

Hong Kong Exhibition ‘Stratagems in Architecture: Hong Kong in Venice’ to join the Collateral Event of 15th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

[Hong Kong, 28th April 2016] The Hong Kong Exhibition at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale) - will be unveiled in Venice on 27th May, 2016 while the Venice Biennale will open to the public on 28th May. Sponsored by Create Hong Kong (CreateHK) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and with the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) as partner, The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Biennale Foundation (HKIABF) is co-organising the exhibition with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) to showcase Hong Kong architectural excellence on the international stage.

Facing the dilemma and predicament across the globe, Alejandro Aravena, Curator of the 15th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition, calls for exhibits under the theme of “REPORTING FROM THE FRONT”, encouraging all to share constraints and challenges, believing that collective wisdom could spark fresh imagination and break new grounds. Under this theme, the Hong Kong curatorial team aims to show the world how young Hong Kong architects and artists break the norms and test the limit of the city to unleash own unique vitality and imagination in the Hong Kong Exhibition at the Venice Biennale.

“The Hong Kong team leverages on the Stratagems in Architecture, a concoction blending architecture with ancient Chinese war wisdom to surmount difficulties and achieve groundbreaking creations. Motivating us all is the Hong Kong spirit of unparalleled perseverance which is known to be capable of turning adversities into opportunities,” said Mr. Stanley Siu, Chief Curator of the Hong Kong Exhibition at the 15th Venice Biennale. Together with 6 curatorial members, he leads a team of 17 young architects and artists in this international initiative. Inspired by the ancient Chinese military strategies, the **36 Stratagems**, and steered by the **Stratagems in Architecture**, the Hong Kong exhibition will demonstrate how Hong Kong architects attempt to address the needs of the public and challenges faced by the professionals in the current social climate, through its 13 exhibits, for example, the community’s desire for conservation, environmental protection, as well as their crave for space and decent urban planning.

“The theme of this year’s Venice Biennale is unique and powerful. By drawing reference to the classic collection of Chinese military tactics in ‘the Thirty-Six Stratagems’, the Hong Kong exhibition is unique too and will showcase, subtly but relentlessly, how our young architects and artists formulate strategies and tactics in the reflection of lifestyles in the metropolis and how they transcend social norms in our city. I sincerely hope that visitors around the world will enjoy our exhibition,” said Mr. William Tseng, the Chairman of HKIABF, at the press conference today.

“This year marks the 20th anniversary of the HKADC. We have stepped forward to showcase outstanding works of Hong Kong artists via various international platforms. Apart from architects, artists and scholars from different sectors have been involved in the Hong Kong exhibitions at Venice Biennale. I look forward to seeing more spark of creativity from the collaboration between architecture and various arts forms.” said Ms. Winsome Chow, the Chief Executive of HKADC.

“The Hong Kong exhibition at the Venice Biennale 2016 has been another milestone of the HKIABF since its inception. The HKIA is proud to be a partner to the youthful Curatorial Team. Nurturing the next generation of architects is indeed at centre of what the Institute is doing,” said Mr. Vincent Ng, the President of HKIA.

This is the fourth time that CreateHK, HKSAR Government, sponsors the Hong Kong exhibition at Venice Architecture Biennale to promote Hong Kong’s architectural sector.

(Ends)

Curatorial Statement

Our society is constantly evolving since its existence. For decades, Hong Kong has been dominated by progressive development to sustain our city's economic growth, from a fishing village to a light industrial city, and eventually became one of the top financial cities in the world. For generations, economical progression became the golden rule of success and it is the largest driving force to move forward.

