

ARTIST GIVES 36 WORKS TO M+ MUSEUM

Multi-dimensional designer Stanley Wong Ping-pui makes largest-ever donation to new art establishment, which he thinks has the right ideas

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Designer and artist Stanley Wong Ping-pui has made the largest-ever donation of his works to the planned M+ museum, and he will donate more.

The trans-disciplinary creative personality who slides between design, advertising and visual art donated 36 of his photographic works.

He also offered to give other work from the past 20 years of his career to the West Kowloon visual culture museum, which is also building a design collection.

Wong is among the 13 local collectors and artists who have recently donated a total of 280 works to M+.

"I can't take them with me. If I trust them [the museum] to do a great job with design, then why

not give them the works," said Wong, also known by his artistic name anothermountainman.

The 36 works are part of his photography series *Lanwei*, which captures images of unfinished buildings in China. M+ acquired 10 of the 46 works in the series, then Wong decided to donate the rest. It is the largest body of his works he has ever donated.

The artist said some of his works were in local museum collections, but they were not exhibited as a series. M+ took a different approach.

"One day they saw my *Lanwei* exhibition and wanted to acquire it. So I let them pick which pieces they wanted," Wong said.

But both M+ and Wong believed the works should be shown as one series instead of individual pieces. "I was touched that finally Hong Kong [museums] has a proper way of collecting. They

understood the entire series should stay together."

Wong has high hopes M+ will succeed, despite some controversy, in particular that over the Chinese contemporary art collection acquired from Swiss collector Uli Sigg.

He says he understands the discontent from both inside and outside the culture sector, but the Sigg collection was only the first step in the museum's moves to establish itself and it was a rare chance to acquire such a large collection – 1,463 donated plus 47 works acquired for HK\$177 million – for such a good price.

After the acquisition, the museum met many local and mainland artists to see their work.

"The 'plus', means the museum includes all kinds of communications in all channels," Wong said. "Content, process and interaction [with the audience] are the

most important. This world doesn't need another national museum."

Wong believes that M+ is on the right track. He says the negative views could become obstacles to the future of Hong Kong.

"How much Hong Kong can accommodate today will decide whether Hong Kong can become a cultural capital in future. But the widespread intense distrust has become physical reflex – it does not involve any thinking process," he said.

Wong said this culture project could be a new way forward for Hong Kong in the next 20 years, and the city would not need to rely on only the financial industry and property development.

"If we look at Hong Kong's accelerating development since the 1950s, we've got wealth but what have we lost?" Wong said. "We've lost the quality of life, the inner virtue of the city. From the government to the public, everyone should think about how this project can benefit everyone."



One of the *Lanwei* series of photographs by Stanley Wong Ping-pui. Photo: SCMP Pictures