

For Immediate Release

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority signs Memoranda of Understanding with 12 leading arts and cultural institutions worldwide ahead of the Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026



The MOU Signing Ceremony and Welcome Dinner at the Hong Kong Palace Museum ushered in the Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026, the first international event that kicks off the Hong Kong Art Week 2026

(22 March 2026, Hong Kong) The West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK), one of the world's largest and most ambitious cultural hubs and Hong Kong's cultural tourism landmark, today welcomed over 150 leaders and visionaries from major cultural districts and top international arts and cultural institutions to attend the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signing Ceremony and the Welcome Dinner of the Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026 (HKICS) at the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM). The events raised the curtain of the second edition of the HKICS hosted by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA or the Authority) from 22 to 23 March 2026.

The MOU Signing Ceremony today celebrated WKCDA's commitment to global connectivity and its expansion of partnerships with 12 leading arts and cultural institutions from the Chinese Mainland and across the globe, including Australia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, United Kingdom, and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The MOUs cover diverse areas, including programme development, talent exchange and professional training. Major highlights include the strategic alliances formed by WestK Performing Arts Division with distinguished groups

and institutions in preparation for the opening of the WestK Performing Arts Centre (WestK PAC) in 2027, the co-organisation of high-quality exhibitions by the Hong Kong Palace Museum and its new partnering museums, and professional training programmes and the Artist-in-Residence Programme organised by the newly established WestK Academy in conjunction with world-renowned cultural and educational institutions to nurture global artistic talents.

At the MOU Signing Ceremony, **Bernard Charnwut Chan, Chairman of the Board of the WKCDA**, underscored the Authority's commitment to strengthening global cultural connectivity through establishing long-term partnerships and collaboration. He said, "Building on the momentum of the inaugural Summit in 2024, the signing of 12 new MOUs marks another significant milestone in expanding WestK's international partnership network. These collaborations translate shared vision into action by supporting high quality programmes, talent exchange and professional development. Together, they reinforce Hong Kong's position as a leading international arts and cultural hub and bring lasting impact to the sustainable development of the industry."

Following the ceremony, over 120 guests attended the Welcome Dinner at the HKPM, with Vivian Sum, Permanent Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Bernard Charnwut Chan, Chairman of the Board of the WKCDA as the Guests of Honour. The dinner featured an insightful Fireside Chat between Shirley Surya, Curator, Design & Architecture, M+ and Boonserm Premthada, Founder, Bangkok Project Studio. Guests also enjoyed a series of captivating performances presented by WestK, including a Chinese music performance by Hong Kong Gaudeamus Dunhuang Ensemble and a jazz performance by Joyce Cheung Trio.

WKCDA boasts 46 global partnerships with the addition of new MOUs signed today

Over the past few years, 34 MOUs and collaborative agreements were signed between WKCDA and esteemed arts and cultural institutions around the world. With the new additions of 12 MOUs signed between Hong Kong Palace Museum, Performing Arts Division and the newly established WestK Academy, WestK has proudly established 46 international partnerships to date.

Key new partnerships:

- WestK Performing Arts Division is forging strategic alliances with five distinguished groups and institutions to strengthen programme development, talent exchange and professional training, in preparation for the impending opening of the WestK PAC in 2027.
- The HKPM will collaborate with new museum partners to co-organise more high-quality exhibitions, further deepening cultural collaboration between Hong Kong and partner institutions.

- Organised under the WestK Academy established in late 2025 with the aim of advancing WKCDA’s mission to foster global connectivity, nurture talent and build professional capacity across the local and global arts and culture sector:
 - WKCDA will partner with China Association of Auctioneers to strengthen talent development and promote professional exchange between Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland art market.
 - Agreements signed with overseas cultural organisations and universities will support the launch of a series of professional training courses and the pilot Artist-in-Residence Programme.

Full List of the 12 New MOUs Announced Today (22 March):

Collaboration on Exhibitions and Other Programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museums Victoria, Australia • Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany
Performing Arts Programme Exchange and Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanghai International Dance Center, China • Chaillot - National Theatre of Dance, France • Factory International, United Kingdom • Sadler’s Wells, United Kingdom • Studio Wayne McGregor, United Kingdom
Artist-in-Residence Pilot Programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech Academy of Visual Art, Czech Republic • Misk Art Institute, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Arts Management Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, United Kingdom • RMIT University, Australia
Arts Trading Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China Association of Auctioneers (CAA), China

A New Era: Reimagining Community through the Arts

Opening tomorrow (23 March), the Summit will be attended by over a thousand delegates from Hong Kong, Chinese Mainland and overseas. Live streaming will be available on WestK’s YouTube channel, the Hong Kong Palace Museum’s WeChat Channels, the Summit’s website, and the Zaiyi app and website, enabling virtual participation from around the world.

This year’s Summit, with the theme “**A New Era: Reimagining Community through the Arts**”, is the first international event that kicks off the Hong Kong Art Week 2026, bringing together close to 30 eminent speakers from 14 countries and regions, including heads of major cultural districts and top international arts and cultural institutions, to engage in constructive dialogue

on key issues affecting the future development of arts and culture globally. 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. The Summit is expected to attract thousands of participants from Hong Kong and beyond.

Programme for Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026:

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 OBE	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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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
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14:30 – 15:45 & 16:15 – 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 – 15:45)

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
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Panel Discussion (II): The Positioning and Value of Museum Learning (16:15 – 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
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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

Moderator:

Dr Louis Ng	Museum Director, Hong Kong Palace Museum, HKSAR
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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
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Launching Hong Kong Art Week: The Summit Provides Exclusive Access to HKPM, M+, WestK Performing Arts Programmes and Other Cultural Highlights

The Summit is the first major 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 the 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 and WKCDCA's Travel Partner; **The Peninsula Hong Kong**, Hotel Partner, **HKT**, Technology Partner, and **Volvo**, Limousine Partner of the Summit respectively. **South China Morning Post**, and **The Art Newspaper** are the Media Partners of the Summit.

The Authority collaborates 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 premier cultural tourism destination.

For details, please refer to the Summit's website: www.culturalsummit.hk

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Notes to Editor

Appendix 1 – Highlighted Programmes of WestK in Hong Kong Art Week 2026

Appendix 2 – Insights from speakers and moderators on the HKICS 2026

Appendix 3 – Hong Kong International Cultural Summit 2026 – Image sheet

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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.