Valuable art treasures of the University

Jo Kam

Walking around the University campus, delightful surprises can be found in the form of displayed artworks. During celebratory events or visits by prominent scholars and experts, various exquisite artworks will also be shown to add colour to the occasion.

The major responsibility for storing the art inventory is shouldered by the Library. Since assuming this task two years ago, library staff have worked hard to develop a database of the collection. The transition of the information to an electronic format has improved maintenance but more significantly, made it possible to post the items on the Library’s website (http://www.cityu.edu.hk/lib/digital/artwork/index.htm) for departments to file online loan applications for the artworks.

With more than 800 artworks in stock, library staff are justifiably proud to manage such a significant collection without hiring external or additional staff. Instead, they redeploy existing staff in every effort, of which Professor Steve Ching Hsianghoo, University Librarian, is very grateful.

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Most of the University’s collection comes from donations. In addition, the CityU Gallery Management Committee, after consulting the Chinese Civilisation Centre, may purchase new artworks for the University. The artwork is then sorted into different categories and placed on the register by the Library.

The collection comprises an array of artwork spanning ancient to contemporary periods and cultures around the world. The diverse works cover various media, including calligraphy, sculptures, photographs and paintings. Some of the works are endowed with special meaning to CityU members beyond their market value. “We are planning to hold an exhibition of the Library’s collection for CityU members,” said Professor Ching.

Like our own health, art needs to be carefully maintained in order to keep it in shape. The Library is also responsible for regular maintenance of the collection, such as appropriate control of temperature and humidity. The artworks are kept in special storage rooms in a Sha Tin warehouse.

“Art can help develop an individual’s personality. We hope to expand our collection by including more artworks created by our own colleagues and students,” said Professor Ching. The Library has staged the Exhibition of Art Works by Members of CityU Community for two years.

Exhibition of Art Works by Members of CityU Community

In 2006, a total of 58 paintings, calligraphy, sketches and pottery created by CityU people for the “Exhibition of Art Works by Members of CityU Community” were on display at the Library. The exhibition, the first of its kind at the University, exemplified the passion for art among the CityU community. Three contributors shared their experiences at a session entitled “Sharing the Experience of Art” after the ceremony.

In 2008, the Library organised the second “Exhibition of Art Works by Members of CityU Community” and “Sharing the Experience of Art”. Over 50 artworks were on display. The exhibition clearly reflected the CityU community members’ enthusiasm for art.
In love with Hong Kong popular songs

Serene Chu

Dr Alice Chik Hsia-hui, Assistant Professor of the Department of English, has an interest in studying the history of popular culture and language education. In recent years, she has developed an ardent interest in collecting local production vinyl records and music CDs. “My favourite singer is Ms Rebecca Pan who came from Shanghai and performed English songs in top-class hotels and night clubs.” Ms Pan’s defining performances came in two local film productions, Days of Being Wild and In the Mood for Love. However, Dr Chik’s most cherished role is Pan’s self-financed production of Broadway opera Madam Pak in 1972. “It was quite an avant-garde initiative to stage a Broadway opera in Hong Kong back in the 70s,” said Dr Chik, in reference to Ms Pan’s performance.

Dr Chik has studied local popular songs since 2006 in a bid to identify the significant impact of English on this artistic medium. The materials she studied include songs from the 1950s to those of recent years, ranging from Ms Grace Chang’s I want you to be my baby to Mr Eason Chan’s Aren’t You Glad. She has so far interviewed more than 60 artists, singers and producers and conducted surveys with 238 tertiary students and more than 100 music lovers to study their listening habits. Besides interviewing veteran artists like Ms Pan and Ms Mona Fong, she also spoke to young performers involved in music production, such as Mr Chet Lam and the musical group “at17”. This provided insight into the entire production process from composition, recording and distribution to promotion. “I find a lot of English songs and English lyrics in Chinese songs in the development of Hong Kong popular songs. This particular cultural phenomenon is worthy of further study.”

