

**Hong Kong Arts Development Council
International Arts Leadership Roundtable 2016**

**Closing Discussion
[Transcript]**

Moderator: Dr WONG Ying-wai, Wilfred, Chairman of Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Panellists:

- 1) Ms Tisa HO, Executive Director of Hong Kong Arts Festival**
- 2) Dr Isaac LEUNG, Chairman of Videotage**
- 3) Mr Duncan PESCOD, Chief Executive Officer of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority**
- 4) Prof TSENG Sun-man, EMA Co-Programme Leader and Adjunct Professor of Hong Kong Institute of Education**
- 5) Ms Ada WONG, Founder and Hon. Chief Executive of Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture**

Wilfred WONG: In this session, we are very honoured to have five distinguished local arts leaders to give response remarks to what have been discussed during the conference, and you are all welcome to share your views and opinions. First, may I introduce our first respondent Mr Duncan Pescod to you.

Mr Pescod is the Chief Executive Officer of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority. He has over 32 years of service with the Hong Kong Government before joining the WKCD. He was the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) and Director of Housing. Please join me to welcome Mr Pescod.

Duncan PESCOD: Thank you Wilfred, and a big thank you to the ADC for organising this very interesting event. I had a very long evening last night with some of you, so my presentation this morning is a little bit disjointed, and probably doesn't actually relate closely to what we were talking about yesterday. What I did think though was I would try and relate the three sessions, the takeaways that I have got from each session back to the West Kowloon project which is what I have been working on. Let me just remind you briefly what the three sessions were. We heard cultural ecology, change of arts spaces, and new thinking on international exchange. We put together this presentation overnight and I want to thank my colleagues for helping me with this. It doesn't relate specifically to any particular point, but I want to illustrate some key issues.

Let me just rehash what I thought were some of the key points that came

out of yesterday's sessions. During the first session, Kathy spoke about the importance of community engagement. Absolutely essential. We had talked about the edge being where things change and happen, and where real creativity takes place. Elaine was reporting on the shortage of space, and revealed the rather shocking fact that some 70% of applications for LCSD's venues are turned down. That's a pretty worrying situation to be in. Taking that particular issue to heart, it seems fairly clear to me that one of the key issues must be how do we increase the capacity of venues in Hong Kong. One of the key issues, as I see it, is we've got to develop the large West Kowloon Cultural District site and get as many facilities as possible that are available for people to use. We are already developing the Xiqu Centre. We have the Lyric Theatre Complex to be tendered out this year. Construction of the museum is already underway. The main park space is being tendered and about to be constructed and warded, as well as the temporary facility of the Nursery Park. Within the Park we have a 450-seat theatre. We will have a 1,400-seat theatre in the Lyric Theatre, a 600-seat medium theatre, a 250-seat studio theatre, also 1,000-seat Xiqu Centre Theatre plus a 200-seat Tea House Theatre. Lots of new venues are coming on stream. So I think we hit the first point.

In the second session, Vincent was talking about the use of unorthodox space. I was delighted to hear Mr Upston described Tai Kwun as being on time and on budget. I consider unorthodox space to be very important. We are also following up with the use of the Temporary Nursery Park, as well as spaces throughout the territory for events. Ms Park told us about how vacant schools are being converted, giving us another example of non-traditional spaces being used for arts purposes. I think the message that came across to me is the need to expand that capacity within the environment. I am delighted to hear the ADC is getting space from the Hong Kong Government and providing additional resources for the community.

Simon talked about his happy problem: he's got more money. No one else in the room seemed to be quite so happy. I could see his smile beaming. But it brings with the challenge: the need to rationalise. Going from 147 different programmes down to six programmes, how do you do with that? I think this notion of simplification came across very strongly. How do you respond to what the community wants? What does the arts community want? Richard briefed us on the issue arising from New Zealand's location. Within the 2,000-km square circle, there are only about four million people. If you transpose the circle to Hong Kong, we would get some 8 million. That's the difference between having to be creative to attract audience formally plus visitors. Our challenge is to cope with potentially 8 million people. We are going to have high-speed rail coming right into the middle of our site. Theoretically we will be welcoming all these people coming in. How do we cope with that? It is something we have to address.

Mr Hirabayashi described a brilliant initiative to allow people to taste some of the traditional art forms, e.g. Kabuki, Noh, etc. It is so important for us to do things here for Chinese theatre (Xiqu). We are building a Xiqu centre. How do we make sure that we can grow the audience? We don't have an audience of an average age of 65 or 70. We have maybe an average age of 35. Event like "Discover KABUKI" is what we are trying to do. We will be doing taster events in our tea house.

Dr Fredric Mao made a very important point. He emphasised partnership, and understanding both yourself and others. Euan also stressed the importance of two key components: the artists and the audience. That is the key which I want to stress in the remaining three minutes of my presentation. There is a need to create a platform based on trust that responds to the needs of both the audience and the artists. Here is the timeframe for the projects that I have outlined. As you can see over the next five years, we are going to deliver every year some of these projects, starting from this year. It is already underway. These dates are set. Like Euan said, they will be on time, and I hope they will be on budget. It is not just about providing spaces for people within boxes. Boxes are fine, but we have got to provide space for the community, for people who don't necessarily regard arts as something that is for them. How can we give them a space that opens their eyes up to the artistic and cultural opportunities? I think the Park is one of the most important features we will be developing. It is a free space. We are already using it for what we called the Freespace Happening in our temporary park, and we are getting thousands of attendees. Last Sunday, we had some 9,300 people on the site for a children and family day. So far we have had something in excess of 43,000 people through the various Freespace events we have held. I think that is a pretty remarkable achievement when we only hold them once a month. But it is not just about the soft construction. The lift of the roof and main theatre structure for the Xiqu Centre just took place last week. It is being built and it is happening. Give me the confidence to say that these things will be delivered on time. We are working 24/7. This is for the people of Hong Kong.

