

Immediate Release

## West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Rolls Out *Creation for Freespace* Series to Explore Scenography, Stage Technology and Foundations of Performance

*First project, What is Stage: Dynamics of Seeing, curated by renowned Hong Kong theatre director Edward Lam provides insight into the world of acclaimed Dutch scenographer Jan Versweyveld*



Left and right: Workshop on Jan Versweyveld's Aesthetic of Scenography, image taken during the workshop. Courtesy of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority.

(7 September 2017, Hong Kong) The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD) launches a comprehensive three-year programme to help nurture talent and build audience appreciation for the theatrical arts in Hong Kong. ***Creation for Freespace: On Scenography*** – part of the *Creation for Freespace* performing arts platform devoted to the West Kowloon Cultural District's highly anticipated Freespace venue, set to open in 2019 – explores the art of scenography in theatre-making. This year's theme, ***What is Stage: Dynamics of Seeing***, is curated by renowned Hong Kong theatre director **Edward Lam** and focuses on the acclaimed Dutch scenographer **Jan Versweyveld** with a series of events that are open to theatre professionals, cross-disciplinary creators and art enthusiasts.

*Creation* is a district-wide platform launched this year to combine the WKCD's initiatives for performing artists from Hong Kong and the region under one umbrella. It encompasses programmes for artist capacity building, new works development, artist residencies, and artist-led exchange and research.

*Creation* will exist across different artistic disciplines and venues as *Creation for Freespace*, *Creation for Lyric Theatre Complex* and *Creation for Xiqu Centre*. The first series - *Creation for Freespace: On Scenography* - will feature the work of a key artist from the sector each year. The 2017 edition, *What is Stage: Dynamics of Seeing*, presents insights into the world of Versweyveld, the scenographer engaged

by renowned theatre director Ivo van Hove, who plays a major role in contemporary theatre around the world. A series of seminars, screenings and workshops have been held since June 2017 as part of this programme.

On 3 – 6 September 2017, Versweyveld hosted a workshop for local artists in Hong Kong. He will also take part in a public seminar, offering theatre enthusiasts a chance to gain a deeper understanding of his unique aesthetics of space as well as the concept of scenography, the role of a scenographer and the impact of space creating on theatre works.

Later this year, the *Creation for Freespace* series will also launch projects on stage technology and foundations of performance. Presented by WKCD in collaboration with Zuni Icosahedron, *Freespace Tech Lab* is a three-year project infusing stage technology and performing arts. Curated by Mathias Woo, the Co-artistic Director of Zuni Icosahedron, the project will explore the stage technology, manifesting the diversity of possibilities in black box theatre. This year's theme, *Sound and Space*, focuses on infusing production techniques of Soundscape and Kinetic Winch into the realm of performing arts. The Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre will be converted into an experimental venue to explore different possibilities.

WKCD, in association with Theatre du Pif, will present *The Foundations of Performance*. Curated by Sean Curran, Co-Artistic Director of Theatre du Pif, a series of events has been held to encourage participants to rethink 'what makes a performance' from different perspectives. Russell Delman, one of the first people in the world authorised to lead Feldenkrais training programmes, and Tim Crouch, renowned theatre playwright, director and performer in the United Kingdom, will be invited to come to Hong Kong to share their studies and systems of practice in intensive practical and theoretical workshops.

"The Authority's artistic strategy is to create strong works for our future venues – works that will have a longer lifespan in order to reach larger audiences," said **Louis Yu Kwok Lit, Executive Director, Performing Arts, WKCD**. "*Creation* is a place to create, to make your brain think. It is a place where you put things together and where you gather people to create with you."

"This first *Creation for Freespace* series explores the importance of scenography, which has evolved over the years, especially within the context of contemporary theatre," said **Low Kee Hong, Head of Theatre, Performing Arts, WKCD**. "Scenography goes beyond the sum of sets, props, costumes and lighting. It is a practice that is akin to the manipulation of space and time. The scenographer determines what the audience is allowed to see and how they see it."

A highlight of the first series was the four-day *Workshop on Jan Versweyveld's Aesthetic of Scenography* from 3 to 6 September, which allowed participants to meet and share ideas with Versweyveld. According to Lam, these workshops will help participants gain valuable insights and experience that will contribute to WKCD's future theatrical productions in terms of both creation and audience appreciation. In preparation for the workshops, Lam has led introductory seminars and presented a series of screenings and discussions on 11 Versweyveld productions. The series concludes on 7 September 2017 with a public seminar featuring Versweyveld, Lam and Low. The seminar will be live-streamed from the West Kowloon Cultural District's YouTube and Facebook pages.

### **General Information**

#### **Artist Workshop**

“What Is Stage: Dynamics of Seeing” – Workshop on Jan Versweyveld’s Aesthetic of Scenography

3 – 6 September 2017

2:00pm – 6:00pm

Studio Theatre, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (1 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong)

Speaker: Jan Versweyveld

#### **Public Seminar**

“What Is Stage: Dynamics of Seeing” – Public Seminar: Jan Versweyveld’s Aesthetics of Scenography

7 September 2017

7:30pm – 10:30pm

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Amphitheatre, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (1 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong)

Speaker: Jan Versweyveld

Free live-streaming channels:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/westkowloon](http://www.facebook.com/westkowloon)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/wkcda](http://www.youtube.com/wkcda)

For further information, please visit <http://www.westkowloon.hk/en/whats-on/current-forthcoming/what-is-stage-dynamics-of-seeing>.

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **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.

### Edward Lam

Edward Lam is Artistic Director and Theatre Director of Edward Lam Dance Theatre. He founded Zuni Icosahedron with friends in the early 1980s and established Edward Lam Dance Theatre during his residence in London (1989 to 1995). Since returning to Hong Kong in 1995, he has devoted himself to theatre and directed 57 original works. His most recent work, *Finding Loveless Land*, premiered in Hong Kong in 2017. Lam was awarded Best Director at Modern Drama Valley's One Drama Awards in 2010 for his work *Men and Women, War and Peace*, and in 2012 for *The Doppelgänger*. Recent books include *Leading Ladies of the Mandarin Cinema* (2014), and his first book on directing, *Who is Afraid of Edward Lam*, was published by Performing Arts Review in Taiwan in 2016.

### Jan Versweyveld

Scenographer and lighting designer Jan Versweyveld trained at the Sint-Lucas Institute in Brussels and at the Royal Academy in Antwerp. In 1990, he became the regular scenographer of the Zuidelijk Toneel theatre group, and in 2001 he joined Toneelgroep Amsterdam as head of scenography and regular designer and photographer. He has worked on numerous productions including dance and opera. Awards include the Bessie Award in New York for his scenography for *Drumming Live*, the Obie Award for Hedda Gabler, and the Prosceniumprijs and the Amsterdam Prize for Art for collaborations with Ivo van Hove. His scenography for *Scenes from a Marriage* at the New Theatre Workshop was recognised with the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Scenic Design. He won the Knight of Illumination 2016 Award for his lighting design of *Song from Far Away*. Jan has been a guest lecturer at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and is one of the co-founders of the scenography training programme in Antwerp.