

For Immediate Release

The 2nd Hong Kong International Cultural Summit Gathers Global Cultural Leaders at WestK for Dialogues and Partnerships from 22 to 23 March 2026

The Summit will be the first international event that kicks off the Hong Kong Art Week 2026



Arts and cultural visionaries and thought leaders from around the world gathered at the West Kowloon Cultural District for the Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2024.

(26 February 2026, Hong Kong) The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD) is pleased to announce that the second edition of the Hong Kong International Cultural Summit (HKICS or the Summit) will be held in the West Kowloon Cultural District from 22 to 23 March 2026. Building on the success of its 2024 debut, HKICS 2026 will bring together close to 30 eminent speakers from 15 countries and regions, including heads of major cultural districts and top international arts and cultural institutions, to engage in constructive dialogue and exchange on key issues affecting the future development of arts and culture globally. The two-day Summit is expected to attract thousands of participants from Hong Kong and beyond.

A New Era: Reimagining Community through the Arts

The theme of the HKICS 2026 is “**A New Era: Reimagining Community through the Arts**”. Cultural leaders and experts from across the globe will share insights on topical issues such as the challenges and opportunities facing multidisciplinary arts districts; reimagining the relationship between the arts, community and leadership; the evolving role of learning in 21st-century museums; and how museums can engage the community and embrace entrepreneurship. A central focus of these discussions will be the integration of sustainable development within the arts and cultural sector, focusing on how cultural practices can enhance public engagement and foster social cohesion.

In anticipation of the impending completion of the WestK Performing Arts Centre (WestK PAC), this year's Summit features an expanded panel discussion programme that includes a new session dedicated to the performing arts. Participants will explore how performing arts institutions can redefine their relationships with communities to remain relevant as they transition from traditional performance venues to dynamic cultural hubs.

Bernard Charnwut Chan, Chairman of the Board of the WKCD says, "The Hong Kong International Cultural Summit (HKICS) has emerged as a premier international event in the arts and culture sector. Following its successful debut in March 2024, we aim to solidify its status as a flagship gathering on the global cultural calendar, sparking transformative discussions within arts communities worldwide. The new edition of HKICS will feature a distinguished lineup of cultural institutions and visionary leaders, highlighting WestK's pivotal role in the global arts landscape and its robust international network. With the impending completion of the WestK Performing Arts Centre, WestK will continue to elevate Hong Kong's standing as a leading arts and cultural hub in Asia and strengthen the city's positioning as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange."

Preceded by a welcome dinner at the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM) on 22 March 2026, the Summit will feature an opening and plenary session at the Xiqu Centre on 23 March morning, followed by five themed panels to be held at the Xiqu Centre, M+ and the HKPM on the same day. The Summit is expected to attract thousands of delegates from around the world, participating either in person or virtually, with live streaming available on multiple platforms.

Programme for Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026:

23 March 2026 (Monday) 09:15 – 11:00 (Xiqu Centre)

Opening 09:15 – 09:45

***Opening Plenary: Multi-disciplinary Arts Districts in the 21st Century – Challenges and Opportunities* 09:45 – 11:00**

Speakers:

Elaine Bedell	Chief Executive, Southbank Centre, United Kingdom
Adrian Ellis	Chair, Global Cultural Districts Network
Douglas Gautier	CEO, Royal Arts Complex, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Dr Mariët Westermann	Director and CEO, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum & Foundation, United States

Moderator:

Betty Fung	CEO, West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, HKSAR
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23 March 2026 (Monday) 11:20 – 12:35 (Xiqu Centre)

Performing Arts Panel Discussion

Panel Discussion: Arts, Community and Leadership – Reframing the Relationship

Speakers:

Sir Alistair Spalding CBE	Artistic Director and Co-Chief Executive, Sadler's Wells, United Kingdom
Rachid Ouramdane	Director, Chaillot – National Theatre of Dance, Choreographer, Dancer, France

Toufic Maatouk Artistic Programming Advisor, Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation, Conductor, Musicologist, United Arab Emirates

Sasapin Siriwanij Artistic Director, Bangkok International Performing Arts Meeting, Thailand

Moderator:
Paul Tam Executive Director, Performing Arts, West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, HKSAR

23 March 2026 (Monday) 14:30 – 15:50 & 16:20 – 17:30 (M+)

Panel Discussion on The Role of Learning in 21st Century Museums

Panel Discussion (I): Building a Community for the Museum (14:30 – 15:50)

Speakers:
Jochen Volz General Director, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brazil
Dr Manal Ataya Advisor, Sharjah Museums Authority, United Arab Emirates
Fatima Bintou Rassoul Sy Director of Programmes, RAW Material Company, Senegal
Karen Smith Head, Academic Programmes, De Ying Foundation, China

Moderator:
Suhanya Raffel Museum Director, M+, HKSAR

Panel Discussion (II): The Positioning and Value of Museum Learning (16:20 – 17:30)