It is not just about the hardware. It is equally important about the software. The Sigg's collection of our M+ museum is part of the asset that we have been building up for the museum in Hong Kong. We've put its display on in Hong Kong. The collection was first in Sweden, then in Manchester, United Kingdom, and we brought it to Hong Kong. Small taste, eighty odd pieces, at a collection of 1,500. Go and see it for yourself. This shows you the quality we are trying to achieve. We have put together an app which has been used by 1,200 users. It is really good. It takes you through the narrative and story where the different artists are coming from, what their point is.

Connecting to our audience, and connecting artists to the audience are something that we do on a regular basis. It is part of the Appreciate Hong Kong programme. But more importantly, it is part of our way to test out what we want to do. We want this park and the future park to be a place for people of Hong Kong to do what they want to do, not what we prescribe they have to do. We let them help us to design it. That's what it is all about. Doing your own thing within the space we provide. It is also about preparing for the opening of the Xiqu Centre. One of the things that came out yesterday was partnerships. The Ghost Seller is a joint production with Taiwan and Hong Kong. We are doing joint programmes. We are working not only with Taiwan, but we've already signed the agreement for closer partnership with the Xiqu Centre in Shanghai. We will continue to do this. We are not working in isolation, but we work with a global and international vision. Thank you.

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you Duncan. Our second respondent is Dr Isaac Leung. Isaac is a young and talented practicing artist, curator and researcher in arts and culture. He specialised in researching the contemporary Chinese art market in his PhD degree and he is currently Lecturer in the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts of the Hong Kong Institute of Education and also the Chairman of Videotage. Videotage is a listed media art organisation in UNESCO, it has been long-term collaborator with other media art organisations for the betterment of video art and new media art locally and worldwide. It is also an organisation supported by the ADC. Please join me to welcome Isaac.

Isaac LEUNG

Thank you Dr Wong. The first key concept that has been repeatedly talked about by a lot of delegates yesterday was the word "21st century". This is like the overarching framework that a lot of us are emphasising on what is the break of last century, what is the characteristic of this century, and what are we going to pursue in this century. When we think about the 21st century, inevitably we think about the young generation, technology and social media, and how we can use technology to engage the young generation. This course has been particularly important in Hong Kong that there are a lot of dynamics between the older generation and the new generation. I think this is a very important issue for us to talk about.

This picture speaks it all. It represents when I was in college, video art used to be like this - both the camera and the phone were separated. A few years ago, we thought technology would be the supplement of our everyday life. But nowadays, with the invention of smartphone, we think that technology is really dominating our everyday life. We have to face that. We have to chase the technology. A few years ago, when we searched the Rembrandt Museum in Google, you probably found this painting. But now you would find a painting with a lot of kids playing with their cell phones in front of Rembrandt's painting, but not looking at the painting. We need to think about how we could actually engage the new generation,

otherwise we are going to lose these audience. On the left-hand side, you see the perfect scenario of the museum in the past that the whole family is looking at arts and artefacts. But in reality, the picture on the right-hand side is the reality. All the family has the screen-based media and they are not talking to each other. This is important for museum practitioners and arts practitioners to think about strategies to engage and educate families and different members of a society.

A classic example in 2015: Louvre Museum was one of the top ten places for check-in on Facebook. The biggest reason for the young generation to go to museum is not to look at art, but actually to do a Facebook check-in. We have to think about how art institutions could engage this new generation, as if any other commodities and objects in our world, no matter art, food, or other commodities. Food is becoming “food porn” when food has to be articulated with Google and technologies. A lot of museums are trying to use technologies to distribute their advocacy, advertise and promote artworks. But I want to draw your attention to the case of Michelle Phan who is the richest 25-year-old girl in the world. She only makes videos on mascara and attracts so many hits every day. If we think about Guggenheim and a lot of museums, the hit rate is actually quite low. As a curator of moving image, I have to always remind myself. Traditionally, we would want to do screening in cinema; now we have to compete with this whole network of the new generation. How could my project actually engage the people who like mascara, and nurture them to start to like video art? This is the very core question at stake.

The second batch of ideas from yesterday was about building, such as building structure, network, place, buildings, values and also partnership. I think this is very much informed by the new technology and new mode of network production. A lot of us are trying to build a new network for us to partner, to work together, and to give innovative values. This is a classic example of Zaha Hadid the architect. Her works are built in Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Seoul and Rome. All of them are flagship buildings. But the problem at stake is how, besides the facade of these buildings, can we distinguish different kinds of local cultures in different cities? How can we have an inclusive model to have different cultures, but at the same time highlight the notion of globalisation? We don't want the picture on the left hand side that the global and local are going to different directions, but we want to try to come up with strategies to tie the ends of global and local, and fill the gap between them. This is part of the value construction including a lot of different values and highlighting the complex network of the globe.

Besides the facade of the building, we have to go into the building as well. A lot of us yesterday talked about how an institution has to be reformed. In the 21st century, with all these kind of changes in the world, I think one of the biggest issues at stake is how we can internally reform in order to cope

with the 21st century network. Are we still using this linear notion of structure, or are we going to have a new structure that could highlight this kind of flexibility? In the past structures, we could only deal with one person in a linear model. How can we cope with the new map of the globe where actually a lot of institutions, peoples and activities are connected physically as well as on Facebook every day?

Lastly, I want to talk about a main theme from yesterday's sessions, which is about the bottom of force, namely everyday culture, community and engagement. Almost every speaker emphasised community engagement, which I would call "decentralisation". I think this is also very much informed by technology about the notions of the 21st century. In other sectors, for example, Hilton's biggest challenge would not be Sheraton but Airbnb, a platform constructed by people, by many individuals, instead of a top-down model; HSBC's biggest challenge would not be Citibank but Paypal. The user-generated notions and platforms have already brought new revolution to people's practice.