Dr Chik’s interest in the language used in popular songs may stem from her family background. Her parents are Shanghai natives who loved listening to Shanghai’s popular Yue opera and classical English songs even after they migrated to Hong Kong. She became interested in independent music several years ago through friends engaged in independent music production. She then started to collect second-hand vinyl records and has now accumulated more than 100. “There are many independent musical groups who sing English songs and I wonder why they would not want to try Cantonese songs,” said Dr Chik. That’s how she started to work with Dr Phil Benson of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, on the study of the history and evolution of local popular songs.

This year, Dr Chik and Dr Benson will publish an academic series, Hong Kong Pop: English Style, that analyses the English elements in local popular songs. Her next project is to publish a book on the history of popular songs in Hong Kong.
A colourful facelift

Eliza Lee

When it comes to realising the objectives of quality education, a congenial study environment is equally as important as outstanding teachers and facilities. The Language Lounge of the English Language Centre (ELC), and the Career and Internship Office (CAIO) have both recently undergone renovations and an enhancement of facilities.

The white walls with ice blue lights in the Language Lounge prompt the sensation you are in a cool northern country, while the English alphabet decorations on the ceiling evoke a contemporary feel. The lounge had not undergone any major renovation since its inception, so the time was ripe to redesign the floor plan and facilities. When it celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, Mr Jean Thorburn Young, Head of ELC, led a working group with six colleagues to plan for the renovation.

“The biggest challenge was to have the maximum flexibility in floor plan design so that we could hold various types of activities in the lounge within the constraints of limited space,” said Ms Young. To achieve this, all furniture, including desks and chairs, can now be moved freely to allow different kinds of activities, even award presentations, to be held. “The tolerance of our colleagues to the inconveniences caused by the renovation ensured the construction work was completed smoothly,” Ms Young added. Both Mr Andre Buitendag, Instructor I, and Ms Flora Leung Fung-chi, Tutor, were very impressed by the redesign and commended the new IT facilities. For example, the glass-built wall is convenient for writing and provides a sense of space.

Leaving the Language Lounge and climbing two stories will take you to the CAIO. Step inside and you will see chairs and murals in bright colours evoking a warm sense of spring. Ms Cecilia Kwok Sau-fong, Director of CAIO, said the design was intended to reflect the happy, vigorous and dynamic image of CityU students. She also tried to create a homelike feel by employing light green as the predominant colour tone. There are oil paintings on the walls, wooden patterns on the door frame and plants and butterfly motifs in the office. “The decorations do not cost much, but they make a workplace more comfortable,” she said.

Ms Kwok and her colleagues started the renovation work for CAIO and their office last March. At the same time, the CAIO website also undertook a major revamp. As the three projects progressed, Ms Kwok encountered numerous difficulties. “With a limited budget and pressing deadlines, as well as the many technical problems with the website revamp, there was quite a lot of pressure,” she said. Fortunately, through the teamwork and concerted efforts of colleagues, enthusiastic support of students and diligent efforts of contractors, the problems were resolved. CAIO is not only open to students; employers and external organisations can also use it for interviews and workshops. The renovated CAIO has been well received by students and employers, as evidenced by the steadily growing number of visitors. “The encouraging response to our hard work makes it worthy of all our toil,” said Ms Kwok.
Giving health a sporting chance

Ellen Chan

This year’s badminton and table tennis competitions, jointly organised by the Human Resources Office and Student Development Services, involved 350 CityU members taking part in the games. About one third of the participants were staff members, in addition to the alumni and students that competed.

Different categories, including those for individuals, teams, families, departments, staff and student teams, were included in the badminton competition. Since its launch in 2002, the annual competition has been very well received by staff and students. Ms Rice Lee Kwai-ying, a new member of CityU, took part in various events and achieved outstanding success.

Rice joined the University last summer to serve as Clerical Officer I at the Governance in Asia Research Centre. She found the heavy workload made it difficult to set aside time to exercise. She took part in the badminton competition as a way to exercise and relieve the pressure of work. “I used to exercise and would like to continue with this pastime. I hope my participation will encourage more colleagues to take part in sports events,” said Rice. “By taking part in the games, I made new friends with colleagues from other departments, which helped me assimilate into my new working environment at CityU.” Besides competing in the individual event, Rice also invited her husband and daughter to join in the spouse doubles and parent-child doubles events. The competition not only helped her family bond but also provided more topics for conversation and enabled her husband and daughter to learn more about her working environment.

