

PRESS RELEASE

Airport Authority commissions artworks for passenger terminal

(HONG KONG, 20 October 1997) -- The Airport Authority (AA) has commissioned two significant artworks for the passenger terminal at the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

Following an intensive selection process involving local and international artists, Australian sculptor Mr Michel Santry was selected by the Board of the Authority to design a large suspended sculpture to be hung in the massive public atrium of the Arrivals Hall. Renowned Hong Kong architect Dr Tao Ho will also create a hanging piece for the West Hall area.

The artworks will be hung in the two most impressive areas of the passenger terminal. The atrium is part of the large area linking the entrance lobbies to the Check-in Hall and comprises a triple height space of cathedral-like proportions -- 25 metres high, 36 metres wide and 320 metres long. The atrium is the only part of the building where air passengers departing from Hong Kong can mix with arriving passengers.

The West Hall is the second focal point in the passenger terminal and is the last point of departure -- and first point of arrival -- for passengers travelling on airlines using the southwest and northwest concourses. The area in which Dr Tao Ho's sculpture will hang is 36 metres square and almost 30 metres high. The backdrop of the West Hall is a multi-storey height glass wall with stunning views westwards across the airport platform towards Macau.

Mr Santry's work is well represented in Australia and internationally. In Hong Kong, his works hang in the grand foyer of the Convention and Exhibition Centre Extension, Pacific Place, Devon and Dorset Houses in Quarry Bay, the Peninsula Hotel Annex, and the Harbour Centre Towers in Hung Hom. His works also feature in public and commercial buildings in London, Beijing, Hamburg, and Saudi Arabia.

Mr Santry has designed a very large but lightweight suspended sculpture that will run the length of the East Hall Atrium. It will be based on the idea of wings and sails -- with their natural associations with the airport and Hong Kong's harbour -- and constructed of lightweight stainless steel tubing, yacht rigging and sail cloth. Because of its size, the work will comprise three sections, each a mixture of Western and Asian icons. It will be a series of highly colourful flowing images, with as its centrepiece a group of floating shapes inspired by the flying figures painted in the world famous Duong Huang caves on the Silk Road more than 1,000 years ago.

Shanghai-born Dr Tao Ho studied architecture at Harvard, worked as a personal assistant to the Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius, and has been teaching and practising in Hong Kong since 1964. In addition to his many architectural credits, including the design of the Hong Kong Arts Centre in 1977, Dr Tao Ho designed the Bauhinia emblem and flag for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In February 1997, Dr Tao Ho was awarded the prestigious Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, honouring him as a leading international artist and architect and for his contribution in bridging the cultures of the East and the West.

His hanging sculpture for the West Hall of the passenger terminal, entitled "A Synergy of

Dynamic Energy", consists of an array of 18 icosahedra (three-dimensional geometric forms with 20 planar surfaces) made of rainbow coloured aluminium tubes joined together by stainless steel tension wires. The complex form symbolises the dynamic interaction of the 18 districts of Hong Kong and the ingenuity of its people.

AA Corporate Development Director Mr Clinton Leeks said the commissioning of these two artworks, under the guidance of the Board's Artworks Committee chaired by Miss Maria Tam Wai-chu, represents only the first phase of the Authority's artworks policy.

"It is the intention of the Authority to create further landmark features in the future in the form of artworks in the terminal and other locations at the new airport," Mr Leeks said.

"In addition to creating an aesthetically and visually pleasing environment for airport users and visitors, the artworks will help to complement the very distinct architectural nature of the passenger terminal. They will also help to project the character of Hong Kong and its new airport as an international meeting place and gateway to Southern China. They will thus enhance the new terminal's role as one of Hong Kong's greatest and most spectacular landmarks"

Mr Leeks added that the policy also placed great importance on providing future venues for local artists to showcase their works, and so bring to the attention of world travellers the unique cultural heritage of Hong Kong. Future phases of the artworks policy would include displays and exhibitions of significant works from local and possibly overseas sources.

Ref. PR-309