

Speech by SHA at opening ceremony of “The Hong Kong Jockey Club Series: Botticelli and His Times – Masterworks from the Uffizi” exhibition (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, at the opening ceremony of "The Hong Kong Jockey Club Series: Botticelli and His Times – Masterworks from the Uffizi" exhibition today (October 21):

Mr Contestabile (Consul General of Italy in Hong Kong, Mr Clemente Contestabile), Mr Cheung (Executive Director, Charities and Community of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Cheung Leong), Ms Ong (Chairman of Chinese-Italian Cultural Society, Ms Michelle Ong), Mr Wong (Chairman of Museum Advisory Committee, Mr Stanley Wong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a great honour to be here at the opening ceremony of the first ever exhibition of the Renaissance master Sandro Botticelli in Hong Kong. We are delighted to stage "The Hong Kong Jockey Club Series: Botticelli and His Times – Masterworks from the Uffizi" at the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to strengthening our position as an international arts and culture metropolis. As part of our efforts, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been collaborating with prestigious museums across the globe to bring world-class exhibitions to Hong Kong over the years.

This year, to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and Italy, we bring this exceptional exhibition from the world-famous Uffizi collection of Italian Renaissance art to Hong Kong.

Many of you may be aware that this is not the first time that our city is spellbound by the beauty of Italian art. But I can assure you that this exhibition, which consists of curatorial elements that truly connect Italian art with the local community and reflects Hong Kong-Italian co-operation at its finest, is unique in every way.

Following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the LCSD and the Uffizi Galleries last year, this exhibition, as the first collaboration between us, will definitely usher in more opportunities for cultural exchanges and closer ties in future. I certainly look forward to our further collaboration with the Uffizi Galleries to bring more amazing exhibitions in the years to come.

The Renaissance is a cultural movement that brought profound influence on human civilisation across Europe in various fields. Visitors to our exhibition will feast their eyes on 42 pieces of priceless works of art, with the largest number by Sandro Botticelli.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the unswerving support of our collaborating partners. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Consul General of Italy in Hong Kong, the most crucial person behind the MoU and the show.

My gratitude also goes to our first-time partner, the internationally prestigious Uffizi Galleries; as well as to our long-term partner, the sole sponsor of the exhibition, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. Without the trust and support of both of you, this meaningful exhibition would not have been possible. Last but not least, I'd like to thank the Chinese-Italian Cultural Society and the First Initiative Foundation as well for their staunch support and dedication.

2020 is a challenging year for every one of us. The COVID-19 pandemic creates a lasting impact on the way we live. In response to the new normal, the LCSD has launched a one-stop online resources centre earlier this year to enable the public to participate in cultural activities in the comfort of their own homes. The unique power of art to soothe and relieve, to heal and inspire is exactly what we should hold on to at this difficult time.

Lastly, may I wish everybody good health and the exhibition a great success. Thank you very much.