

[For immediate release]

**Creative Tourism Project 'Design District Hong Kong #ddHK'
All-new Placemaking Series 'SSP_People'
2 Self-guided Routes Connect Several Public Spaces and 10 Local Businesses
and Uncover Human Stories in Sham Shui Po Community
to Shape 'Urban Living Room' for Liveable City**

(2 March 2021, Hong Kong) Organised by Hong Kong Design Centre and initiated in 2018, 3-year creative tourism project Design District Hong Kong (#ddHK) comes to its final year with the theme "transFORM" to turn Wan Chai and Sham Shui into a pop-up 'open-air design district gallery'. In these trying times, we join hands with creative partners from wide-ranging disciplines to muse on the past and present and peer into the future with creative thinking. Coming up first is the brand-new placemaking series 'SSP_People' aiming to transform the Sham Shui Po (SSP) district.

"In recent years, Sham Shui Po has made it to the top three of the list of the coolest and kindest neighbourhoods in the world, just after Barcelona's Esquerra de l'Eixample and Los Angeles's Downtown, and followed by New York's Brooklyn, Melbourne's Yarraville and others. With the aim to further advance social inclusion through civic participation, we draw inspiration from local cultures and use design to transform parks and streets into the epitome of new-generation public spaces," said Sam Lam, #ddHK's Chief Curator and Project Director. Evolving from an ageing district into a hub for creative industries, Sham Shui Po is the hippest and newest haunt of many local designers and cultural lovers. With this context, #ddHK invited Michael Leung as Guest Curator, and Pat, Founder of Wontonmeen, as Creative Partner to curate 'SSP_People'. The project presents a range of site-specific design installations co-created by people and organisations from different ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds. They will pop up from 6 to 14 March in several public spaces and communities in the district. Drawing on the multifarious perspectives of SSP residents, the works use innovative but approachable ways to present different facets of the neighbourhood. We worked with 10 local shops to co-create upcycled furniture sets to turn the neighbourhood into an urban living room where robust community interactions and exchanges can take place. We also designed 2 self-guided routes connecting the people and stories of SSP. In addition, the widely admired shop cats will serve as the ambassadors of this urban living room to extend the community's friendliness and hospitality. They will lead visitors to dive into a visual journey which kicks off at Boundary Street, giving the public an insider's view of SSP's cat kingdom and multiculturalism.

"Through 'SSP_People', we hope to transform what is unseen but deeply rooted here into a journey for your senses, featuring the cultural diversity, history, design, and everyday life of SSP. On top of making physical works, we seek to create a sense of place to liven up the streets and living spaces of our city, and invite visitors and locals to explore SSP's history and culture," said Michael.

"Through collaborative installations, walking/ cycling guides, creative workshops, public

engagement and more, we aim to initiate collaborations across private and public organisations and bring together designers, artists, schools, local communities and other stakeholders as active agents in the co-creation. We hope to engage the public to explore different ways to develop a better city," said Pat.

3 site-specific design works create an array of spatial experiences highlighting multicultural SSP

The living room is the soul of a home. Its layout and decoration reflect its owner's taste and personalities. #ddHK reshapes SSP into an 'urban living room' by leveraging placemaking strategies to transform dull public spaces into vibrant and fascinating yet down-to-earth design spaces filled with the neighbourhood's characters. You will follow the locals' footsteps through the 'urban living rooms' scattered in the district, track down the community's shop cats, which possibly exceed a whopping 500 of them, and dig out the upcycled furniture hidden in 10 local shops. In this extraordinary exploration, you will immerse in the human touch of SSP while discovering its intriguing stories and everyday life.

