

Joint Venture of Hysan and Chinachem Engages HKAPA EXCEL to Operate the 20,000 sq. ft. Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities at Lee Garden Eight
Five-Year Memorandum of Understanding Signed to Echo with the Government's "Blueprint for Arts and Culture and Creative Industries Development"
Joining Forces to Develop Diverse Arts and Culture Industries with an International Perspective



The signing ceremony was held today (13 December 2024) at The Community Lab in Lee Garden Five. The MoU was signed by Mr Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited (front row, left), and Professor Gillian Choa, Chairperson of HKAPA EXCEL and Director of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (front row, right), witnessed by representatives from the joint venture and HKAPA EXCEL.

(Hong Kong, 13 December 2024) – The joint venture established by Hysan Development Company Limited (“Hysan”) and Chinachem Group (“Chinachem”) signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) today with the Extension and Continuing Education for Life, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (“HKAPA EXCEL”), engaging HKAPA EXCEL as the operator of the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities at Lee Garden Eight. This strategic partnership aims to leverage the strengths and resources of the signing parties to integrate arts into community and commercial spaces, in an effort to promote diversified development of arts and culture, and further enhance the appeal and cultural vitality of the Lee Gardens Area, thereby meeting the growing cultural needs in the city. The signing of this MoU signifies the partnership’s support for the Government’s ‘Blueprint for Arts and Culture and Creative Industries Development’ and its collaborative efforts to bolster the local arts and cultural sector.

Lee Garden Eight is a brand-new, large-scale premium commercial project, jointly developed by Hysan and Chinachem. The project, spanning over 1 million sq. ft., is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2026. The completion of Lee Garden Eight will further strengthen the Lee Gardens Area portfolio. Approximately 20,000 sq. ft. of space within the project has been designated for the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities, which will include a 150-seat black-box theatre, multifunctional exhibition and open spaces, café and more. These facilities aim to provide local and international artists and arts groups with greater opportunities to create and showcase their talents, offering diverse cultural experiences to both locals and tourists. Located at the office lobby level of Lee Garden Eight, these facilities will also bring significant benefits to office tenants situated in the project, offering them opportunities to participate in various arts events and exhibitions.

Under the five-year development plan, HKAPA EXCEL has been engaged to operate the facilities with a professional, internationally recognised curatorial standard, supported by its extensive resources. The plan includes:

- Managing key facilities such as the black-box theatre, which will provide flexible and innovative performance spaces for both local and international artists;
- Attracting more international arts organisations and groups to host cultural activities and exhibitions, with the Lee Gardens Area in Causeway Bay positioned as a cultural and artistic hub where local and international cultures converge;
- Creating opportunities for HKAPA EXCEL's students and alumni to practise and showcase their work, including creative processes and works-in-progress, offering visitors a closer look at the evolution of artistic creations;
- Making full use of the Lee Gardens Area's various "pocket spaces" – relatively small, underutilised spaces to be reimagined for artistic displays, guided by the principle of "Diversity with Identity". These efforts will further integrate art into the community, inject new elements of creativity into Causeway Bay, and take Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries to the international arena.

The partnership has also invited renowned Hong Kong composer Mr Leon Ko to take the lead as the creative consultant for the facilities. With his professional curatorial expertise, Mr Ko will bring fresh vitality to the facilities while nurturing the growth of local cultural and artistic talent.

Mr Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited, said, "Hysan is committed to housing diverse aspects of arts, embracing the principle of 'Diversity with Identity' and different developments and creations. We aim to infuse arts and culture into the community and everyday life, and this new artistic space at Lee Garden Eight reaffirms our commitment to nurturing local culture. We are honoured to establish a long-term partnership with HKAPA EXCEL to jointly develop a forward-looking five-year development plan for the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities at Lee Garden Eight. With HKAPA's over 40 years of experience in performing arts education and venue management, we are confident that they will fully utilise their expertise and resources to curate diverse artistic programmes that connect meaningfully with our daily life. This will inject new cultural vitality into Causeway Bay and further enrich the city's cultural landscape."

