

APPENDIX of STRATAGEMS IN ARCHITECTURE: HONG KONG IN VENICE

EXHIBITION INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong is a city known for its versatility and resilience; yet what is often seen in daily life is rigidity and lack of alternatives. Architecture, under such circumstance, becomes an agency reflecting on human, social and even political conditions, and at the same time moulding the values of the public. On one hand, it conforms to the rules of capitalism and private demand; on the other, it seeks to transcend the norm and open up imagination. What lies in between could be conflictive and creates endless and ever-changing battlefields. New ideas are put to test at the borderline; they may fail or they may transform into new set of values. Working on the margins often unveils the social dilemma – whether human need should be replaced by the need for progress and wealth.

The classical Chinese essay Thirty-Six Stratagems is a collection of military tactics applied at wars in ancient China. The wisdom provides guides in politics, business and civil interaction in modern time. The stratagems are categorized into chapters that illustrate different situations, both advantageous and disadvantageous. Drawing reference from the classic, the exhibiting architects and artists examine the challenges they face and attempt to provide solutions to the complexity of reality.

The situations they chose tell the battles that they are fighting, which can be personal as well as social. A battleground may root in their practices or at different aspects in everyday life and in society. The extremely high real estate prices, highly dense living space, dominant market force, visionless urban renewal and housing planning, environmental concern - the exhibiting architects and artists unfold the challenges and the pressing needs of the public, and try to tackle the issues with their solutions inspired by the age-old wisdom. They see themselves not merely practitioners in architecture or art, but activists in making a difference. Their works are commentaries on social reality. Individual practitioners come up with proposals using unique language in architectural or art practices, they coalesce into a think-tank to experiment ways to survive at the margin and win the battles.

OPENING CEREMONY

DATE: 27 May 2016 Friday

TIME: 16:30

OFFICIATING GUEST: **Mr. TSENG Yen Wei, William**
Chairman of The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Biennale Foundation

Ms. Winsome Chow
Chief Executive of Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Ms. LAM Shuet Lai, Shirley JP
Special Representative for HK Econ & Trade Affairs to the European Union Brussels, ETO

OPENING HOURS: 10:00 – 18:00 28 May – 27 Nov 2016
10:00 – 20:00 on Fri and Sat from 28 May – 24 Sept 2016
Closed on Mondays, except 30 May, 9 May, 31 Oct and 21 Nov

LOCATION MAP:



CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Our society is constantly evolving since its existence. For decades, Hong Kong has been dominated by progressive development to sustain our city's economic growth, from a fishing village to a light industrial city, and eventually became one of the top financial cities in the world. For generations, economical progression became the golden rule of success and it is the largest driving force to move forward.

"Social Fact" is a term created by the father of sociologist Emile Durkheim as to indicate the social patterns that are external to individuals. Social facts can be social norms, moral values, customs, conventions, rules and other social structures exist outside individuals. At the basis of the term lies the perception of the individual grossly conditioned by social realities that form the "Boundaries of Acceptable Behavior", but these boundaries are not static. Each generation will derive their own set of norms and values based on their particular social practice. For our new generation, the moral value is shifting from progressive development to reflexive, more concern on civil society, civil right, minority interest, fairness, localisation, social enterprise, and sustainable life, and that forms the bottom-line of the new generation. In some areas, this bottom-line is collided with the current "Boundaries of Accepted Behavior". It creates the condition for the changes. Mary Douglas further explained these changes as breaking of rules or norms by looking for "Binary Opposition and Possibilities", the rule breakers are standing at the liminal stage or have already gone beyond them. All margins are dangerous, if they are pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any system of ideas is vulnerable at its boundary, it is our "Frontier", as know as the "Battleground".

Each of our young exhibitors is unique and having their own characteristics on architectural design or art creation with

Hong Kong at 15th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition

the new moral value and they are the new driving force of our society. They understand the latest trend and are equipped with advance technology. During their practice as an architect or an artist, they are consistently facing difficulties with their creation in order to survive. In response to our curatorial statement regarding the definition of our "Frontier" [Battleground], they will be looking into the Thirty-Six Stratagems and select one stratagem to demonstrate how he or she would succeed in their own battleground at the frontier of architecture or art. We want to hear their stories and their approach to the social responsibility, by reducing the gap between the private demands and public needs in the field of architecture and art.