I would use this picture as a metaphor. I think the contemporary world is just like this motherboard which is a big board that has a lot of little components. If a tiny little part of that motherboard is out of order, then the whole computer would not be working. In the the 21st century, it is very much about we have to look at the whole motherboard, and at the same time paying attention to individuals. Individuals' power is so important. In a nutshell, it is a definite reality. The future has arrived. A lot of us, whether in the field of education, arts, government or corporation, are all trying very hard to chase the reality, because the reality is actually in my pocket- my iPhone.

Before I go, I would like to give an example of what Videotage is doing. It echoes with what a lot of speakers had talked about yesterday. Videotage is working with the Art Basel Crowdfunding Initiative to have a kick-starter programme. Besides getting money from the ADC, we also would love to have funding from the crowd all over the world, from the citizens and individuals. We are going to have a booth in the upcoming Art Basel, and also presenting our new European network. I am building a long-term collaboration between Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. In the past two years, we collaborated with 22 institutions from the UK, Hong Kong and China. We are adapting a model of sharing economy where we only contribute a very small amount of money. But if each of the 22 organisations is also contributing a little bit, then eventually we can have a very impactful international project. Besides, as a curator, we normally think about having moving images to be screened in galleries, white cube space and cinema. But last year I curated a programme at Clockenflap. We got a full house, and it was really amazing to see a lot of young people coming to our programme. We worked with the PMQ Detour. Working with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, we presented two

programmes, representing Hong Kong artists at two major festivals and art fair in Spain. As for 2016 we are going to host the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA), an international media art festival.

In conclusion, we are actually in a crossroad where we have to come up with new strategies to cope with the 21st century. I would end my presentation with this sentence: “it takes a network to serve a network, and it takes a network to fight a network.” The 21st century is no longer about linear problem-solving skills, but about building a sustainable and effective network that we can let different individuals take part in culture. Thank you.

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you Isaac. Now it is the busiest time for Tisa as the Hong Kong Arts Festival has just opened two weeks ago. I am really thankful for Tisa joining us today. Tisa, please.

Tisa HO:

Thank you. It’s a great pleasure to be here. There are three things I would like to say in sharing this time. The first is thanks. This is not just a polite thanks because it is a wonderful event as it is, but it is a special example of the kind of things that we are reaching for. In our discussion, we all said we want to wish to include different voices. It could be such an easy conversation among us from the councils, among a circle of professionals. It is a wonderful sign of how Hong Kong is now. It is a wonderful sign of how we all want to reach and connect, and that you have given this time and space for others to be heard.

The second is also thanks and an apology. I am here alone from the Hong Kong Arts Festival because we are doing 119 shows right now. Even though my colleagues are not here, I need to thank my team of 35 for doing all the heavy-lifting, so that I can come here and have this conversation and connect with the community, in which we live and work, and which we try to serve. That is the preamble. The community has been a really important theme in this discussion. There have been some really good analogies. Ecology was the first one. That is part of the conference title. Then we have bones, ligaments and collagen, all of those good bits that keep you working in good order. And just now we had Isaac’s motherboard. All of those analogies say that all the parts need to work. The big bones need to work. The ligaments need to work. The individual bits of the motherboard need to work. There are ecologies within ecologies, so it is important to understand the many layers that exist in the community. Not just saying “this is the bone and this is the ligament”, but each organism within each ecology needs to have its own bones of some sort, its own collagen and ligaments of some sort. That is the health of the individual organisation’s organism. Duncan talked about hardware as well as software. In the same way, I think we need all of these in the ecology.

Forgive if I refer to the Hong Kong Arts Festival for a minute. People

think of the Hong Kong Arts Festival as the big opera, the big orchestra, the work and so on; we also do two hundred outreach activities. We have some 6,500 young friends this year who do not come for free, who actually pay for the privilege of being a young friend and attending stuff in the Festival. We do new stuff every year. We do contemporary dance, supported by the Hong Kong Jockey Club. We are really pushing our limits and our artists. Some of them are supported by foundations; some of them have other grants. I also like to think of the festival as an ecology, as a whole body with the bones and the ligaments. I think this idea needs to be in every organisation and in every community, so that it functions healthily. When we say “we are this bit and we don’t care about the others”, it starts to get dangerous. That is the eureka moment for me that we need to look at ourselves and each other. As Dr Mao says, we need to know ourselves and our partners. We need to look at organisations in this way.

The other takeaway that I had came from Kathy’s interesting question – when governments or cities invest in the arts, at what point does it actually engender dependency? At what point do we look at the balance of co-payment and co-responsibility for it? Isaac talked about crowdfunding. The festival sells over 90% of the box office tickets every year. For us, the audience is part of our crowdfunding. Everybody who buys a ticket co-pays for the festival. The greatest pleasure is when people book their tickets, they add a hundred or a thousand dollars to their booking form. It is a kind of crowdfunding. It is already there. It says that they want the Festival, this organisation and that programme, not just because they personally enjoy it, but they are willing to make a contribution, whatever it is. That number has been growing in the last three or four years. If this is a trend, then it is a very positive trend.

In terms of the right balance between funding, self-payment and co-payment, I think it differs in every community. The Americans have one model, right? The government does fund, say some 2% and everything else is either philanthropy, corporate, or you work as a waiter until you audition and get a job in a theatre. That’s one model. What we tend to call the European model is, for example, the Berlin International Film Festival is well-funded. I think there are many models, just as there are many different ways to be a healthy organism in the ecosystem. There are many different ways to balance the co-payment. To what degree access to the arts is a civic good that should be provided out of the tax dollar? To what degree you want people to make the choice? Behind some of those questions about money; it’s about access, valuation and appreciation. If it is all free and you make people go or it is just there, how do you know, except by doing major survey, what the valuation is? What level of engagement is there? Free access, which is what Duncan is doing, is fantastic. I am very curious, if people need to pay for it, what would happen? Orchestras that play in parks are wonderful. There are different

types of services – serving 5,000 or 10,000 people in an outdoor zone, and serving 1,000 people who will pay for a ticket and listen to something very different. Are those all parts of the ecology? Can we only do the 10,000-people outdoor concerts? What sort of value do we place on those versus the 1,000 people who pay to go for something else? The numbers are important.