"Our appreciation goes to the Development Bureau of the HKSAR Government for its support in incorporating the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities into Lee Garden Eight's development plan, with policy support including GFA exemption and land premium concessions. The integration of arts and cultural elements into this commercial project acts in alignment with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau's latest blueprint for arts, culture and creative industries, manifesting our collective commitment to industry development. Looking ahead, we aspire to be a nurturing force in the arts and cultural industry ecosystem. We hope this space will serve as a platform where emerging artists can showcase their talent and grow into influential artists, with Lee Gardens Area serving as their cradle of development," Mr. Lui added.

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts has over four decades of experience in performing arts education and venue management. As the extension arm of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, HKAPA EXCEL will leverage its professional resources and capabilities to curate a diverse array of artistic programmes for Lee Garden Eight, thereby driving greater engagement in cultural activities and advancing the development of arts education.

Professor Gillian Choa, Chairperson of HKAPA EXCEL and Director of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, remarked, "HKAPA EXCEL is honoured to collaborate with Hysan and Chinachem to establish a distinguished platform for local and international artists to create and showcase their work. Leveraging the Academy's extensive expertise and experience in professional curation, alongside the unparalleled location of Lee Garden Eight in the heart of Hong Kong's vibrant urban centre, we are confident that this partnership will inspire greater public engagement with the arts while enriching the cultural fabric of the community. We look forward to transforming Lee Garden Eight into an innovative creative space, offering young artists an exceptional opportunity to showcase their talent, unleash local artistic potential, and contribute to the sustainable development of performing arts."

Mr Leon Ko, Governor, HKAPA EXCEL and Curator for exhibition space of the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities at Lee Garden Eight, said, “Art is not only a form of creative expression but also a bridge that fosters human connection. I am delighted to see Hysan, Chinachem, and HKAPA EXCEL joining forces to bring new artistic possibilities to Causeway Bay. Lee Garden Eight is more than just a venue—it is a space for nurturing creativity, where artists, the community and businesses can come together to collaborate and contribute to injecting new cultural vitality into Hong Kong.”

This collaboration serves as a model for the fusion of arts and business. The Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities at Lee Garden Eight will be seamlessly integrated into the overall design of the project, closely connected with the surrounding urban park, the integrated pedestrian walkway system, and public leisure spaces, establishing a new cultural landmark in Causeway Bay.

– END –

Photo Caption



Photo 1 - The signing ceremony was held today (13 December 2024) at The Community Lab, Lee Garden Five. The MoU was signed by Mr Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited (front row, left), and Professor Gillian Choa, Chairperson of HKAPA EXCEL and Director of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (front row, right), witnessed by representatives from the joint venture and HKAPA EXCEL, including (back row, from left to right):

- Mr Joseph Leung, Deputy Managing Director of Asset Management, Chinachem Group;
- Ms Winnie Wong, General Manager, Projects, Hysan Development Company Limited;
- Mr Andy Choi, Chief Financial Officer, Hysan Development Company Limited;
- Mr Ricky Tsang, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Chinachem Group;
- Dr Gordon Munro, Vice-Chairperson of HKAPA EXCEL and Deputy Director (Academic), The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts;
- Mr Leon Ko, Governor, HKAPA EXCEL;
- Ms Stella Lau, Governor, HKAPA EXCEL;
- Ms Josephine Yim, General Manager, HKAPA EXCEL



Photo 2 - Mr Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited, expressed his vision for the collaboration with HKAPA EXCEL to seamlessly integrate arts into the community and commercial spaces. Through the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities at Lee Garden Eight, this partnership seeks to drive the diversified development of arts and culture in Causeway Bay while further elevating the appeal and cultural vibrancy of the Lee Gardens Area.



Photo 3 - Professor Gillian Choa, Chairperson of HKAPA EXCEL and Director of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, remarked that HKAPA EXCEL's extensive expertise in professional curation, alongside the unparalleled location of Lee Garden Eight in the heart of Hong Kong's vibrant urban centre, provides a strong foundation for this collaboration. She expressed confidence that the partnership will broaden public access to and participation in arts, while enriching the cultural fabric of the community.



Photo 4 - Lee Garden Eight has designated approximately 20,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area exclusively for the Performing Arts and Cultural Facilities. These thoughtfully designed spaces include a black-box theatre, multifunctional exhibition and open areas, and a café, offering a professional platform for local and international artists and art groups to create and showcase their work.