

Press Release – For Immediate Release

**CHAT launches the ‘Accessibility Tour’,
Hong Kong’s first guided tour led by deaf and hearing docents,
taking inclusive museum experience to a new level**



High resolution photos are available to download from the below link :

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/5vd0b7na8faublwytrlii/ABNXvmEiY-grjN4QSWwgPMI?rlkey=95y48s38o5ggcvxfln4ngp0b1&dl=0>

[Hong Kong, 27 September 2024] Committed to being a ‘textile heritage museum for all’, **CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile)** has come to its fifth year. This month, CHAT is thrilled to announce the launch of its ‘Accessibility Tour’, Hong Kong’s first museum guided tour led by both deaf and hearing docents using spoken and sign languages, offering a brand-new cultural experience with inclusivity at the heart.

Through this innovative initiative, CHAT hopes to foster collaboration and understanding between deaf and hearing communities. Museum docents are not merely gallery guides but also important mediators who stimulate visitors’ curiosity and interest to learn. In the multisensory Accessibility Tour, deaf and hearing docents will go in pairs to share insights into the history of Hong Kong’s textile industry using spoken language and visual sign language, bringing together education, diverse perspectives and entertainment while promoting inclusivity.

The Accessibility Tour is made possible by the generous sponsorship from **The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Hong Kong** and the unwavering support of **Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong**. **SLCO Community Resources**, established by the CUHK team, has also been offering its expertise in sign-bilingual services and actively involved in designing the tour, developing sign vocabulary as well as training deaf and hearing docents. The programme is planned and implemented collaboratively by museum professionals, scholars and social service practitioners to create a more accessible museum for all, aligning with CHAT’s continuous effort in providing unique cultural experiences that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Takahashi Mizuki, Executive Director and Chief Curator of CHAT, shared a personal experience from her time as a curator in Japan. When giving an exhibition tour to a blind visitor, she found that he was more interested in personal interpretations and emotional responses than in museum terminology. This made her realise the essence of the museum experience lies not only in conveying information but in facilitating emotional exchanges among visitors. Takahashi believes that such interactions enrich the museum experience and hopes to enhance the experience at CHAT with a guided tour that resonates with visitors from all backgrounds.

Stories of Collaboration Between Deaf and Hearing Workers at Nan Fung Textiles

Ng Chow Ping and Wong Chow Kuen are deaf and worked as weaving machine operators at Nan Fung Textiles Limited for over ten years in the 1970s and 1980s. They believe hearing impairment did not have a big impact on their work, and deaf workers played an equally important role as their hearing counterparts in the factory.

Ng recalled that her tasks at the Nan Fung Textiles mills were straightforward and simple, and her hearing impairment was not at all a hindrance. She found the working environment suitable for all ages, and she could acquire new knowledge at work. There were about 50 workers in her department, around 15 of whom were deaf. Since there was no vibrating alarm at the time, deaf workers had more difficulty waking up in the morning and preferred to work the afternoon or night shift, which happened to match the operational needs of the factory.

Wong pointed out that deaf workers were much less bothered by the machine noises in the mills, which allowed them to concentrate better on their tasks. Nan Fung Textiles provided shuttle services to pick up and drop off workers; while hearing workers generally had little knowledge of sign language, deaf and hearing workers often mingled and played mahjong together after work.

CHAT's new Accessibility Tour brings back memories of harmonious collaboration between deaf and hearing workers which happened at the same place decades ago, continuing the precious legacy of Hong Kong's textile industry. It also presents a great opportunity for deaf people to work in a museum and give back to the community by educating the public through sign language.

Free and Open to All



First of its kind in Hong Kong, the Accessibility Tour is offered free of charge every Sunday starting from September. It welcomes visitors of all abilities and ages, and no reservation is required. Apart from delving into Hong Kong's textile industrial history, participants will learn about sign language, its basic use and significance in society, gaining a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and inclusion.

Accessibility Tour Details

Date: Every Sunday from now to 29 December 2024

Time: 1:45–2:45pm, 3:45–4:45pm

Venue: The D. H. Chen Foundation Gallery

Language: Cantonese (with simple English interpretation if needed) and Hong Kong Sign Language

NOTE TO EDITORS:

About CHAT

CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile) is Hong Kong's textile heritage museum located on 2/F of The Mills, the former cotton-spinning mills of Nan Fung Textiles in Tsuen Wan. Opened in March 2019, CHAT offers new knowledge while nurturing ideas and talents through exhibitions, workshops and community programmes. Committed to preserving local tangible and intangible textile heritage, CHAT invites everyone to experience the innovative spirit of Hong Kong's textile industry and engage in new dialogues and inspirational journeys that interweave heritage, arts and textile.

Eugenia Law Pik Yu

Eugenia Law is Associate Curator of Learning and Community at CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile) and previously worked at National Geographic Channels, the University of Hong Kong and non-profit independent art organisation 1a space. She graduated from City University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong. She received the Local Arts Administration Scholarships 2017 to pursue museum studies at the University of Leicester, UK. Law has curated exhibitions and events related to contemporary art, community engagement and education. Her practices focus on exploring the possibilities of public engagement in contemporary art and the creative industry.

General Enquiries :

CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile) Tel : +852 3979 2301 Email : media@mill6chat.org

Ada Leung Tel : (852) 3979 2321 Email : ada.leung@mill6chat.org

Tramy Lam Tel : (852) 3979 2329 Email : tramy.lam@mill6chat.org

Lydia Chow Tel : (852) 3979 2320 Email : lydia.chow@mill6chat.org

For media inquiry, please contact: CPR Communications & PR Ltd

Cuby Fu Tel : (852) 6680-6889 Email : cuby@cprcomm.hk

Coey Chan Tel : (852) 9755-7473 Email : info@cprcomm.hk

APPENDIX

The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Hong Kong

The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Hong Kong is a private philanthropy with deep roots in Hong Kong and a mission to enhance the well-being of communities and the environment. Based on its core value of the interconnectedness of all life, the Foundation supports the development of insights, values, and skills that enhance the capacity of individuals and communities to live more fulfilling lives. The Foundation funds programmes that encourage people to make ethical choices that assist their self-development and benefit the wider community and environmental sustainability. It works with organisations throughout Hong Kong, exploring holistic well-being, compassion, equality, and sustainable living.

About SLCO Community Resources

SLCO Community Resources Limited was established in 2016 as an independent non-profit charitable organisation to provide self-sustainable community services based on linguistics research, empirical evidence and experience in frontline services. The vision of SLCO-CR is to promote sign bilingualism in communication, education and social inclusion, and to create a diversified community without communication barriers.

Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies

Established in 2003, the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is the first research centre in the Asia-Pacific region focusing on sign language research and deaf training, including sign linguistics, sign language teaching, sign interpretation, language acquisition of deaf children, adult second language acquisition of sign language and deaf education. In addition to participating in international collaborative research projects, the Centre also coordinates the development of sign linguistics training and research at Asian universities and supports the development of sign bilingualism and co-enrolment (SLCO) education for deaf and hearing students in Asia.