I am equally glad to hear from Kathy's presentation that, together with the outreach and access, excellence is at the core value and at the heart of what they do. One word I was kind of waiting for, and it did occur sometimes but not as frequent as I had thought. Given the nature of this conversation, sometimes I think we use a proxy word. We talked a lot about supporting artists. We talked a lot about connecting artists and audiences. But we didn't talk a lot about the work. For me, the connection is not just between artists and audiences, it is artist connecting audiences with the work, whether it is a new work or a classic work. I know this is difficult. It is much easier to deal with numbers and quantities. I totally recognise that great art cannot be mandated. It cannot be made to order. A masterpiece is not created by just someone who sat down and made it with an order. But the notion of great work needs to be front and centre of all of our minds, because it is the great work that would affect how we think about humanity. It is the great work that would move us emotionally, stimulate us intellectually and satisfy us aesthetically. Yes, we must accept that many different types of works must take place, many different experiments, including some would fail, must be countenanced and must be embraced. But all of the investment, all of the energy, all of the questions, all of these, at the end of the day it really has to be about great work. If not, what are we doing with our time and resources? Thank you!

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you Tisa. The next speaker is Prof TSENG Sun-man. Prof Tseng is the co-programme leader of Executive Master of Arts in Arts Management and Entrepreneurship, and an Adjunct Professor at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. Prof Tseng is a frequent speaker on arts management training, giving presentations frequently around the world. His book, *Principles of Arts Management*, published in Chinese, has been used as a textbook by many mainland arts management programmes. Prof Tseng, please.

TSENG Sun-man:

Thank you Chairman Wong. First of all, thanks to the ADC for inviting me to share my personal views here. I am privileged to have also participated in the first Roundtable two and a half years ago. I must congratulate the ADC for the significant advance over the last one in terms of the audience number, maybe more practitioners are able to participate, and in terms of the intensity of interaction and engagement, so more are benefiting from this function. Congratulations.

For my time I will talk about three things. First of all I have been

reflecting yesterday what major changes have taken place in Hong Kong from the last Roundtable. In fact, I would just be repeating things that I think Elaine Yeung, Chairman Wong and also Duncan had shared with us. It is probably worthwhile in the sense that we have quite a bit of negative, frustrating views in Hong Kong lately. It might be useful just to think more positively on what we had achieved, including the small progress we have made in the last two and a half years. Chairman Wong shared with us the major accomplishments of the ADC in the last few years on the new art spaces, cultural exchange, and some changes of the grant system. And Elaine yesterday shared with us the Home Affairs Bureau, the new matching grant pilot scheme, the changes at the LCSD on moving some of the cultural programmes to the New Territories, and of course the East Kowloon Cultural Centre. I don't think I need to repeat what Duncan shared with us this morning on all the things that West Kowloon Cultural District has been doing. I really think we are making progress.

The second point I would like to share is, I guess we all learnt from our overseas and local speakers yesterday and hopefully this morning. There are a few things I particularly want to highlight. They are perhaps of special relevance to Hong Kong. First of all, many arts councils shared with us that the notion of engaging the public is recognised as one of their top priorities both in last Roundtable and repeated here. I think we should be thinking more about that in Hong Kong.

Yesterday we also heard about the importance of arts advocacy. I was very touched to watch the videos of creative dancing at the elderly's home in Singapore. Not only because it is easier for me to think of myself as an old person, but also it is such a good example of having the arts at a central part of our lives. Arts is everywhere. Arts is related to us in every age. We also heard from the Australia Council for the Arts about their different studies on the impact of the arts on physical and also mental health. Those are so interesting and the society at large really needs to constantly be reminded of the instrumental value of the arts, but it is so important for governments to realise that as well. I also note the importance that arts councils attached on engaging the public through the digital technology and the internet, which Isaac has shared with us so vividly that I don't think I need to stress on that point.

The last point springs from the very fruitful discussion we had yesterday's afternoon on international exchange. It is really inspiring to be reminded that for international exchange, it is multiple levels of exchange, not only a matter of importing or exporting of the arts and artists. It is so much about exchange of personnel and co-production. Mr Brault also reminded us that it is not a matter of national pride that we are showing our things abroad, but we should all be working together because it is a small world.

I want to end by making some suggestions to the ADC. First of all, I hope

the ADC would give more emphasis on research. In both last Roundtable and this edition we have heard from different arts councils about many studies they had done. Yesterday, the Australia Council for the Arts and also Singapore's National Arts Council shared the studies on public participation, public consumption and public attitude. I understand that the ADC has commissioned study on arts consumption in Hong Kong at the moment, which I think many of us are eagerly looking forward to the results. It would be so useful to us. Only when we know what the real situation is, then we are able to identify what we are lacking and work out strategies to address the deficiencies. In my opinion, the arts circle in Hong Kong would like to know the different aspects of the ecology and effectiveness of our operation and promotion, such as the effectiveness of our marketing, our audience development initiatives, how we can encourage more rerun of productions. In the last Roundtable, we had guests from arts and business to share with us the synergy of arts and business working together. All these studies are important for us as we look into the future and work out good strategies.