For the table tennis competition, different events were also held for individuals, mixed doubles, and staff and student teams. Ms Clara Wong Choi-ki and Mr Gordis Yau Tak-man, Assistant PE Officer I, won the staff mixed doubles event. Clara not only took part in the event, but was also organiser of the competition for the second time. She took care of all the detailed arrangements, worked with the Human Resources Office and trained referees and student helpers. “A lot of student helpers were needed throughout the competition. I had to teach them how to update the competition schedule and record scores. I also needed to teach them the rules so that they could serve as referees in the competition,” said Clara. As coach of the CityU table tennis team, Clara said the competition offered her a chance to identify and recruit some potential student athletes into the University team.

An ardent soccer player and coach of the CityU soccer team, Gordis only took up table tennis two years ago. This was the first time he had paired with Clara in the mixed doubles. Despite possessing excellent physical strength from his soccer training, he found table tennis challenging. “The fast pace and dynamic responses required in table tennis make it physically demanding,” said Gordis. Table tennis has now become one of Gordis’ favourite games, as it helps enhance his relationship with colleagues. He said his son now often invites him to play table tennis.

The badminton and table tennis competitions are part of the annual Wellness March organised by Student Development Services. Other activities that were part of this year’s Wellness March were lectures, workshops, outdoor activities and sports, all aimed at encouraging colleagues to enjoy a healthy and happy life. 

Colleagues show their talent in the badminton and table tennis competitions.
Many people visit Tokyo to shop. But if you are willing to give the credit card a reprieve, you will discover a lot of pleasant places to relax.

Last October, with Tokyo enveloped in deep autumn, I ventured far from the bustling city to visit the suburb of Karuizawa. Exiting the train station, I was instantly met with fresh, cool air. Despite the chilliness, I couldn’t help but take a deep breath to let the fresh air fill my body and soul. There were houses dotting broad avenues with few cars on the road. The leaves on the trees lining the avenues had turned bright red or golden yellow, while blankets of red leaves covered the hills in a beautiful scene.

If time allows, I suggest a two-day stay in Karuizawa. It is a leisurely experience staying in a traditional Japanese Ryokan and exploring the area on a rental bike. It takes only an hour or so to ride to Kumoba-ike, where you can enjoy a tranquil scene formed by red leaves and the pond. You may also consider strolling through the woods to the chapel built entirely of timber, a romantic landmark popular among locals for wedding ceremonies.

Taking break from your hectic schedule to go abroad for a few days will surely help you recharge your batteries.
—Ms Ronnie Leung Mei-yee, Academic Regulations and Records Office

CityU 25th Anniversary Photo and Video Competition

As part of the celebration programme for CityU’s 25th Anniversary, we invite you to capture the CityU experience in a photo format (the video competition is for students only) for a chance to win fabulous prizes.

The theme of the photo competition is CityU - the Most Appealing Moment. Any moment, image or snapshot of campus life that evokes the spirit of City University of Hong Kong will do. Each winner will be presented a cash prize and certificate. The competition is open to all CityU students and staff. Please visit the 25th Anniversary website (http://www.cityu.edu.hk/cityu25/) for more details.

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Linkage Quiz

How many artworks does CityU have?

CityU currently has over 2000 artworks. Each artwork is catalogued in detail, and the collection is continuously expanding.

Lucky draw results for Linkage quiz in issue 277

- Chan Ka-yun (VPRT)
- Chan Lai-wan (MEM)
- Chick Lai-chun (FMO)
- Fung Tak-wing (UP)
- Har Ping-yi (ESU)
- Kwok Sau-lai (BC)
- Leong Wai-ping (ADMO)
- Pang Yin-ping (AP)
- Tam Sue-fung (SLL)
- Tong Ping-keun (EE)

The winner will receive a HK$500 gift voucher. The draw will be made on 26 June. The winner will be notified by email.

Communications & Public Relations Office

Phone / 電話：2788 9317
Fax / 電傳：2628 2812
Website / 網站：cpo@cityu.edu.hk

Editor-in-chief / Shih-yiung Tan
Managing Editor / Lenggen Chen
Executive Editor / Jo Kam
English Editor / Craig Francis
Design / Anissa Wo

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