

# HKMoA's Chinese painting and calligraphy exhibition explores life planning of ancient scholars through their artworks (with photos)

The Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMoA) launched the exhibition "Life Planning of the Chinese Literati: Selected Chinese Painting and Calligraphy from the Xubaizhai Collection", featuring 46 sets of Chinese painting and calligraphy selected from its Xubaizhai collection. The exhibition applies the contemporary concept of life planning to the choices made by traditional Chinese literati on their lives and careers. It explores the diverse artistic styles and aspirations shaped by different groups of scholarly officials and reclusive literati due to different life journeys and personal encounters.

Life planning is a crucial part of the management of one's living in society nowadays. The ancient literati often found themselves at the crossroads between serving in the court to engage with the world or retreating to enjoy a life of seclusion, thereby achieving different artistic paths. Through comparisons of artists between officialdom and seclusion, court and mountains, Confucianism and Buddhism, the exhibition highlights the stylistic differences of Chinese painting and calligraphy during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It also explores how the decisions made by the ancient scholars against the backdrop of dynastic transitions affected their artistic pursuits.

Highlight exhibits include works by famous artists from the Ming and Qing dynasties, such as Tang Yin's "Returning home with a qin", Wen Zhengming's "Cooling off the hot summer", Tang Dai's "Autumn mountains", Zhu Da's "Reeds and mallard" and Kang Youwei's "Four poems in running-cursive script". Visitors can try the "Career Aptitude Test of Ancient Literati" interactive game in the gallery to discover their own strengths and potential in the workplace.

The HKMoA has also invited Hong Kong artist Leung Lai-man to create the artwork "Ready, Set, Go!" for the exhibition. Drawing inspiration from the various paths of official careers and reclusive lives chosen by the Chinese literati, Leung depicts seven children dressed in kindergarten uniforms in a set of "gongbi" paintings. These "children at play" are presented as ancient literati from the Ming and Qing dynasties in a Chinese garden setting, inviting audiences to travel back in time, engage in dialogue with ancient literati across time and space, and explore the meaning of life.

The HKMoA's Xubaizhai collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy was donated by the late renowned collector Mr Low Chuck-tiew in 1989. It encompasses masterpieces dating from the Six Dynasties through to the 20th century and is especially renowned for works by masters of the major schools of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The exhibition is being held at the Xubaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 2/F of the HKMoA (10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon), while the "Hong Kong Artist Dialogue Series: Leung Lai-man – Ready, Set, Go!" is now on display at the lobby on the second floor of the museum. Admission is free. For details of the exhibition, please visit the website at [hk.art.museum/en/web/ma/exhibitions-and-events/life-planning-of-the-chinese-literati-phase1.html](http://hk.art.museum/en/web/ma/exhibitions-and-events/life-planning-of-the-chinese-literati-phase1.html) or call 2721 0116 for enquiries.



