

For Immediate Release

First exhibition exploring Hong Kong popular culture to go on show at M+ Pavilion

Ambiguously Yours: Gender in Hong Kong Popular Culture

M+ Pavilion

17 March– 21 May, 2017



Stanley Wong, Poster, *Chung King Express*, 1994, M+ Collection. Courtesy of M+, Hong Kong

(21 February 2017, Hong Kong) M+, the museum of visual culture in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District, is pleased to announce ***Ambiguously Yours: Gender in Hong Kong Popular Culture***, the museum's first exhibition exploring popular culture through the aesthetics of androgyny and gender fluidity, and the dynamic interplay with visual art, design and moving image. *Ambiguously Yours* will run from 17 March to 21 May, 2017, and is the third exhibition to be presented at the M+ Pavilion, a

permanent space on the West Kowloon site that hosts the museum's exhibitions leading up to the opening of the M+ building in late 2019.

Featuring over 90 works dating from the 1960s to 2016, *Ambiguously Yours* focuses in particular on the 1980s and 1990s, widely recognised as the heyday of Hong Kong popular culture, to look at how the widespread experimentation and creativity of that period has had a lasting influence on the visual culture of today. The exhibition showcases works from the M+ Collection, and those on loan from prestigious local institutions, private collectors, and artists to show how ideas around male and female roles and behaviours were routinely challenged in popular culture, creating a daring and pluralistic platform upon which the aesthetics of androgyny and gender ambiguity proliferated.

Ambiguously Yours is made up of four main sections:

The exhibition opens with the iconic concert costumes of Cantopop legends Roman Tam and Anita Mui, alongside more contemporary artists such as singer and actor Denise Ho. Designed by renowned local fashion designers including Eddie Lau and Silvio Chan, these outfits, alongside the work of Hong Kong icon Leslie Cheung, demonstrate that performances depicting fluid ideas around gender, cross-dressing, and flamboyance can be considered both counter-cultural or subversive and widely popular and beloved.

In the second section, the exhibition presents a selection of film clips that explore the narrative plurality of Hong Kong cinema during the economic boom of the late 1980s and 1990s, including Stanley Kwan's classic story, *Rouge* (1988), through to Wong Kar-wai's *Chungking Express* (1994), to analyse how narrative and theatrical tropes have been used in film to address societal attitudes to male and female roles in contemporary life.

The relationship between popular culture and the field of graphic design is then examined through a wide range of media, including album cover designs, City Magazine covers and photography. This section celebrates the collaborative and creative nature of art directing and graphic design through the work of artists like Alan Chan, Wing Shya, William Chang Suk-ping, and another mountain man, and explores how gender served as a means of design innovation.

The final section of the exhibition explores popular culture as a rich source of inspiration for artists through a selection of works from the M+ Collection. Wilson Shieh's depiction of the Hong Kong skyline encourages a new reading of the city's most recognizable buildings, while Ho Sin Tung and Ming Wong pay homage to the experience of cinema. The collages of Japanese pop artist Keiichi Tanaami explore the instability of meaning in the age of mass communication, while the work of Singaporean designer Theseus Chan draws on multiple influences in his magazine designs.

Ambiguously Yours: Gender in Hong Kong Popular Culture is curated by Tina Pang, Curator, Hong Kong Visual Culture; Chloe Chow, Assistant Curator, Hong Kong Visual Culture; and Janis Law, Curatorial Assistant, Moving Image, with Dr Chow Yiu-fai and Dr Ng Chun-hung as curatorial advisors.

Suhanya Raffel, Executive Director of M+, said: "The M+ Pavilion program has provided a perfect on site location in West Kowloon to present an ongoing series of exhibitions that addresses M+'s curatorial interests. *Ambiguously Yours* sees our curators develop an exhibition that presents new perspectives on a very familiar and beloved period of Hong Kong cinema and popular culture. I am certain that this exhibition will be another profound stepping stone in our museum's mission to increase knowledge with both local and international audiences."

"In this exhibition, we wanted to recognise the creative experimentation that flourished in relation to popular culture of the 1980s and 1990s in Hong Kong by presenting it through a fresh new perspective;

one that has great contemporary relevance,” said **Tina Pang, Curator, Hong Kong Visual Culture**. “Bringing together talented individuals from the fields of art, design, fashion, music, theatre, film and advertising, the entertainment industry was pioneering in its multidisciplinary nature, and drew naturally upon influences from the avant-garde to Cantonese opera. It was this creative dynamism that contributed to the regional and international success of Hong Kong’s Cantopop and film industries. *Ambiguously Yours* is an exciting opportunity for local audiences to reconsider familiar works through the lens of contemporary ideas about gender politics, while also introducing new audiences beyond Hong Kong to some of our greatest performers and actors.”

