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M+ Celebrates 100 Years of Architect I.M. Pei with Two-part Symposium in Hong Kong and the US

Rethinking Pei: A Centenary Symposium
12–13 October 2017 (Cambridge, MA, USA)
14–15 December 2017 (Hong Kong)

(3 October 2017, Hong Kong) M+, the new museum of visual culture in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District, is pleased to announce ***Rethinking Pei: A Centenary Symposium***. Co-organised by M+ with, respectively, the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, and the Department of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong, this two-part symposium celebrates the 100th birthday year of I.M. Pei by bringing together leading scholars who will lend new insights into the acclaimed architect's life and work. The symposium will take place on 12–13 October in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA (at Harvard University), and on 14–15 December in Hong Kong (at the University of Hong Kong). The symposium is made possible by the generous support of C Foundation.

Despite his global renown and numerous iconic buildings — including the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1968–78); the Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong (1982–89); and the Louvre Pyramid in Paris (1989–93) — Pei remains a surprisingly under-researched and under-theorised figure. His six-decade career is mostly identified with his unwavering interest in cultural synthesis and the power of pure geometrical form, but his work and methods of practice offer additional opportunities for investigating their dynamic interconnection within multiple, consequential moments in the history of mid- to late 20th century architecture, and their relationships with broader phenomena.

Examining Pei's work through formal, spatial, social, cultural, and geopolitical lenses — spanning architecture and urbanism, and across the USA, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East — *Rethinking Pei: A Centenary Symposium* will assemble more than 30 speakers, including scholars selected by invitation and open call, alongside associates, colleagues, and friends of Pei. Together, the symposium's two linked conferences aim to resituate the architect from the intersecting vantage points of the international poles with which he is most closely linked: Hong Kong/China and Boston/the USA.

'It's a great privilege for us to be able to contribute to new and deeper bodies of knowledge about one of the great architects of the 20th century—one whose profound contributions are widely known, but perhaps not well-studied,' said **Aric Chen, Lead Curator, Design and Architecture, M+**. 'There's wonderful complexity to be discovered beyond the pure forms and geometries of Pei's work. He was an architect with roots in China, the USA and, in the end, the world, making him a pivotal figure for us at M+ as we investigate different vantage points for telling the narratives of architecture and visual culture.'

Commenting on the symposium, **Suhanya Raffel, Executive Director, M+**, stated: 'Since its beginnings, M+ has been committed to developing and contributing to a global museum culture through collaborations and partnerships with artists, makers, institutions, and other bodies in Hong Kong and around the world. We are excited to partner with two of the most internationally recognised academic institutions — the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University and the Department of Architecture, the University of Hong Kong — on the organisation of *Rethinking Pei: A Centenary Symposium*.'

General Information

12–13 October 2017 (Cambridge, MA, USA)
Piper Auditorium, Gund Hall
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Cambridge, MA, USA

Speakers:

Daniel M. Abramson, André Bideau, Edward Eigen, Annette Fierro, Delin Lai, Stuart Leslie, Thomas Leslie, Bill Pedersen, Leslie Robertson, Cole Roskam, Brett Schneider, Janet Adams Strong, Shirley Surya, Yvonne Szeto, Kellogg Wong

14–15 December 2017 (Hong Kong)

KB 419, Knowles Building
Department of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Speakers:

Barry Bergdoll, Chin-Wei Chang, Jiat-Hwee Chang, Yung Ho Chang, Nelson Chen, Thomas Daniell, Juan Du, Ming-Wei Huang, Seng Kuan, Bing Lin, Linfan Liu, Eric Mumford, Kamran Afshar Naderi, Sandi Pei, Sara Stevens, Calvin Tsao, Kwang-Tyng Wu, Margie Yang

For more information: www.mplus.org.hk/rethinking-pei

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Notes to Editors

About I.M. Pei

I.M. Pei (b. 1917) is one of the most celebrated architects of the 20th and 21st centuries. Born in Mainland China, Pei studied architecture in the USA, receiving his bachelor's degree from MIT in 1940 and his master's degree, under Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius, from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1946. Remaining in the USA, Pei embarked on a career that would produce such influential and widely-lauded projects as Society Hill in Philadelphia (1964), the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1978), John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston (1979), Fragrant Hill hotel in Beijing (1982), Louvre Pyramid in Paris (1989), Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong (1989), Suzhou Museum in Suzhou (2006), and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha (2008).

Pei is a recipient of architecture's prestigious Pritzker Prize. In France, he has received the Grande Médaille d'Or of the Académie d'Architecture de France, and is a Commandeur of the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur. For his services to the USA, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Medal of Arts from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum.

About M+

Hong Kong's museum for visual culture – encompassing 20th and 21st century art, design, and architecture, and moving image from Hong Kong, China, Asia, and beyond – M+ will be one of the largest museums of modern and contemporary visual culture in the world. Located adjacent to the Art 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, 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.