

CE promotes Hong Kong as arts and cultural hub (with photo)

â€‹The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, tonight (June 7) met with representatives of Mainland and overseas art galleries via a webinar. She briefed them on Hong Kong's growing competitive edge as an international arts and cultural hub, and that it is the best time for them to expand their presence in the city. The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, and the Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, also joined the webinar.

The webinar was organised by Art Basel, with which the Chief Executive has had close interactions over the years since Art Basel Hong Kong was hosted in Hong Kong some eight years ago. Apart from senior executives of Art Basel including its global director, Mr Marc Spiegler, the webinar was attended by a dozen of directors and founders of art galleries in major cities around the world, including New York, London, Paris, Rome, Milan, Athens, Tokyo, Seoul, Singapore, Jakarta and Mainland cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Mrs Lam said that Hong Kong has all along been an East-meets-West hub for international arts and cultural exchanges. To promote cultural co-operation, Hong Kong has signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) on cultural co-operation with 20 countries which facilitate cultural activities such as staff exchanges, education, training, research and business matching. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) had also signed MOUs with world-renowned museums such as the British Museum and the Gallerie degli Uffizi to strengthen cultural exchanges and co-operation between the parties.

"The professionalism and passion of Hong Kong's museums are well recognised by the community of collectors and artists. In addition, Hong Kong is blessed with a rich private collection; many of the collectors are supporters of our public museums," Mrs Lam told the participants.

"I am honoured and thrilled to receive on behalf of our public museums two remarkable donations from Chih Lo Lou Art Promotion Ltd and the family of celebrated artist Wu Guanzhong in 2018."

Mrs Lam highlighted that Hong Kong is quickly developing into a major global art trading centre. Hong Kong's competitive edge includes its low and simple tax regime with no customs duty, value-added taxes or estate duty on artworks, the freedom of expression enjoyed by people including artists, a robust intellectual property protection regime, and comprehensive private wealth management services available to collectors.

Mrs Lam noted that Hong Kong has been investing heavily in upgrading existing cultural hardware and building new facilities. The M+ Museum and the Hong Kong Palace Museum in the West Kowloon Cultural District, which are expected to be commissioned at the end of this year and in the middle of next

year, respectively, together with the renovated and expanded Hong Kong Museum of Art, will be cultural landmarks by the Victoria Harbour. Other hardware includes the host of museums managed by the LCSD, Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts, the PMQ as well as prime Hong Kong exhibition venues including the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and AsiaWorld-Expo. Coupled with the recent efforts of private developers to enhance artistic elements in their properties, members of the public are now able to sample a rich and colourful diversity of arts and cultural activities all around Hong Kong.

On top of the first-class arts and cultural venues, she pointed out that Hong Kong has a vibrant art scene and plays host to a number of large-scale and well-received annual international art fairs, including Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Central and the French May Arts Festival, attracting plenty of art lovers and members of the public on a yearly basis.

She pointed out that Hong Kong's position will be further boosted by the "Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" approved by the National People's Congress earlier this year, in which Hong Kong, for the first time, is encouraged to develop into a hub for arts and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. She added that it echoed the directions of the Culture and Tourism Development Plan for the Greater Bay Area promulgated in December 2020, which indicated support for Hong Kong to develop into a more competitive global platform for cultural exchanges.

"Given Hong Kong's competitive edge and bright prospects in art and cultural development, and the recent drop in rentals in the commercial property market amid the epidemic, I believe that it is the best time for international art galleries and world-renowned artists to expand their presence in Hong Kong. I welcome you all with open arms," said Mrs Lam.