The second suggestion would be we could have more discussion, debate and dialogue on cultural ecology and strategy. The last two days have been very fruitful, but I hope we don't have to wait two and a half years for another discussion. Locally we can have very fruitful discussions on local ecology. In fact, many of us went through the 1990s when there were a lot of discussions. Of course that was before the establishment of the ADC and its five-year plans, the Urban Council's five-year plan and also the Recreation & Culture's five-year plan. But as we are leading up to the facilities in West Kowloon and East Kowloon, it is a good time for us to think of the future. The good thing is we now have many arts administrators who are being subsidised to undertake short overseas internships and trips. I hope they do not only learn professionally but also on the outlook. They would be able to look at the cultural ecology and also different cultural contexts of different countries. When they come back, they will be urged to contribute their insights into how to improve our own ecology here. What's the point of having this dialogue and discussion? I personally think this would enhance our capacity and develop strategic thinking for our organisations. I also hope that perhaps in the not-so-distant future we will see the ADC drawing up a strategic plan, a five-year plan or a three-year plan. I know it is a very daunting task which might attract a lot of discussions and criticism, but since the ADC has such a wide representation and is in such a strategic position, it is perhaps the best organisation to do that. I imagine when that is done, it will probably serve as a good reference for an arts sector plan or a development roadmap for Hong Kong in future. Those are my dreams. Thank you.

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you Prof Tseng. Thank you for drawing up the wish list. I am so happy that Mrs Betty Fung (Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs) is

here. We need more money for the research. Next speaker and the last one is Ms Ada Wong. Ada is the founder and honorary chief executive of Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture. Apart from the Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture, she founded the Make-A-Difference Initiative, a continuing platform to groom the next generation of creative and innovative change makers in Asia. She also founded the Good Lab in 2012, an inspiring social innovation hub for social entrepreneurship development in Hong Kong. Please, Ada.

Ada WONG:

Thank you Wilfred. It's always difficult to be the last to speak. First I would like to thank sincerely the Arts Development Council for their thought leadership in the organisation of this forum. As Prof Tseng pointed out, we used to talk about cultural policy and cultural vision quite a lot in the 1990s. Somehow, in the last few years, we stopped talking about it or it was actually not at the top of the agenda. But the world has changed a lot. Thanks to the speakers from yesterday that I learnt a lot.

I, in particular, reflected on two things from yesterday's presentations. The first is the power of arts and technology; together it's really immense. Rupert from Australia told us the BrightHearts relaxation app, and I took a look at it last night. It's really powerful using images to alleviate the pain suffered by patients. But unfortunately our policy leaders in Hong Kong or people like us in this room don't realize the power of that. We see a lot of money pouring into the technology sector now. Cyberport is having 20 million sq. feet for start-ups and 500 million for start-up money. If only Wilfred can talk to Nicholas Yang (Secretary for Innovation and Technology) and say, "look, if arts and technology work together hand in hand, we can probably produce much better, more sustainable ideas for the betterment of Hong Kong and the well-being of people", because arts is powerful. For this aspect, I have to thank Rupert, although he had flown back to Australia already.

The next is from Ms Park from Korea. She mentioned about regional development of Korean artists. Young artists are going into different cities, not just in Seoul anymore, occupying vacant school sites, working with Westerners and local people, so that local people also get a perspective in arts and culture. I reflect on the Hong Kong situation – do we have something similar? Is there an emerging trend in Hong Kong? I see a very, very small trend. Last week, for example, I attended something called the EmptySCape Art Festival, also supported by ADC's small project grant. It is held in Ping Che in north eastern part of New Territories. There is no theatre; there is no exhibition hall. The site-specific art work and installations are all in deserted classrooms in village schools. It is quite eerie to walk around the deserted campus, but it is a magnificent try for a site that has never been used, all done by young people. You would be amazed that in two days, over 3,000 people went there. That is actually not a small number if you consider they only have a

tiny budget and the concerts are all in paddy fields and veggie fields. You have arts everywhere. We should not be bounded by having no venues. Nature is also our venue. That is something I learnt from that weekend. What is the most touching about that experience is that first of all the audience is young people. The millennials nowadays really like arts experiences. In addition, the villagers, middle-aged folks from Ping Che, also took part. Although it is a very literal installation, it was their work. It was fascinating. They talked about it to me and they were really passionate about it. You can see the cross-sector influence.

Another small project that is not bounded by the “I-have-no-money” attitude is Wong Ka-jeng (黃家正) and his group the Music Lab. They’ve got no money. There is now a crowdfunding platform called Music Me. They raise funds from that crowdfunding platform to host three concerts which they call the Local Ginger Music Festival (本地薑音樂節), showcasing local musicians like Ka-jeng, Rachel Cheung and other young musicians who are now back from abroad. They are all classical music players, but they have re-interpreted classical music in a really great way.

There are the emerging trends in Hong Kong. Apart from the technology side, young artists would like to communicate with community to create arts experiences that we have not seen before. I think this resonates with what Kathy told us about Singapore that community engagement is important. Arts with the old people was an excellent example, and it was great to be reminded that non-ticketed events would be as important as ticketed events. With that I also have three thoughts – not suggestions for the ADC but thoughts for everybody in this room.

When I looked at the title “Arts in the New World”, I would like to be very positive. My first thought is that let’s be very positive. Actually Hong Kong has a lot of resources, but we lack a can-do attitude these days. We used to have this can-do spirit. Everything can be done. That’s why my EmptySCape’s young people, having no venues and exhibition halls, found a deserted village school. If you allow your imagination to run wild, you can find places to showcase your work. This is something that we, older folks, should acknowledge and support. We do have space, but there are a lot of spaces that are regulated. Perhaps we can start with crossing boundaries and asking schools. I always think that schools’ halls, given a bit of money, can be transformed to community arts centres. One or two schools halls in different districts as community arts centres would actually ease the demand for small venues quite a lot. Young people these days would like to try different settings, so this is not something that would surprise them. They are quite willing to try.

