

Remaking Central through Public and Community Art Programme: Consultancy Research for the Art Promotion Office in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This is a research based consultancy report that aims to advice the Art Promotion Office (APO), the public art authority in the Hong Kong government, to upgrade the image of the Central area and advance community cultural development through a public and community art programme. It is based on the literature that conceptualizes public and community art as publically accessible artworks with a high degree of publicness as opposed to traditional monuments and utilizes the principles and theories in the fields of cultural studies, public art planning and management, urban design, policies for community cultural development, and community art project programming. The presumed imaginative scenario of the project is that the Hong Kong government has decided to redevelop Central and the APO has commissioned this consultation project.

A pre-plan research was conducted that systematically surveys public artworks by employing a two-cluster sampling method and an innovative matrix for assessment. This pre-plan research reveals the genres, publicness and the effectiveness of the current artworks in current Central, based on which, five key problems have been identified and the vision for New Central are identified. The output of this consultancy report covers advices on both levels of governmental structuring and the New Central programme with rich empirical implications.

What follows are a number of key advices as the output of research: set up a new governmental agency for public art planning within the urban planning board; implement the "percent for art" mechanism to boost the quantity of public artworks; adopt both redevelopment and zoning model for public art planning; improve the public art administration system by enhancing community participation, public art education and community outreach. Also, Lynch's five-component-framework for urban image building has been innovatively applied to public art development programme. A sculpture park and three public art corridors are suggested in addition to a number of landmarks and nodes. Furthermore, it advises the way of improving policies for community cultural development, such as increasing material support, building cultural infrastructure and networks, enhancing community awareness and advancing cultural democracy. Computer-aided illustrations of public artworks and their sites as well as a community art project plan are included to showcase suggested artworks and development.

Keywords: public art, Central in Hong Kong, urban design, public art management