Kick start your urban adventure at 20-metre-long mural with shop cats as tour guides

#ppl_&_meow_dd

@ Tai Nan Street Refuse Collection Point

From traditional shops to hip stores, a lot of businesses in SSP take on shop cats to help manage their customer relationships. It is estimated that over 500 shop cats around the district. These flurry store managers all have their own personalities, communities and life stories. They inspired Kristopher Ho to team up with a group of young volunteers from community organisation Hope of the City to create the 20-metre-long mural *#ppl_&_meow_dd*. It conveys his impression of shop cats, and the cotton flowers in the background symbolise SSP's robust textile trade.

Apart from being killingly adorable, fluffy shop cats are also intrinsically curious, imposing and sensitive. Scan the QR code on the mural and you can watch the shop cat-themed short film *Meow Shui Po* made by filmmaker Bobyea who was trained under famous Japanese photographer Yokonami Osamu. Follow the footsteps of our veteran shop cat and uncover the close ties between the local shops in the neighbourhood from a feline angle, you will feel the human touch and discover intriguing everyday stories of SSP.

#ppl_chill_dd

@Sham Shui Po Nam Cheong Street Sitting-out Area

SSP is known as a colourful community burst with vitality. All sorts of stalls, mouth-watering local delicacies and state-of-the-art electronics compete to catch your eye amidst the enthusiastic hollering of street vendors. It is an epitome of a spirited city. Not only is it the home of the working class and the ethnic minority but also the haunt of the hip and the young. It is all about diversity, inclusion and agility.

To let curious outsiders discover different sides of SSP and renew their impression of the old district, a group of Hong Kong designers and SSP's residents teamed up to transform Nam Cheong Street Sitting-out Area (5) which is sandwiched between 2 bustling thoroughfares through the centre of SSP. They co-created 2 sets of *#ppl_chill_dd* design installations to turn the park into a 'real life chatroom' for locals and visitors to hang out and take in the brand-new look of the district.

Hand-painted phrase boards | Katol

With a community composed of many different ethnicities, SSP is genuinely a cultural melting pot. However, the language barrier means that its residents may not necessarily communicate as much as they want. Graphic designer and signboard painter Katol hand-painted a collection of phrase boards in different languages, including Cantonese, English, Vietnamese, Nepali, Indonesian, Thai and Hindi, featuring Chinese calligraphy by artist Chan Oi Ying. They are greetings, conversation starters and gentle reminders to help us bridge the language divide, beginning with "Good morning!", "Shall we talk?" and "Come and have a look!" What's more, the QR codes on the work link you to the music videos featuring local residents from different backgrounds singing the popular songs of their cultures, showcasing an unseen SSP through the music world.

Simple People figures | Rex Koo

Visual artist Rex Koo, whose *Strange Tales of Walled City* won the bronze award of the 14th Japan International Manga Award, is deeply influenced by 80s Hong Kong popular culture. For 'SSP_People', he turned his *Simple People* 2D geometric portraits into real-size multidimensional figures. The featured cultural figures include Bruce Lee, Ip Man, James Wong, Sam Hui and Wong Ka-kui, among others, who are all deeply related to SSP. For instance, Ip Man once ran a martial arts gymnasium in Hai Tan Street, Sam Hui went to a primary school in the neighbourhood, and James Wong and Wong Ka-kui spent their childhoods there, too. You will agree SSP is indeed a hidden cradle fostering legendary talents which demonstrates the infinite possibilities when multiculturalism takes root and grows.

Handmade lanterns | Public co-creation

To engage SSP residents in the project and to make their own community a better place, our creative team and kaifongs apprenticed with Mr Au Yeung Ping-chi, the second generation of Bo Wah Effigies which has stood in SSP for more than half a century, to learn traditional lantern-making. Local residents were also invited to get hands-on and participate in making lanterns. They used bamboo sticks to make the frames and hand-sewed deadstock fabrics and fabric remnants collected from textile shops together to make patchwork lanterns which are now exhibited in the park. After the exhibition ends, residents will be invited to take the lanterns home.