My second thought is that cultural entrepreneurship is important. People like Wong Ka-jeng and his group are very entrepreneurial. They like to try new things. They are very innovative in their presentations of the

concerts. If we work together with them, guide them in the right way, perhaps we can also enable them to do better and be cultural entrepreneurs. We have nine flagship companies who are getting a lot of funding. When I looked at Kathy's presentation, there are 28 major grant companies in Singapore. We don't really have 28 major grant companies in Hong Kong but we have a bigger population than in Singapore. On top of the nine, who are the twenty up-and-coming, emerging groups? We can encourage them to be entrepreneurs and train them, but we can give them a little bit of seed funding so as to incubate them. Incubation should happen in the arts field, and not just in IT start-ups. I think incubation works not just with social enterprises, but for cultural enterprises.

My third thought is very simple. Isaac is the youngest person on this panel. I hope, in one or two years, at the concluding session we will have people like Isaac sitting here and I sit down there. We acknowledge that young people are here to take the lead. There are a lot of young arts leaders in Hong Kong. They should be given a floor. They should be given a keynote presentation time. I know a lot of passionate young artists in Hong Kong and they are doing great things. They engage the society but they are still pursuing excellence. I think we can do both together. We can engage community and pursue excellence at the same time. Let's give them a floor, let's give them a voice. They will have to lead us into the new world. I am also getting old. I really look forward to hearing younger voices in this room and also beyond this room. Thank you.

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you, Ada. Thank you Isaac for averaging down the age on the stage. Let us now open the floor for discussion. I would like to particularly invite our overseas guests, after hearing Hong Kong's situations, what more advices do you have for us? And of course, the floor, the arts leaders of Hong Kong, after the two days, what do you think and what suggestions do you have for us and for government? Our Vice-Chairman Lina Yan, please.

Lina YAN
(ADC's Vice-chairman):

Thank you Chairman and all the plenary session panellists. After hearing all the words of wisdom in these one and a half days, I have a feeling that I must share a few points – and these points have been deep down in my hearts for years.

First of all, in response to the development of cultural ecology, I think, in order to make it flourish with sustainability, we need to maintain a good amount of variety in terms of art forms, expertise of different ages and different arts groups of different sizes. At the same time, we have to provide them with equal opportunity to survive, grow and develop. As Ada has just said, some big groups can make money by themselves. But for some medium-sized and small-sized groups, they need somebody to help and nurture them, and to help them grow. I think we must maintain a healthy equilibrium in the cultural ecology, make room for development

in search of the power of arts, as Ada has said. I agree with Ada and Sunmen that we need more discussion in the future on cultural ecology.

Secondly, in order to develop arts space, we need space, and Hong Kong is a small city. We do not have a lot of space to develop. It is good that the government has already done a lot of things, such as opening up venues for performances and activities, big and small. But there is still a lack of home base, which means the office for some arts groups, especially the small-sized arts groups, where they can dream, plan and grow. We lack rehearsal space as well. That is why the ADC, in the past two to three years, has been doing quite a lot in cultivating arts space for the artists. We try to collaborate with different parties, like corporations and some personalities outside the government by convincing them to contribute their property compound for the use of the artists. We have begun the work, but we still need to work much harder in order to create more arts space for our artists.

Apart from cultivating arts space, one point which I have not heard much in our discussion in these two days is the management of the space, which requires special expertise and skills. We cannot totally rely on the government to manage all kinds of arts space. Neither can we rely on the artists themselves alone. I don't mean that the artists cannot manage the arts space themselves but artists are artists. They have their characters and expertise. Management of arts space may not be their expertise, therefore the ADC staff has been trying to manage some of the arts spaces in the past few years. We hope we can give some good examples to some corporations and maybe even some real estate developers in the future so that we can move them, touch them and convince them to contribute more for our artists.

The third point is about exchange. I think exchange should be in two-way in terms of fields, industries as well as arts skills and professionalism. Not just exporting what we have and importing what others have, it should be in two-way. We must know our own strength, as Fredric said yesterday. We have to know what we are good at so that we can share with others, but also we need to know what we have to learn from others. A good and effective exchange should be a process of achieving mutual understanding, generating synergy, making friends and cultivating collaborations, so that both sides can benefit, grow and improve.

To conclude, the purpose of this roundtable is to offer a platform for exchange of views and experience. We hope our guests enjoyed these two days and had the chance of expressing your views, sharing your wisdom with everyone here and everyone here can bring something back home in order to continue their work in arts development. Thank you.

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you. Kathy would like to say something.

Kathy LAI:

I would like to share that I am most destabilised now because of Isaac. He has introduced a lot of disruptive concepts which are not new. I don't come from the arts sector. These concepts have been talked about and even implemented in other sectors. I recalled, when I was on the podium, I did share that I did have a feeling in my bone that we are way behind time in the digital world. Not even calling it a strategy because I don't know if the concept of strategy is relevant in the digital world. We are still thinking of physical space but there is so much virtual space. Arts research, art-making, arts presentation, just the whole virtual space is so unexplored by the arts sector. I am destabilised now because I don't even know where to start. The feeling in my bone would be the young people are already doing it, whether there is a system, a philosophy or even a policy, and I wonder how they can be supported. Maybe this is not an issue that one arts council can wrap its mind around.

Even in international exchanges I think there are so many quantum leaps that can be achieved, if we just try to pay more attention and resources, enabling the community to develop themselves and contribute to the cultural development of our people. I have no answers because, like I said, I am so destabilised now. I have a lot of questions. In fact, I cannot even articulate those questions. All I feel is just total disruption. Maybe I should just tear down National Arts Council. It's over. It's so last generation. I wonder if we can take that threat. I am so sorry that this only comes in the last section in this Roundtable but I wonder if we can catch up with the rest of the sectors. In hospitality Airbnb is disrupting hotel chains, whereas in transportation Uber is rocking the boat. They all have to reinvent themselves. Maybe we have to reinvent ourselves and the way we think of arts and culture developments. That's the thought I have after this morning session.

Wilfred WONG:

Thank you Kathy. Yes, Tisa.

