

HKMoA receives donation of over 100 artworks by renowned Hong Kong calligraphist Jat See-yeu from his family (with photos)

The Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMoA) received a generous donation of 123 sets of precious artworks of Chinese calligraphy and paintings by Hong Kong calligraphist Jat See-yeu (1935 – 2009) from his family for the HKMoA's permanent collection. This marked the largest single donation of calligraphy works by an individual Hong Kong artist that the museum has ever received. Eighty-five sets of the newly donated artworks have been selected for display in the "Boundless Universe: Calligraphy by Jat See-yeu" exhibition which will be opened tomorrow (December 8), showcasing Jat's creative journey and his contribution to promoting Hong Kong's contemporary calligraphy.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the exhibition and donation ceremony today (December 7) at the HKMoA, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Mr Vincent Liu, pointed out that the Hong Kong Museum of Art has been dedicated to showcasing the unique Hong Kong art and Chinese culture through diverse curatorial approaches. From the exhibition "City Rhymes: The Melodious Notes of Calligraphy" to the exhibition "By the People: Creative Chinese Characters" and the current exhibition "Boundless Universe: Calligraphy by Jat See-yeu", these three exhibitions form a trilogy that presents a comprehensive chapter of Chinese calligraphy in the history of Hong Kong art from different perspectives. He extended his gratitude to the Jat family for their generous donation which demonstrated their generous spirit and a steadfast commitment to the public good. Mr Liu pointed out that the collection of this donation encompassed the diverse periods of Mr Jat's calligraphic creations in various calligraphic scripts and works that integrated calligraphy and paintings, providing an extraordinary resource for studying the development of calligraphy in Hong Kong. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is committed to promoting the development of arts and culture in Hong Kong and telling the good stories of the city. It is hoped that through this exhibition, the younger generation, who might not have as many opportunities to write with brush and ink, would gain a deeper understanding of Chinese calligraphy, a unique art form in Chinese culture. He also hoped that visitors could feel Jat See-yeu's love for life and Hong Kong while appreciating his innovative calligraphic endeavours.

Other officiating guests included Jat's son, Mr Jat Sew-tong, SC; the Chairman of the Museum Advisory Committee, Professor Douglas So; and the Museum Director of the HKMoA, Dr Maria Mok.

The passion Jat See-yeu held for the art of calligraphy was developed at a very young age. During secondary school, he learned from the accomplished Hong Kong calligraphist Au Kin-kung for a brief period. Having studied under

Hong Kong ink painting master Lui Shou-kwan in the 1960s and 1970s, Jat was inspired by his new ink paintings and embarked on a journey of diverse exploration in calligraphy. He strived for evolution and innovation while being firmly rooted in traditional calligraphy. Jat had dedicated his whole life to the art of calligraphy and actively participated in its promotion and education. In 2001, he was awarded the Medal of Honour from the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for his contributions to fostering the art of calligraphy.

The exhibition is divided into four zones based on four perspectives: "Cultivating the Self in Tradition", "Infusion of Calligraphy and Painting", "My Realm of Art in the Studio" and "My Own Path", which showcases Jat's passion for preserving tradition and his carefree and innovative spirit in embracing contemporary times. Highlight exhibits include an over six-metre-wide "Calligraphy in running script" expressed in a roving, uninhibited style; "Orchid blossoms", an innovative piece that blends calligraphy and ink painting; "Calligraphy in clerical script" inspired by nature's splendour; the majestic large-scale work "Verse in running-cursive script" in his advanced years; and the original ink on paper works of the two wooden couplets currently hanging at the Kowloon Walled City Park.

Audiences can also enjoy a tour video aided by a visitor's guide to explore Jat's calligraphy found in Cheung Chau where he had resided for decades, and other places in Hong Kong. In addition, the exhibition will feature Jat's calligraphy performance with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra in 1999 which showcased his spontaneous creation of a large-scale calligraphy accompanying the live music. There is also a dynamic timeline which presents Jat's artistic journey and the development of Hong Kong calligraphy groups since the 1950s, providing audiences insights into the multifaceted growth of Hong Kong calligraphy and cultural essence rooted in tradition.

The exhibition will run from December 8, 2023, to July 3 next year at the Hong Kong Art Gallery on the 2/F of the HKMoA (10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon). For details of the exhibition, please visit the website at hk.art.museum/en/web/ma/exhibitions-and-events/jat-see-yeu.html or call 2721 0116 for enquiries.



