

Creativity to brighten up Victoria Harbour promenades (with photo)

The Harbour Office of the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the Harbourfront Commission (HC) announced today (October 23) the winning entries of the "Victoria Harbour" Word Art Competition and the Harbourfront Public Furniture Competition. An iconic word art installation and 20 units of public furniture designed by the public will be placed at various locations on both sides of Victoria Harbour progressively in the next six months, for visitors to interact with, take pictures at and check-in with on social media.

The HC Chairman, Mr Vincent Ng, said, "The HC has a long-established aspiration in engaging the community in harbourfront development. The harbourfront should not only be an open space in which the public can relax and enjoy the sea view, but also a place for displaying creative arts. The two competitions combined community engagement with social creativity, enabling the public to take part in the building of the harbourfront, enhancing their sense of belonging with it."

The "Victoria Harbour" Word Art Competition was open to members of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors and the Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design. Meanwhile, the Harbourfront Public Furniture Competition was open to all members of the public, with participants including professionals, practitioners in the cultural and creative industries, students and creative amateurs. The competitions received close to 100 entries, which has come as a happy surprise. Some of them even involved cross-sectoral collaboration.

The Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands), Ms Doris Ho, who was a member of the selection panels, said, "The proposals received were of a very high quality, embracing outstanding design as well as diverse themes and styles. The selection panels are confident that the winning entries will brighten up the harbourfront with additional points of interest, colours and vibrancy, attracting more people and connecting them to the harbourfront."

"The Beacon of Hong Kong" (see picture), the winning entry of the "Victoria Harbour" Word Art Competition, was designed by young architect Arnold Wong and his team. The installation echoes the glamorous night view of Victoria Harbour with bold fonts and bright colours. Its mesh design was inspired by traditional Chinese window frame and screen craftsmanship, and enables sunlight to penetrate and create different effects during different times of a day. Its hollow letter design invites people to walk into the world of creative arts and become part of it. The artwork will be displayed at the East Coast Park Precinct east of Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter in the first half of 2021. About 40 metres in height and 3m in width, the artwork will be clearly visible within the Harbour.

The Harbourfront Public Furniture Competition identified 20 extremely creative entries reflecting the characteristics of Hong Kong (see annex). They will be placed at the Hoi Fai Road Promenade in Tai Kok Tsui, the Pierside Precinct near Wan Chai Ferry Pier, and the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct to be created at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area starting from the end of this year.

The three designs receiving the largest number of votes feature different characters. "PLAY RING!", with a ring shape in its original form and undulating curvature referencing the movement of waves, was designed having regard to the spatial requirements for different physical movements of human beings. The installation allows people to sit, lean or lie down comfortably, and can become play equipment encouraging visitors to explore. "Anamorphosis" sets off from the perspectives of art, technology and nature. By coupling recycled plastic fibres and timber with augmented reality, this piece of futuristic and interactive public furniture exemplifies the synergy between a leisure park and creative arts. "The 60s view" presents the imaginations of a team of young designers by silhouetting the facade of a tenement building to simulate a time travel experience for visitors at the harbourfront. They may sit by the window of a 1960s tenement building and enjoy the view of the modern Victoria Harbour.

Mr Ng said, "The word art installation and the public furniture will become shared resources at the Victoria Harbourfront. With the general public appreciating and treasuring these pieces, we hope that the items will become a catalyst inducing all sectors of society to take part in the development of a vibrant harbourfront and inspire more creativity."

The selection panels of the two competitions comprised representatives from the DEVB and the HC, the latter of which includes co-opted members of the three relevant District Councils. The selection criteria included: technical feasibility; artistic concept in consideration of the design of the promenade and the corresponding theme(s); artistic/professional merit, creativity, originality, environmental friendliness and sustainability; experience and ability to organise and fabricate public artwork, innovation, uniqueness and artistic merit of the previous public artwork; and impact on the promenade and the community relationship. Designs had to be creative, vibrant and interesting, while proposals for the Harbourfront Public Furniture Competition also had to take due consideration of the normal height and comfort for furniture. Winning entrants will undertake design and production of the respective installations.