Tisa HO:

I want to hang onto some of what Ada's said, which is Hong Kong's can-do spirit. Yes, we can. And yes, there's disruption. There was a point in Isaac's presentation, from which as a much older person I take great comfort, which is the image all the kids are looking at their phones but not looking at the artwork. I don't lose that. I am so glad Isaac had that slide as well. We have the funky apps, and we can reach different people, and we can do many things in cyber space.

But something about the arts, whether it is visual, classical or performing, there is humanism at the heart of it. Whether it is through a two-dimensional painting or 3-D installation or cyberspace, it is connecting that. I would like not to throw away the old things. The classics are classics for a reason, and I would hate to see a day when a Mahler's symphony has disappeared because all can only be played in digital form,

and we don't hear the sound of a viol, never mind the violin. Let's keep it all. A variety includes everything.

Isaac LEUNG: I want to have a quick response. That's exactly why I showed a Michelle Phan's case, which I think all those videos are so-so. It's just mascara. It is not what video art is or what a curator would want to see. But at the same time, that is a very classic example that we are losing these people. We don't want to lose the audience, right? So how we can use these platforms to win these people back to what we want to promote? Even though I am the youngest one here, I think that I am already so old that I actually have no answers.

Wilfred WONG: You are not that young compared to these people.

Isaac LEUNG: Exactly. I am already really old for them. For example, we had this screening at Clockenflap festival. That was the first time I saw the kids watching the screening programme. They stood out in front of the screen and took selfies. In my generation I would not dare to leave my seat, but now they are taking selfies with my screening programme. It's always a lot of dynamics between all generations.

Wilfred WONG: You know the most expensive concert tickets these days are the standing seats?

Isaac LEUNG: Yes exactly.

Wilfred WONG: Because they want to stand in front of the stages. Things have changed. Yes Simon?

Simon BRAULT
(CEO & Director of
Canada Council for the
Arts): Strangely enough I did not feel at all disrupted by your comments. I actually feel reassured to hear that voice. I really appreciated your presentation. I thought it is very inspiring. You gave us a lot of hints in terms of us presenting institutions or public funders, but I would like to ask another question just to push a bit further of what you were saying. My question would be, how do you see the future of public funding of the arts, if there is a future for it? What do you consider to be one of the most urgent shifts that should happen in terms of funding the arts?

Isaac LEUNG: As a cultural theorist and an outsider researcher looking into the arts, I think it is always a paradox, so to speak. I think, for example, in crowdfunding, we are authorising individuals who are not experts in arts to give a vote. But traditionally, no matter the monetary value or cultural value of any art pieces, it is authorised by institutions. It's a top-down model. An artwork has no value unless it is authorised by institutions and players on behalf of institutions. But in the 21st century, the whole culture is about individuals. We can just make a video and get thousands or millions of hits. I have no answer, really. I believe that we have to change.

I am also trying to reshape Videotage, but at the same time I also have to deal with a lot of things. What is the value of arts, ultimately? Do curators and arts institutions still have the rigour to tell people – this is good stuff? It is also our profession. So I am deconstructing our professions in order to cope with the 21st century at some point. It is a paradox.

Personally I don't think crowdfunding would be dominating everything. We still need government, we still need museum, otherwise we have no ground to even talk about arts if we don't have museum one day. But I think the reality is that museum has to change.

Simon BRAULT:

Some years ago I wrote a book called *No Culture No Future*. The very argument of the book was the reinvention of the cultural models, including the funding models, would happen at the city level, and not at the national level. I am still convinced of that even if I am running the national funder in Canada. Everything I learnt is at the level of my city Montreal. I think you are in a very, very privileged position here in Hong Kong. And the very privileged position is the scale of the city, the scale of the space and the dynamism of this place. You are planning a lot here, but I think it is very important to benefit from the privilege of being in one place on an island to experiment more and more, and take a lot of risks in experimenting, because the cities and this world are the open sky laboratory to invent anything on the social front and the economic front, but it has to be the same on the artistic and cultural front. I really envy your chance to be where you are in the world, at the crossroad of everything in the world. You do have a lot of power and possibilities, and I look forward to seeing what will happen over the next few years in Hong Kong. Thank you for inviting me.

Ada WONG:

I'd like to respond to Simon's question. I think arts funders nowadays should be more of a co-creator and should have a mind-set like an angel investor. In addition to money there could be more mentorship. There could be more facilitation so that the end result is very empowering for the grantee. It is very difficult to evaluate success. Success is not just based on box office or quantity, but also based on other factors as well. Sometimes I do hope that grantors can understand the ecosystem a bit more and be more risk-taking in making their decisions. Thank you.

Wilfred WONG:

Dick, would you like to say something?

Richard GRANT
(Chairman of Creative
New Zealand):

For people like me and national funding institutions in this rapidly changing environment, the key question is the question of responsibility. We are responsible for the expenditure of public money on the arts and culture. The question of responsibility is also at present and in the future subject to disruption. The money we give to a hip-hop dancer is disputed by the string quartet. The money we give to the drama group is disputed by the ceramicist. In this changing environment, there is no

compartmentalisation of knowledge about where expenditure goes anymore and the responsibility of the national administration such as ours becomes even more complex. I think Kathy might go home and have a few aspirins.

Wilfred WONG:

Okay. Alice?

Alice MONG
(Executive Director of
Asia Society Hong Kong
Centre):

I learnt so much. When I go back to Asian Society we are going to talk about opening our venue more. I know we have a wonderful venue and I hope to work with the ADC on sharing that with the community. We've already done a bit of that in these four years. This has inspired me.

But I want to address a question, maybe to Tisa or others, of the definition of great art. What we have been talking about in this a day and a half is about the ecosystem. And in terms of great art, it doesn't get great overnight. We need an ecosystem of mediocre art, bad art, good art and great art. Having returned from New York four years ago and being there for nine years, I want to echo what Simon said about the cities. What is really exciting about Hong Kong is we are seeing a beginning of an ecosystem. Remember, right now we think of impressionism as being very valuable and collected by museums and auction houses, but over a hundred years ago the French themselves did not collect impressionism and rejected them. It was the nouveau riche Americans who collected them.

