

For immediate release

## First showcase of ink art from the M+ Collection to debut in October

M+, West Kowloon Cultural District Authority give global context to ink art with *The Weight of Lightness: Ink Art at M+*

13 October 2017 – 14 January 2018



(29 September 2017, Hong Kong) M+, the highly anticipated museum of visual culture at Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District, will exhibit selections from its exceptional ink art collection for the first time ever this fall. *The Weight of Lightness: Ink Art at M+ (The Weight of Lightness)* will explore the pivotal role of ink art in global visual culture, offering fresh perspectives using cross-disciplinary and geographically diverse approaches. The exhibition will run from 13 October 2017 – 14 January 2018 at the M+ Pavilion.

While ink art generally refers to visual works with lineage to ink painting and calligraphy in the Asian tradition, M+ is taking a more expansive view with *The Weight of Lightness*, which will present a transnational, interdisciplinary perspective on ink art from the 1960s to the present day. Throughout this period, artists have examined the practices and concepts of traditional ink art to develop new expressions and techniques influenced by their environments, personal experiences and artistic

tendencies from outside their own cultures. These experimentations have resulted in varied applications and interpretations of the ink aesthetic, blossoming in different geographic locations and under different political, social and individual circumstances.

*The Weight of Lightness* explores how ink art is not only a medium, but also a crucial aesthetic in contemporary visual culture. Featuring works in various media including painting, calligraphy, installation, photography and moving image that demonstrate artists' diverse explorations. Nearly 60 works by 42 artists from more than 10 regions – representing Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, India, the US, Spain and more – will be on display.

The exhibition's title illustrates the tension at the core of ink art between the material and the spiritual. This relationship permeates the three thematic sections of the exhibition:

- 'Scripts, Symbols, Strokes' showcases how artists channel their communicative impulses through writing, gesturing and mark-making in direct or implicit dialogue with the arts of calligraphy and drawing.
- 'Desire for Landscape' studies how landscape, arguably the most explored genre of the East Asian painting tradition, continues to inspire a wide range of artistic expressions.
- 'Beyond Material' focuses on the notions of transformation and transcendence by showing artistic investigations in the materiality of ink, water and paper, and by exploring the emotional and philosophical dimensions of ink beyond the physical world.

Artists featured in the exhibition include (in alphabetical order): Irene Chou, Hidai Nankoku, Hsiao Chin, Hung Fai, Kan Tai-keung, Koon Wai Bong, Kwok Mang-ho (Frog King), Lee Ufan, Leung Kui Ting, Liang Quan, Liu Kuo-sung, Lui Shou-kwan, Ni Youyu, Tong Yang-Tze, Wucius Wong, Xu Bing, Yang Jiechang and Yuan Jai. (See Annex for a full list of 42 artists)

'Ink art has been designated as an important area of focus that underlines the museum's distinctive voice in world visual culture. *The Weight of Lightness* will introduce audiences to new, cross-cultural perspectives to view ink art in our collection,' said **Ms Suhanya Raffel, Executive Director of M+**.

**Dr Lesley Ma, Curator, Ink Art for M+** said, 'By make existing boundaries more porous through this exhibition, we show how ink art—endowed with the weight of traditions and invigorated by the lightness of its material and the experimental vision of artists—possesses boundless potential.'

Accompanying the exhibition is an exciting line-up of public programmes that demonstrate ink art's relevance to other forms of modern and contemporary artistic productions, each one highlighting the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority's cross-disciplinary approach. These include M+'s first music programme, featuring a curated playlist of contemporary compositions inspired by ink art; commissioned dance performances for the M+ Pavilion by Hong Kong choreographer Allen Lam and students of the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts (HKAPA), led by David Steele, Dean of the HKAPA's School of Dance, in collaboration with the Authority's Performing Arts department; and the M+ Screening "*Stillness in Motion*", which explores moving image works influenced by the contemplative nature of ink art.

The curatorial team for *The Weight of Lightness* consists of Lesley Ma, Curatorial Assistant, Visual Art; Minnie Cheung, Curatorial Assistant, Visual Art; and Sharon Lee, Research Assistant. Learning and interpretation programmes are organised by Athena Wu, Associate Curator; Mou Tse, Assistant Curator; and Stanley Chu, Curatorial Assistant.

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### **For media enquiries**

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About M+**

Encompassing 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century art, design, 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. The vision of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority is to create a vibrant new cultural quarter for Hong Kong. With a complex of theatres, performance spaces and M+, 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**

#### **Lesley Ma**

Lesley Ma is Curator, Ink Art for M+. She was involved in the 2015 *Mobile M+: Live Art* and organised *M+ Matters: Postwar Abstraction in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan* in 2014. Previously, Ma co-curated *Great Crescent: Art and Agitation in the 1960s—Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan* at Para Site in Hong Kong in 2013, which also toured Tokyo and Mexico City in 2015 and 2016. Prior to that, she served as Project Director at Cai Guo-Qiang studio in New York (2005–2009) and Curatorial Coordinator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2011–2012). Ma holds a B.A. in history and science from Harvard College, a M.A. in museum studies from New York University, and a PhD in art history, theory and criticism from the University of California, San Diego. She is also a recipient of the Fifth Yishu Awards for Critical Writing on Contemporary Chinese Art in 2015.