The ancient Chinese war strategies are often referring to modern business strategies and published not only in China but translated into foreign languages and published worldwide as

bestsellers. The Thirty-Six Stratagems [三十六計] was a Chinese essay used to illustrate a series of stratagems used in politics, war, and civil interaction. The Thirty-Six Stratagems are divided into a preface, six chapters containing six stratagems each, and an afterword. The first three chapters generally describe tactics for use in advantageous situations, whereas the last three chapters contain stratagems that are more suitable for disadvantageous situations. Each proverb is accompanied by a short comment, no longer than a sentence or two that explains how the said proverb is applicable to military tactics. These thirty-six Chinese proverbs are related to thirty-six battle scenarios in Chinese history and folklore, predominantly of the Warring States Period and the Three Kingdoms Period. The Thirty-Six Stratagems consists of 6 chapters and each chapter consists of 6 stratagems; Chapter 1: Winning Stratagems [勝戰計], Chapter 2: Enemy Dealing Stratagems [敵戰計], Chapter 3: Attacking Stratagems [攻戰計], Chapter 4: Chaos Stratagems [混戰計], Chapter 5: Proximate Stratagems [並戰計] and Chapter 6: Desperate Stratagems [敗戰計].

BIOGRAPHY OF CHIEF CURATOR

Mr. SIU KWOK KIN, STANLEY

Stanley Siu grew up and studied in New Zealand where he received his Bachelor of Architecture from UNITEC School of Architecture. He returned to Hong Kong after graduation and has practiced as an architect on a number of residential, commercial, master planning, cultural and sustainability projects in Hong Kong and Overseas. In 2014, Stanley has received the Young Architect Awards 2013 organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects. This is one of the most prestigious awards in Hong Kong to honour and acknowledge the talents and contribution of Stanley's achievements in the field of Art and Architecture.

In 2012, Stanley founded the international awards winning Hong Kong based architectural firm Daydreamers Design. Daydreamers Design is recognised for its work in architecture, master planning, landscape design, community development and art installation locally and globally. Daydreamers Design aims to synthesize individual methodologies and educe sophisticated design solutions through research, curatorship, and collaboration with various artists and designers, as well as active engagements in social dialogue. With the leadership of Stanley, Daydreamers Design have participated the 2013 Lantern Wonderland competition organized by the Hong Kong Tourism Board and they have received the Gold Award. The winning design "Rising Moon" was exhibited during the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Victoria Park, a combination of large-scale public art and architecture. Sustainability was the fundamental concept; Stanley has decided using recycled water bottles and low energy consumption LED lights to construct the 20 meters diameter hemisphere and it was well received by the public. In

2015, Stanley was invited by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group to design a 23 meters tall “Hong Kong Christmas Tree” by the Victoria Harbour. He decided to continue the sustainable idea by using traditional Hong Kong’s bamboo scaffolding construction and recycled aluminium cans for this installation work.

In 2015, Stanley was selected by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects as the curator for their first overseas architecture exhibition in Taiwan, “Past. Present. Future. – Tracking Hong Kong Architecture” showcased thirty winning projects from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects Annual Awards and the Hong Kong Young Architects’ Exhibition at Taipei Songshan Cultural Creative Park. Within the same year, Hong Kong Institute of Architects Biennale Foundation and Hong Kong Arts Development Council appointed Stanley as the Chief Curator for the 15th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition – Hong Kong Exhibition “Stratagems In Architecture, Hong Kong In Venice”.

Stanley’s professional activities and interests are split equally between architecture and contemporary art. His artworks has been exhibited in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, the Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Taipei Songshan Cultural Creative Park, Artistree, Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Central, Art Taipei and Affordable Art Fair. In 2013, Stanley became partner and curator at 100ft Park, an artist run space aiming to provide an open platform for the local young artists to share their creative thoughts.

Stanley’s passion in architecture has extended from profession to institution, as the chairman of the Community Development Committee, he helped organizing a number of major events for the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in collaboration with other Non-Profit Organisations.