Speakers:
Christophe Cherix David Rockefeller Director, The Museum of Modern Art, United States
Seb Chan Director and CEO, Australian Center for the Moving Image, Australia
Devyani Saltzman Director for Arts, Barbican Centre, United Kingdom
Dr Carol Yinghua Lu Director, Inside-Out Art Museum, China

Moderator:
Dr András Szántó New York-based cultural strategy consultant and author, United States

23 March 2026 (Monday) 14:30 – 15:50 & 16:20 – 17:30 (Hong Kong Palace Museum)

Panel Discussion: Museums at the Crossroads: Fostering Community and Embracing Entrepreneurship

Panel Discussion (I): Knowing Our Audiences: Shaping Community-Centred Museums (14:30 – 15:50)

Speakers:
Lynley Crosswell CEO and Director, Museums Victoria, Australia
Dr Sharon Shaffer Principal of Early Learning in Museums, United States
Dr Hiroyuki Shimatani Executive Director, The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan, Japan
Dr Simone Verde Director, Uffizi Galleries, Italy

Moderator:
Dr Louis Ng Museum Director, Hong Kong Palace Museum, HKSAR

Panel Discussion (II): Entrepreneurship and Innovations in Museums (16:20 – 17:30)

Speakers:
Dr Chu Xiaobo Director, Shanghai Museum, China

Dr Bernd Ebert	Director General, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany
Manuel Rabaté	Chief Executive and Director, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, India
Moderator:	
Lou Wei	Executive Deputy Director, The Palace Museum, China

Fruitful Partnerships from the Inaugural Edition

The first edition of the HKICS in 2024 marked the beginning of WKCDA's comprehensive global partnership efforts, facilitating the signing of 21 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with leading arts and cultural institutions worldwide. This foundational step led to an expanded network of partnerships, increasing the total number of MOUs to 34 to date. Notable projects resulting from these collaborations include:

- **“I. M. Pei: Life Is Architecture”** special exhibition toured to ALRIWAQ in Doha, Qatar, co-presented by M+ and Qatar Museums (QM), organised by M+ (From October 2025 to February 2026)
- **“Wonders of Imperial Carpets: Masterpieces from the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha”** special exhibition, co-organised by the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM) and the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (From June to October 2025)
- **“The Hong Kong Jockey Club Series: Picasso for Asia—A Conversation”** special exhibition, co-organised by M+ and Musée national Picasso-Paris (From March to July 2025)
- **“The Hong Kong Jockey Club Series: Treasures of the Mughal Court from the Victoria and Albert Museum”** special exhibition, co-organised by HKPM and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) (From August 2025 to February 2026)
- **“Janet Cardiff: The Forty Part Motet”**, the first project realised by M+ and MoMA, debuting in August 2026

The new edition of the Summit in 2026 will forge additional partnerships for WKCDA with global institutions in diverse areas, including co-production and touring of exhibitions and performances, as well as educational and exchange programmes for art administrators and artists across the HKPM, M+ and WestK Performing Arts.

Launching Hong Kong Art Week: The Summit Provides Exclusive Access to HKPM, M+, WestK Performing Arts Programmes and Other Cultural Highlights

The Summit will be the first international event launching the Hong Kong Art Week in late March, coinciding with the vibrant celebrations of Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Central, and other major arts and cultural spectacles. The Summit participants will immerse themselves in the rich cultural tapestry of Hong Kong, enjoying complimentary access and exclusive tours at HKPM and M+, participate in the annual WestK FunFest by WestK Performing Arts where they can enjoy the large-scale outdoor art installation at the Harbourside East Lawn, Art Park, along with visits to other prominent cultural institutions and events that showcase the city's artistic spirit.

WKCDCA extends its heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors whose generous support makes the Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026 possible. These include the **Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau of the HKSAR Government**; **Cathay**, Major Sponsor of the Summit as well as WKCDCA's Exclusive Travel Partner; **The Peninsula Hong Kong**, Hotel Partner, **HKT**, Technology Partner, and **Volvo**, Limousine Partner of the Summit respectively.

WKCDCA will collaborate closely with the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Information Services Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the HKSAR Government and Art Basel in publicising the Summit and "Hong Kong Art Week". This concerted effort aims to elevate Hong Kong's international profile as a cultural hub and a premier cultural tourism destination.

For programme details, please refer to the Summit website: <https://www.culturalsummit.hk>

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About the West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK)

WestK is one of the largest and most ambitious cultural hubs in the world and Hong Kong's new cultural tourism landmark, spanning 40 hectares alongside Victoria Harbour. WestK comprises a mix of landmark arts and cultural facilities, including world-class museums M+ and the Hong Kong Palace Museum, intricately designed performing arts venues the Xiqu Centre and Freespace, the 11-hectare Art Park with a waterfront promenade, and the upcoming WestK Performing Arts Centre.

Hosting over 1,000 exhibitions, performances, programmes, and events each year, WestK provides a vital platform for both emerging and established artists. WestK welcomes more than 10 million visitors each year, evolving as the international cultural brand of Hong Kong and strengthening the city's strategic role as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.