Talents 2023: EMBRACE today (June 21):

Tony (Chairman of Vocational Training Council (VTC), Mr Tony Tai), Donald (Executive Director of the VTC, Mr Donald Tong), Dr Ong (Principal of the Hong Kong Design Institute, Dr Lay Lian Ong), Consul General Ficarra (Consul-General of Italy in Hong Kong, Mr Carmelo Ficarra), distinguished guests, students, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to join you for the opening ceremony of the Hong Kong Design Institute's annual graduation exhibition and show, "Emerging Design Talents".

I'm told that this year's presentation features more than 500 innovative works, created by graduating students at both the high diploma and degree levels from the Institute's four main departments. And they include, I'm pleased to note, the winning mascot design for Hong Kong's participation in the Hangzhou Asian Games.

There is simply so much to see – but the good news is that the exhibition will continue until September 8.

"Embrace" is this year's theme. For our graduating students, they are about to embrace the next stage in their lives. For those pursuing a career in design, understanding the latest trends, and then taking them in a fresh direction – your direction – is the way to go.

Creativity knows no boundaries, national or otherwise. Embrace diversity, and you're on your way to creating something entirely new, and yours and, soon enough, ours.

On this note, I am pleased to learn that the Design Institute is helping students gain greater international exposure. This includes working with the Consulate General of Italy and its year-long Viva Italia programme, launched in March. The multi-faceted festival covers a variety of workshops, exhibitions, movies and sessions on Italian culture. My thanks to the Consul-General for partnering with the Design Institute on this inspiring initiative.

Just a few months ago, I visited the Institute. I spent a good time, an exciting time, with students majoring in fashion and image design, art tech, make-up, modelling and other career studies. I got to see, firsthand, what they do and how they do it.

I was even involved in the shooting of a virtual scene, and tried my bad hand at pattern drafting, tailoring and other skills being taught at the Institute.

What I came away with was an abiding appreciation of the Institute's experiential, interactive approach to learning – and the passion and attention to detail the students displayed in everything they did.

I am confident that the graduates will thrive in their careers, and no doubt that Hong Kong and our creative industries will be better because of them – and because of the Design Institute's passionate commitment to education and professional training.

The Institute, of course, is part of the Vocational Training Council. For more than 40 years, the VTC has been a close working partner of the Government in promoting vocational and professional education and training, or VPET, in a wide range of sectors, from the flourishing creative industries of design and fashion, to our outstanding food and beverage industry.

In recent years, the Government has attached even greater importance to VPET. We are determined to help young people realise their potential, and are offering them multiple career pathways to do so.

It's why, in my Budget this year, I supported the VTC's launching of a two-year pilot project, starting this coming academic year. It will give secondary school students early exposure to VPET. We will also offer a Diploma of Applied Education Programme this September. And, together with the VTC, industry and other stakeholders, we are exploring additional programmes.

Our goal is clear and compelling: to give our youths a wealth of career choices and life prospects. In doing so, we create more possibilities for our economy, for our community, for all of us. I count on the continuing good work of the VTC and the Hong Kong Design Institute to help get us there.

To this year's graduates, I wish each and every one of you a rewarding career and a fulfilling future. Hong Kong is with you all the way. Thank you.