“Social Fact” is a term created by the father of sociologist Emile Durkheim as to indicate the social patterns that are external to individuals. Social facts can be social norms, moral values, customs, conventions, rules and other social structures exist outside individuals. At the basis of the term lies the perception of the individual grossly conditioned by social realities that form the “Boundaries of Acceptable Behavior”, but these boundaries are not static. Each generation will derive their own set of norms and values based on their particular social practice. For our new generation, the moral value is shifting from progressive development to reflexive, more concern on civil society, civil right, minority interest, fairness, localisation, social enterprise, and sustainable life, and that forms the bottom-line of the new generation. In some areas, this bottom-line is collided with the current “Boundaries of Accepted Behavior”. It creates the condition for the changes. Mary Douglas further explained these changes as breaking of rules or norms by looking for “Binary Opposition and Possibilities”, the rule breakers are standing at the liminal stage or have already gone beyond them. All margins are dangerous, if they are pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any system of ideas is vulnerable at its boundary, it is our “Frontier”, as know as the “Battleground”.

Each of our young exhibitors is unique and having their own characteristics on architectural design or art creation with the new moral value and they are the new driving force of our society. They understand the latest trend and are equipped with advance technology. During their practice as an architect or an artist, they are consistently facing difficulties with their creation in order to survive. In response to our curatorial statement regarding the definition of our “Frontier” [Battleground], they will be looking into the Thirty-Six Stratagems and select one stratagem to demonstrate how he or she would succeed in their own battleground at the frontier of architecture or art. We want to hear their stories and their approach to the social responsibility, by reducing the gap between the private demands and public needs in the field of architecture and art. The ancient Chinese war strategies are often referring to modern business strategies and published not only in China but translated into foreign languages and published worldwide as bestsellers. The Thirty-Six Stratagems [三十六計] was a Chinese essay used to illustrate a series of stratagems used in politics, war, and civil interaction. The Thirty-Six Stratagems are divided into a preface, six chapters containing six stratagems each, and an afterword. The first three chapters generally describe tactics for use in advantageous situations, whereas the last three chapters contain stratagems that are more suitable for disadvantageous situations. Each proverb is accompanied by a short

comment, no longer than a sentence or two that explains how the said proverb is applicable to military tactics. These thirty-six Chinese proverbs are related to thirty-six battle scenarios in Chinese history and folklore, predominantly of the Warring States Period and the Three Kingdoms Period. The Thirty-Six Stratagems consists of 6 chapters and each chapter consists of 6 stratagems; Chapter 1: Winning Stratagems [勝戰計], Chapter 2: Enemy Dealing Stratagems [敵戰計], Chapter 3: Attacking Stratagems [攻戰計], Chapter 4: Chaos Stratagems [混戰計], Chapter 5: Proximate Stratagems [並戰計] and Chapter 6: Desperate Stratagems [敗戰計].

More about Stratagems in Architecture: Hong Kong in Venice

<http://2016.venicebiennale.hk/>

Themes of the past Hong Kong Exhibitions

2006 - VICE VERSA: displacing Acts, Lives and Thresholds of a Hyper City

2008 - Making of the Hong Kong Exhibition and the Making of Hong Kong

2010 - Quotidian Architecture

2012 - Inter Cities / Intra Cities: Ghostwriting the Future

2014 - Fundamentally Hong Kong? Delta Four 1984 - 2044

“Stratagems in Architecture: Hong Kong in Venice”

Collateral Event of 15th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Dates 27th May 2016 4:30 pm (Opening of Hong Kong Exhibition)

26th -27th May 2016 (Preview)

28th May – 27th November 2016 (Open to public)

Venue: Campo della Tana, Castello 2126, 30122 Venice

(opposite the main entrance of Arsenale)

Photos

Photo 1



Renowned architect and calligrapher Mr. Chung Wah Nan, HKIA past President, wrote the Chinese theme of the HK Exhibition, wishing the Hong Kong Exhibition a success in the La Biennale di Venezia. Left to right: Prof. Bernard Lim, JP, Chairperson of Biennale Steering Committee, Mr. Stanley Siu, Chief Curator, Ms Christine Chie, Senior Manager (Industry Support) of CreateHK, Mr. William Tseng, Chairman of The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Biennale Foundation, Ms. Winsome Chow, Chief Executive of The Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Mr. Vincent Ng, Chairman of The Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Topaz Sponsor - Mr Alan Au, General Manager, and Mr. Steven Tam, Project Manager, of Free Form Construction Co. Ltd.