#ppl_lean_&_learn_dd

@ Nam Cheong Park

A place full of life, SSP and its history are always about its people and their livelihood. It is brimmed with the heartwarming stories of its old kaifongs awaiting us to unearth. Project Futurus and Walk in Hong Kong teamed up with the young people from '10 Stories 100 Pieces' (Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association) and Christian Concern for the Homeless Association (CCHA) to create a small-scale '**everyday living room**' #ppl_lean_&_learn_dd which now stands in the central plaza of Nam Cheong Park. Made with recycled pallets and paper tubes, it displays SSP's stories and data so that we can 'lean and learn' in this inviting and relaxing living room, deepening our understanding of the community through the design, social and cultural lenses.

The work tells a collection of design stories reflecting the development of SSP and classic everyday designs. It presents statistical data such as the number of households and age distribution through illustrator Don Mak's charming illustrations. From the stories, we can distil an understanding of the fashion philosophy of our seniors – slightly cropped trousers, impeccable grooming and distinctive floral tops. Through the images of the old locals' everyday life captured by photographer Wong Liang-yih between late 2019 and 2020, we can savour the unique charm and sentiment of SSP.

10 co-created furniture pieces draw visitors to explore the characters of old and new businesses

#ppl_upcycle_dd (Appendix 1)

@Wah Hing Accessories, Hip Yee Hing Embroidery, Alri Star Leather Factory, Kung Chan Cycle, Sun Nga Shing Umbrella Store, Wah Ngai Canvas, Yen Chow Street Temporary Hawker Bazaar (Pang Jai), Wing Fat Store, My Book Room, Sunrise Photo Co

With an impressive spectrum of old and new shops, SSP is an ideal treasure-hunt destination. We engaged the coaches and students from non-governmental organisations such as 10 Stories 100 Pieces (Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association) and CCHA in woodwork classes to equip them with the skills. Guided by informal design, they then worked with 10 local old and new shops – communicating with the owners, understanding their needs – and used recycled materials, design thinking and woodworking skills to custom-make upcycled furniture for each of them. These shops are now spruced up by these new-yet-old, beautiful-yet-practical furniture. While appreciating these exhibits, visitors can also take in the characters of SSP's old and new businesses.

2 self-guided routes open you up to everyday urban stories

We joined hands with local tour organiser Walk in Hong Kong to design 2 self-guided routes for visitors to explore SSP by foot with our audio guides or by bike. After your journey, don't forget to redeem a set of SSP stickers designed by local artists and designers.

#ppl_discover_dd

Audio-guided tour: Walking route (from 5 February on)

With the online audio-guided tour on our official website, visitors can follow the curated route to visit the featured spots, listen to their stories and discover the interesting episodes of the district's

culture and history, such as how some old businesses have changed and how the community has evolved. The stories of this vibrant place, critical or trivial, will give you countless reasons to fall in love with it.

#ppl_cycle_dd

An exploratory route designed for cycling lovers

We usually navigate through SSP on foot, but have you ever thought of exploring it on wheels? Get on your bike and follow the cycling route we designed, you will expand your SSP experience and realise its actual breadth. This route is designed for bikers with excellent skills, rich road cycling experience, adequate safety gear and appropriate liability insurance. Safety first and always pay attention to road conditions.

#ppl_hunt_dd

SSP stickers

What is SSP in your eyes? Let's see it through local artists' and designers' eyes with these 3 sets of SSP stickers designed by Don Mak, Katol and Rex Koo. And now you have got the chance to bag them – follow our map and audio-guided tour, explore the whole SSP district, take pictures of any one design installation in the 4 public spaces, upload them to your social media as a public post with the tags @designdistricthk_ddhk and @ssp_ppl, and you will be able to redeem 1 of the 3 sets of stickers at Runners Foods (135, Lai Chi Kok Road) during the exhibition period as a token of your SSP memory.

More to come in Wan Chai soon...

