

OUTLOOK 展望



The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD or the Authority) believes in the power of the arts to connect people. Artistic experiences become even more important during periods of crisis. In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, WKCD responded quickly and assuredly to keep its various projects on track, provide valuable opportunities for the local arts community and maintain as much as possible a steady stream of quality programming. Indeed, public organisations must be able to adapt to the 'new normal' in order to survive and thrive, and the Authority is doing everything it can – especially in these unprecedented times – to deliver on its vision of building a world-class integrated arts and cultural district.

One example of WKCD's efforts is the expansion of its online offerings to accommodate arts enthusiasts who have been avoiding public gatherings and staying at home. During the year in review, the Authority made a collection of dance films available on the West Kowloon Cultural District's (West Kowloon or the District) website and began live-streaming music programmes from Freespace. M+ made the inaugural Sigg Prize announcement online, which was accompanied by videos of the Sigg Prize 2019 exhibition. M+ also created a dedicated webpage with enriched digital contents and learning resources for convenient access by users. Such initiatives have received an encouraging response, and the Authority will continue to explore ways to deliver quality arts and cultural programming digitally.

西九文化區管理局(管理局)深信藝術擁有一股蘊藏力量，能夠將人與人連繫起來。藝術能夠給予我們各種體驗和感受，當遇到危機時，藝術變得尤其重要。在2019冠狀病毒病疫情爆發之後，管理局迅速果斷應變，既盡力確保各工程項目如期推進，同時繼續為本地藝術界提供寶貴機會，盡可能維持上演各項高質素的節目活動。在疫情下，公營機構必須要適應「新常態」以保持運作和發展，在這前所未見的逆境當前，管理局竭盡所能，繼續實踐將西九文化區(西九)打造成世界級綜合藝術文化區的願景。

管理局其中一項應對逆境的方案是在疫情期間為足不出戶的藝術愛好者提供了加強版和更豐富的網上內容。在回顧年度內，西九網站放映了一系列舞蹈電影，並透過串流直播呈獻自由空間的現場音樂表演。另一方面，M+亦以網上形式揭曉「希克獎2019」得獎結果，並於網上放映「希克獎2019」展覽的影片。此外，M+更特設專屬網頁，提供豐富的數碼內容和學習資源，方便用戶欣賞和使用。以上種種安排均獲得好評如潮，管理局將繼續探索更多不同方式，於網上提供更多優質的數碼化藝術文化節目。

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The Authority has been supporting the arts and cultural industry throughout these difficult times by providing rehearsal spaces when none other were available and by commissioning new works. With the voluntary salary contributions of its senior executive team and a generous donation from the Chairman of the WKCD Board, the Authority also initiated the Arts Relief Scheme 2020, a time-limited response fund amounting to approximately HK\$3 million, to support local artists affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Xiqu Centre and Freespace have provided us with invaluable experience in operating premier arts and cultural institutions. West Kowloon has continued to focus on the preparations for the launch of more world-class arts and cultural facilities that will come on stream over the next few years. M+, one of the largest museums of modern and contemporary visual culture in the world, will begin welcoming members of the public from 2021. The Hong Kong Palace Museum, which will exhibit some of the most significant works from the Palace Museum collection, is scheduled to open in mid-2022. The years ahead will also see the opening of the Lyric Theatre Complex as well as more food and beverage offerings. All these facilities promise to further transform the District into a vibrant place where arts and culture lovers, visitors and the general public can enjoy and experience.

The execution of the Land Grant by the Government in April 2020 was a momentous milestone in the development of West Kowloon, enabling the Authority to take the project forward as an integrated arts and cultural district combined with Hotel/Office/Residential features. All these future dynamic offerings are critical to help generate recurrent income to sustain West Kowloon's operations in the long term. In the meantime, the Authority has to address a widening structural operating deficit resulting from the multiple new venues that are coming onstream over the next few years. WKCD has worked dutifully to tighten cost controls and seek new sources of revenue, but the impact of the global pandemic – including disrupted show schedules and food and beverages operations, less income from donations and fewer sponsorship opportunities – remains a challenge.

It is impossible to know with any degree of certainty when the pandemic will come to an end. However, WKCD is confident that with the continued support of the local arts and culture sector and the wider Hong Kong community, the District's long-term prospects remain bright. The Authority will continue to monitor the pandemic situation closely, and to respond swiftly and effectively as it fulfils its commitments to develop the capacity of Hong Kong's arts and culture, build the District's audience base, engage the community, and inspire the city's youth. It will also continue to collaborate with local and international talent and organisations to bring the very best of the arts to Hong Kong.

The immediate task is the preparation for the M+ opening. In spite of these extremely challenging times, the Authority is hoping to welcome everyone to the museum in 2021 so that together we can celebrate another significant achievement safely, healthily and with confidence in the state-of-the-art museum of visual culture in the world.

管理局一直與藝術文化界同行，共渡時艱。當全城節目場地難求，我們盡力為業界提供排演空間，並委約藝術工作者創作新作品。另外，高級行政團隊自願扣減薪酬，加上管理局董事局主席的慷慨捐助，管理局設立了「藝術紓困計劃2020」，透過這筆總額近300萬港元的有時限性款項，幫助受2019冠狀病毒病疫情影響的本地藝術工作者。

戲曲中心和自由空間的啟用，為我們提供了營運一流藝術文化場地的寶貴經驗。西九會繼續專注籌備推展更多世界級首屈一指的藝術文化設施，而這些設施將於未來數年相繼落成。首先，M+作為全球最大的現代與當代視覺文化博物館之一，將於2021年開幕。香港故宮文化博物館亦將於2022年年中開幕，並將會展出一系列故宮博物院珍藏瑰寶。其後未來數年，還有演藝綜合劇場，以及更豐富多元的餐飲設施陸續投入服務。由此可見，西九將逐步邁進，成為一個充滿活力的地區，讓藝術文化愛好者、訪客和市民大眾盡情享受和體驗。

政府於2020年4月簽立批地文件，是西九發展一個重要里程碑，讓管理局繼續推進項目發展，成為一個融合酒店/辦公室/住宅發展的綜合藝術文化區，為管理局帶來經常性收入，這亦是支持西九長遠營運和可持續發展的關鍵。與此同時，隨著未來數年多個新場地陸續投入營運，管理局正面對結構性營運赤字持續擴大。管理局已加大力度控制成本，並積極開拓新的收入來源，但受到這場蔓延全球的疫情影響（包括表演節目改期或取消、餐飲設施營運暫停、捐款收入和贊助機會大減），未來仍然充滿挑戰。

雖然我們不能預知疫情何時結束，但管理局有信心在本地藝術文化界及全港市民大眾的持續支持下，西九的長遠前景仍然光明。管理局會繼續密切留意疫情發展，迅速和有效應對，繼續履行西九的承諾，促進香港藝術文化發展、拓展觀眾群、鼓勵社區參與，以及啟發本地青年的創作。西九會繼續與本地及國際藝術專才和機構合作，將最優秀精彩的藝術帶到香港。

我們目前的首要任務是要為M+開幕做好準備。即使面對種種困難挑戰，管理局有信心和期望能夠於2021年，於這所全球首屈一指的視覺文化博物館歡迎大家，一起健康平安慶祝西九另一個重要成果。