I also want to talk about the funding model. Tisa also touched upon the European as well as the US model. I just read a report this week that the largest number of billionaires in the world is not in the United States but China. This is the funding model that I am interested in. Where is Hong Kong's role going to be in terms of funding? We know how successful the Hong Kong Arts Festival has been. I have ten shows to see. That's the funding model of Hong Kong. Can we rely on our own model? We look at what's happening in Europe. With all the issues and problems like the refugee crisis in Europe, should we look at the European model in Asia or should we create our own models? I am also very inspired by Isaac. Is the disruption actually bad for Asia, bad for Hong Kong? I know it's a lot but these are the questions I am dying to ask all of you.

Wilfred WONG:

Anyone like to take the questions? Okay, Tisa.

Tisa HO:

Let me just do one of them, because it is at the heart of something that I said, and you've correctly picked up on it, and that's great art. I wouldn't dare to define it, and yes, judgements change and Isaac's right – it is a kind of consensual. But the consensus is also a community one. Just because I said this is great art and everyone disagrees doesn't make it great art. There is authority, there is consensus, and there is community. It is a very multifaceted, organic change. Judgements change over time.

Sometimes it is as shallow as taste, and sometimes it does resonate. That's why it makes advocating for the arts so difficult because it is so difficult to define, and it does change and evolve. I know that we all know what we mean when some great performance or image touches us and speaks to us. That's the thing we need to keep in mind. And I totally agree with you. I sit through enormous amount of performances, which I would much rather I didn't. But if at the end of twenty performances there is one that blows me away, that's totally worth the twenty. We would have invested it, not just the time. As I said great arts cannot be mandated and it cannot be produced on order, so we need to invest in a lot of stuff to make that happen, but we mustn't lose sight of that.

Wilfred WONG:

Okay, Duncan please.

Duncan PESCOD
(CEO of West Kowloon
Cultural District
Authority):

I would like to pick up the funding issue because I think it is central to what this whole conversation is about. Let's be honest. There has always been disruptive arts. That's the nature of the piece we were talking about yesterday at the edge. That's where we want to be. Personal choice on arts is always going to be a debatable issue. It is not your choice, my choice or not even a museum choice at the end of the day that is going to be leading. It's what individuals pursue to be valuable. This whole notion of values is one thing, but the more important thing, I think, is the notion of funding.

It is all very well for a community to rely on public funds, but honestly public funds will never be the most dynamic source of funding. We've got to get artists, I am afraid, to look for other sources of funding. It's so essential. Hong Kong, I think, has been incredibly well-served by public funding over the years for the institutional sites such as the HK Philharmonic. But honestly the most dynamic stuff I see isn't funded by the government; it's by people finding their own sources of funding. I think that's where we have got to go now. The challenge for Hong Kong is that we don't really have a culture of funding of the arts. It's not something what people would look to. If they are going to fund something they will buy something for the university or a hospital. We've got to change that. Because the most important thing in terms of private sector funding and commercial funding is the value of money they get out of it. There is no point saying it's philanthropy, giving back to the community. At the end of the day they want to know what they are going to get out of it, and we've got to start thinking in those terms. It's absolutely essential. This is a contract. I provide the arts, I provide access to museums, or I provide opportunities to come and see one of these wonderful shows that Tisa is putting on, in return for which I expect you to give me something. Without this notion it is not going to work. I think we should not just look at what public sector does. We got to change the dynamics with the private sector. That's the only way we are going to take this forward. By the way, we will be coming to you for money. The public is not the only source for us either.

Wilfred WONG:

I think this brings us to the end of this session. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our overseas guests for coming a really long way to attend the conference. This is the second time we hold the Roundtable. I echo what many of our participants said. I felt this one is much better in terms of both organisation and outcome. We got a lot of ideas back, some very mind-boggling like Kathy said. But if there is no disruption, there is no rebirth. We always want to go where it is needed. We picked Isaac because he is one of the emerging talents that we have. We would like to pick someone younger, but we haven't found any yet. We need to average down our age, and we have a good opportunity coming up. The ADC will be reappointing members towards the end of the year. Betty (Ms Betty Fung, Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs), let's work together and find some younger artists and people to put on the Council. That will help to change the way we think and operate.

I also thank all the local arts leaders for coming. I know you are all very busy, and some of you have come for two days. I am deeply appreciative. I thank this occasion for being the catalyst for bringing us together because the arts community can work together, and we should work together. Because it is not about funding. I keep saying, it doesn't matter how much money government pours into the ADC, it's never going to be enough. Never. The Government has actually doubled ADC's annual recurrent expenditure in the last three years, without telling anybody that has been done, but we are still insufficient in meeting all the needs. That is a good sign, because we have a vibrant arts community and there is an insatiable appetite. That is where new funding methods and ways of doing things need to come in. I really thank everyone for participating and making this leadership programme work. I promise, as long as I am the chairman of the ADC, I will organise more local discussions among ourselves because I think it is time for us to review the arts and cultural policies as well. It's been some time now that we have taken a new look, particularly with the new generation coming in. To be honest, sometimes I don't even understand my sons. That is where the gap is. We need to embrace the young people and the future. That is why the topic of our Roundtable is "Arts in the New World", the new order. As the funding body and the promoter of arts, we need to keep reinventing ourselves, otherwise we cannot be in this position. Yesterday one speaker said something very pertinent, that is, "we have to remain relevant". If what we do is not relevant, we are just another organisation that people learn to depend on and we are not doing our job as the Arts Development Council. With that, thank you very much again. Let's give all the speakers a great round of applause. Thank you for attending.

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