

Hong Kong's art sector shows resilience and innovation to adapt to pandemic

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin), together with the THINKTANK, Centre for International Relations (CIR), have organised an online event on April 13 with high-ranking artists, scientists and managing directors from the creative industry in Poland and Hong Kong to talk about the future of art amidst the increasing influence of technology and artificial intelligence on artists and their creation process.

The panel included Dr Pascale Fung, Professor, Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering; Director, Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research, HKUST; Prof Jeffrey Shaw, Veteran new media artist, Chair Professor of the School of Creative Media, CityUHK; Mr Piotr Mieczkowski, President, Digital Poland Foundation; Dr Katarzyna Stanny, Head of Media Imaging Lab at Department of Media Art, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw; Dr Ewa Maria Åsmigielska, lecturer, Department of Sculpture at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing; and Mr Michal Znaniecki, opera director.

In the event's opening, Mr Bill Li, Director of HKETO Berlin, highlighted that despite the pandemic, Hong Kong has emerged as one of the largest art trading centres in the world in recent years. Its unique history and geo-strategic location made it the connecting point of Western and Chinese artists and collectors. With Asian economies' strong performance and fast recovery from the pandemic, the Asian and Hong Kong art scenes flourish, attracting both artists and entrepreneurs who are looking to expand their presence here.

"In 2020, Hong Kong's global art market share rose from 17.5 per cent in 2019 to 23.2 per cent in 2020, overtaking London for the first time. I think these figures speak for themselves", Mr Li pointed out.

While others had to cancel all activities, Hong Kong's art scene also kept going in a physical way. Swiss art fair giant, Art Basel, held its only physical event of 2020 in Hong Kong. Another example took place in June 2020. The Hong Kong Art Gallery Association partnered with 12 of the city's art galleries to stage a boutique art fair. Drawing nearly 3 000 visitors, their "Unscheduled at Tai Kwun" was one of the world's first fairs to open since the pandemic broke out.

When looking into the future, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has been making significant investments in the city's arts infrastructure. "The key development is the West Kowloon Cultural District, a flagship project designed to boost Hong Kong's art and cultural landscape, with the vision to attract people across all demographics to a vibrant district to explore new cultural experiences. It is one of the world's

largest cultural projects", Mr Li added.

The centrepiece of the District is the M+, Hong Kong's new visual cultural museum that will dramatically change the Asian art landscape in 2021. With most Asian museums operating as silos, telling the story of art in their own countries but seldom how artists influenced one another across borders, M+ being a multi-disciplinary museum with an international collection is set to become one-of-a-kind in Asia.

About HKETO Berlin

HKETO Berlin is the official Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government representative in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Poland as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland.