In the first quarter of this year, #ddHK is leading the way to reshaping public spaces in the post-pandemic world. In addition to the Sham Shui Po district, we seek to curate Victoria Park into a 'Colour Fantasy' Chinese garden with 7 creative sets. Each of them was inspired by Hong Kong's urban palette or Wan Chai's history and acts as a distinctive landscape element to collectively elevate the park experience to one akin to meandering through a Chinese garden. It lets visitors rest and relax, awakens their senses to the beauty and versatility of Victoria Park, and engages them in the park's transformation into the epitome of new-generation public spaces and an icon of city resilience. More details will be released soon, stay tuned!

- The end -

High-resolution images can be downloaded here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zb6zgn0gut4q91f/AABLKHLhc9MHvE30RKgw_GrWa?dl=0

Get updates of #ddHK at:

Website: www.designdistrict.hk | Facebook: www.facebook.com/designdistricthk |

Instagram: www.instagram.com/designdistricthk.com & www.instagram.com/ssp_ppl

In response to the crowd and site control measures against COVID-19, the works of the design exhibition may be exhibited in different periods. In addition, the exhibition period of each of the creative works may vary depending on venue availability. For the latest exhibition details, please refer to the official website and social media of #ddHK.

About Design District Hong Kong

Design District Hong Kong (#ddHK) celebrates authentic culture and creativity and uses design to liven up the unique “Heung Gong Dei” (a vernacular name of Hong Kong) experience, which embodies our collective local identity and affection for this city made possible by the contribution and perspiration of every Hong Kong citizen.

Presented by Tourism Commission and organised by Hong Kong Design Centre, ddHK envisions Wan Chai and Sham Shui Po as a 3-year pop-up “open-air design district gallery”. Visitors can explore it through a wide range of creative self-guided routes and year-round free guided tours. Its original multidisciplinary designs and authentic street events are the results of creatively curated community collaborations, social conversations and participatory design. It aims at elevating existing tourist attractions, reconnecting people with local neighbourhoods and bringing new life to ordinary public facilities and underused spaces. It sets to transform the daily experience of tourists and locals alike with a fresh take on Hong Kong’s history, culture and creativity.

In the first year (2018/19), #ddHK took the old Wan Chai coastline back in the 1840s as the starting point. From south to north, west to east, design works were installed all across Wan Chai, collating a love letter for the city “Connected City: A Love Letter to Hong Kong”. The scattering works formed a poetic visual vanish point showcasing the evolution of Hong Kong’s urban landscape. In the second year (2019/20), #ddHK is focusing on pop culture under the theme ‘Pop! Get Inspired at Every Turn’. Visitors can savour the surprises and inspirations in streets and alleys. #ddHK peers into the future in its final year (2020/21) with the annual theme “transFORM”. Tourists and locals can also follow the specially planned self-guided routes to explore this ‘open-air design district gallery’ with a series of creative works.

About Hong Kong Design Centre

Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC) is a non-governmental organisation, and was founded in 2001 as a strategic partner of the HKSAR Government in establishing Hong Kong as an international centre of design excellence in Asia. Our public mission is to promote wider and strategic use of design and design thinking to create business value and improve societal well-being, with the aim of advancing Hong Kong as an international design centre in Asia.

HKDC's flagship programmes include Business of Design Week (since 2002) – Asia's leading annual conference and event on Design, Innovation and Brands; DFA Awards (since 2003) – a widely recognised design awards that celebrates outstanding designs with Asian perspectives; Design Incubation Programme (since 2012) and Fashion Incubation Programme (since 2016) – 2-year incubation programmes to nurture 4 future design and fashion entrepreneurs; FASHION ASIA HONGKONG (since 2016) – a fashion initiative combining conversations, interactions and cultural exchanges to energise the city's image, and position it as an Asian hub for fashion trade and business development; Knowledge of Design Week (since 2006) – an annual thematic design knowledge sharing platform that explores how design can solve complex challenges of our society.

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