“*Ambiguously Yours* looks at various artistic representations of gender ambiguity and fluidity as a starting point in examining the ways through which Hong Kong popular culture popularises, deepens, and shapes the notion of mainstream gender stereotype,” said **Chloe Chow, Assistant Curator, Hong Kong Visual Culture**.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Period:

17 March– 21 May, 2017

11 am – 6 pm

Wednesday to Sunday and public holidays

Location:

M+ Pavilion, WKCD

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Notes to Editors

About M+

Hong Kong’s museum for visual culture – encompassing twentieth and twenty-first century art, design, and architecture, and moving image from Hong Kong, China, Asia, and beyond – M+ will be one of the largest museums of 20th and 21st century visual culture in the world. Located adjacent to the park on the waterfront, the museum building, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, is scheduled to open in 2019.

About West Kowloon Cultural District

Located on Hong Kong’s Victoria Harbour, the West Kowloon Cultural District is one of the largest cultural projects in the world. Its vision is to create a vibrant new cultural quarter for Hong Kong. With a complex of theatres, performance spaces, and M+, the West Kowloon Cultural District will produce and host world-class exhibitions, performances, and cultural events, as well as provide 23 hectares of public open space, including a two kilometre waterfront promenade.

Curators:

Tina Pang

Tina Pang is Curator, Hong Kong Visual Culture at M+, Hong Kong’s museum of visual culture located in the West Kowloon Cultural District, a position that she has held since 2014. Prior to joining M+ she was curator at the University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong, and honorary assistant professor in the Department of Fine Arts where she taught museum studies and Chinese material culture. She was a 2010 recipient of the Lee Hysan Foundation Fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council to

research curatorial practices in the United States. Recent projects have included contributing curator to the Vancouver Art Gallery's MashUp: The Birth of Modern Culture (2016), and co-organiser with Aric Chen of M+ Matters: Confronting Activist Art and Design from a Museological Perspective (2016). Tina is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (BA Hons Chinese and Art & Archaeology), and St. Hilda's College, The University of Oxford, (MPhil Ethnology and Museum Ethnography).

Chloe Chow

Chloe Chow is Assistant Curator for Hong Kong Visual Culture at M+ where she co-curated exhibitions including *Mobile M+: NEON SIGNS.HK* (2014) and *Mobile M+: Moving Images* (2015). Previously, she served as Project Officer at the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and as Museum Trainee at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, organising exhibitions and projects including *Revitalising the Glorious Tradition: The Retrospective Exhibition of Pan Tianshou's Art* (2011), *Imperishable Affection: The Art of Feng Zikai* (2012), *All Are Guests – Hong Kong at the Liverpool Biennial 2012* and *Shenzhen · Hong Kong Creative Arts Festival* (2012). Chow received his BA in Arts (Double major in Fine Art and Comparative Literature) from the University of Hong Kong and an MVA in Art Administration from the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Janis Law

Janis is currently the Curatorial Assistant for Moving Image, M+. Her first project with M+ is the ongoing screening series, *M+ Screenings*. Before working with M+, Janis was the Museum Trainee of Hong Kong Film Archive and the Education and Outreach Officer of Chung Ying Theatre. Janis holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from the University of Western Australia and an MA in Media Cultures for the City University of Hong Kong.

Curatorial Advisers:

Dr Ng Chun Hung, Honorary Associate Professor, HKU Department of Sociology

Dr. Ng grew up on a diet of mass consumption and media culture. That experience means he has a hard time trying to choose among watching television, listening to popular music, reading comic books, strolling in shopping malls and doing sociology as his favourite vocation in life. He makes a compromise and decides to specialise in the sociology of mass media and popular culture. His research interests include cultural studies and gender studies.

Dr Chow Yiu Fai, Assistant Professor, HKBU Department of Humanities and Creative Writing

Dr. Chow Yiu Fai received his Ph.D. and M.A. from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. His research fields include diaspora, gender, multiculturalism, cultural studies, critical theories, mass communications, transnationalism, and popular music. Next to his academic work, Dr. Chow writes Chinese song lyrics and other forms of creative writing.

For media enquiries

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