Photo 2



Mr. Stanley Siu, Chief Curator, introduces the curatorial statement.

Photo 3



Officiating guests and curatorial team of the “Stratagems in Architecture,” Upper left to right: Mr. Aden Chan, Prof. Bernard Lim, JP, Mr. Stanley Siu, Ms. Christine Chie, Mr. William Tseng, Ms. Winsome Chow, Mr. Vincent Ng, Mr. Alan Au, Mr. Steven Tam. Lower left to right: Mr. Paul Yip, Mr. Kenneth Tse, Mr. Angus Ngai, Mr. So Kwok Kin, Mr. Sunny Yung

Chief Curator – Stanley Siu

Stanley Siu received his Bachelor of Architecture from UNITEC School of Architecture. He has practiced as an architect on a number of residential, commercial, master planning, cultural and sustainability projects in Hong Kong and Overseas.

Stanley has received the Young Architect Awards 2013 organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects. In 2012, Stanley founded the international awards winning Hong Kong based architectural firm Daydreamers Design. With the leadership of Stanley, Daydreamers Design have participated the 2013 Lantern Wonderland competition organized by the Hong Kong Tourism Board and they have received the Gold Award. The winning design “Rising Moon” was exhibited during the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Victoria Park. In 2015, Stanley was selected by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects as the curator for their first overseas architecture exhibition in Taiwan, “Past. Present. Future. – Tracking Hong Kong Architecture.” Within the same year, Stanley was appointed the Chief Curator for the 15th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition – Hong Kong Exhibition “Stratagems In Architecture, Hong Kong In Venice”.

As the chairman of the Community Development Committee, Stanley helped organizing a number of major events for the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in collaboration with other Non-Profit Organisations. In 2013, Stanley became partner and curator at 100ft Park, an artist run space aiming to provide an open platform for the local young artists to share their creative thoughts.

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Biennale Foundation

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Biennale Foundation is a nonprofit making organization established and incorporated in 2014 for charitable purposes. The objects for which the Biennale Foundation is established are:

- To promote creativity and advance the understanding, appreciation and interest of architectural and design excellence
- To encourage cross-border and cross-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration between creative professionals from Hong Kong, Greater China region and overseas
- To support art, design, architectural and cultural education for students and youth, the community, and policy makers
- To create a favourable environment for study, research and experimentation of design, art and architectural works in an exhibition scale
- To energise and revitalize specific sites of interests by introduction of cultural and creative events

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Established in 1995, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) is a statutory body set up by the Government to support the broad development of the arts in Hong Kong. The major roles of HKADC are to fund, support and promote the broad development of the arts including literary arts, performing arts, visual arts as well as film and media arts in Hong Kong. Aiming to foster a thriving arts environment and enhancing the quality of life of the public, the HKADC is also committed to facilitating communitywide participation in the arts and arts education, encouraging arts criticism, enhancing arts administration and strengthening the work on cultural policy research. The HKADC has taken part in the Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition since 2006.

Create Hong Kong of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Create Hong Kong (CreateHK) is a dedicated office set up by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to spearhead the development of Hong Kong's creative industries. Set up in June 2009, CreateHK co-ordinates the Government policy regarding creative industries, focuses Government's resources catering for the promotion and speeding up of the development of creative industries in Hong Kong, and works closely with the trade to boost the development of creative industries. CreateHK has been sponsoring the Hong Kong Exhibition of the Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition since 2010 to promote the Hong Kong architecture sector.

Organisers

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Biennale Foundation
香港建築師學會 雙年展基金會



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*This press release is issued by A-World Consulting Limited on behalf of The Hong Kong Institution of Architects Biennale Foundation and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

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