

香港舞蹈概述

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香港舞蹈概述2018

Hong Kong Dance Overview 2018

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美術設計、排版 Graphic Design and Typeset	Felixism Creation
出版 Publisher	Felixism Creation
網站 Website	http://www.danceresearch.com.hk/

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資助 Supported by



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Tai Kwun Dance Season — The Possibilities of People’s Space

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Introduction

The Central Police Station Revitalisation Project, a collaboration between The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) and the Hong Kong government, has transformed the former Central Police Station, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison into a complex for the city’s heritage and arts.¹ Unveiled in May 2018, Tai Kwun was selected by *TIME* as one of the world’s 100 greatest places of the year three months later. The magazine hailed Tai Kwun as ‘Hong Kong’s largest-ever restoration project’ where ‘visitors can have a drink in the former jail or watch a Shakespeare play in a onetime prison yard, among other activities.’² Apart from the repurposed complex that houses permanent exhibition galleries, restaurants, shops, offices, and multi-functional spaces, the heritage site also includes two new buildings — JC Contemporary and JC Cube — for visual and performing arts events.

As Hong Kong’s new landmark for performances and arts, Tai Kwun’s events are certainly not limited to the two buildings. The encompassing array of art programmes is held across outdoor squares and indoor venues. For instance, the 2018 seasonal calendar consisting of ‘Theatre Season’ ‘Dance Season’ and ‘Circus Play’ allowed performing arts to fill every corner of the heritage site, creating a pervasive artistic ambiance unlike any other arts festivals or dance/theatre seasons in town. Meanwhile, as learnt from the interviews with artists who have contributed to the Dance Season, Tai Kwun has dedicated much effort

to attending to the needs of artists, in the hope to develop a more in-depth and long-term partnership besides seeing to the completion and effectiveness of productions.

Since its launch in 2018, Tai Kwun appears to adopt an operation model like that of most cultural landmarks in Hong Kong, that is management by an art operator with funds from a non-profit organisation. The new landmark also shares the vision of promoting local arts and cultures, enhancing public engagement, and planning various art programmes. While such concept and model of development seem to be nothing new from a curatorial perspective, this essay suggests that Tai Kwun is a rarity in the city's arts scene in light of the formation of 'people's theatre' proposed by dramaturg and researcher Katalin Trencsényi.³ As most venues in Hong Kong are managed by the government, Tai Kwun is a rare gem because it is not only a hub of venues, but also of art curation. What makes Tai Kwun different from other venues is three-fold. First, in terms of venue curation, with the goal to build a sphere for social interactions, Tai Kwun's programmes are part of the social agenda that converse with other elements of the venues. Second, when it comes to the planning of the Dance Season and relations with the audience, presenting different dance shows in different sorts of space can create a more multifaceted performance model, and hence a viewing experience that transcends traditional theatre. Lastly, from an artist's point of view, the direction that prioritises people over programmes places emphasis on the ecology of the local dance scene and the minimum one-year partnership with artists also overturns the long-standing model of festival- or institution-driven programme planning. The interviews with artists who have participated in the Dance Season also touch upon questions for the third point: has Tai Kwun, managed and operated by HKJC, brought breakthroughs to the existing production model in Hong Kong? Or was

the partnership in favour of artists' development highly dependent on the efforts of the Performing Arts Team? Can the reliance on certain personnel of the team to stand against the bureaucracy have a real impact on Hong Kong's dance sector?

In this light, while this essay departs from reviewing the 2018 Dance Season, it also covers part of the 2019 Season for a closer look at Tai Kwun and its approach to curation. As data collection is difficult given its short, two-year history, this essay will refer to plenty of information and articles provided by Tai Kwun, as well as interviews with participating artists and insights from practitioners. A personal account as Tai Kwun's creative partner will be included to assess how the city's new venue and curatorial institute of dance has applied artistic and humanitarian vision to its operation and planning. The essay will also observe, under the lens of venue research, the needs of dance creatives and the innovation in the conceptualisation of the production of the performance.

People's Performance Venue

Trencsényi establishes that 'history provides two models of national theatre founding'. One is the 'French (or aristocratic/ absolutist) model' that 'defines what art, good taste and good drama are from the point of view of the establishment', such as the Royal Theatre built in 1748 in Copenhagen.⁴ The other is the 'German (or bourgeois/democratic) model' that uses the theatre as a gathering place for civic society.⁵ First launched in the Schouwburg (City Theatre) in Amsterdam in 1638, this model is still widely adopted in Germany and Britain to date. The former sees the stage as a vehicle of education and showing the drama becomes the main, if not only, function of the theatre; the latter returns the theatre to the people by turning it into a public arena for gathering, food and drinks, entertainment, debate, rest, etc. Take the theatre's catering

management as an example. Built in 1976, National Theatre in London runs on the German model. According to the *Annual Report 2013-2014*, while a majority of its annual income came from ticket sales (60%) and subsidy from Arts Council England (17%), catering and front of house trading made up of 11%, which was a rather high proportion for a national theatre.⁶ Likewise, Sadler's Wells Theatre, the world's leading dance venue in London, generated 11% of its revenue from 'trading and other' in 2018, with 2.9 million Pounds generated by catering alone.⁷ However, in Hong Kong, the government's Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) manages over 60% of the performance venues in the city.⁸ The *2010-2011 Annual Report*, which concluded with a deficit, shows that the hiring charges for venue bookings accounted for 69% of the annual income. In the report of over sixty pages, five pages are dedicated to the management of carparks but none mentions catering.⁹ Of course, some of the public theatres have restaurants and dining facilities, but probably their rental contributes to the overall income. Also, both the Cultural Presentations Section and the Festival Office of LCSD tend to come up with the events before designating them to different venues, hence without taking the venues' development into account in the planning. As shown in both the income proportion and operation model, the former British colony has not inherited the British 'German model' like the quasi-public and public theatres in London. When the major function of Hong Kong's public venues is reduced to hiring, other services are rendered unimportant as reflected in the financial reports. On the other hand, private venues such as Hong Kong Arts Centre and the Fringe Club dedicate more efforts to creating a holistic experience for their audience as well as a domain for social exchange.

Similarly, as a heritage complex for contemporary art exhibitions, performing arts, leisure, and entertainment, Tai Kwun operates with the vision to be a sphere for social exchange, and that includes performing

arts and the aforementioned Dance Seasons. Though income figures from ticket sales and catering have yet to be released, the organisational structure has offered some hints. As of 2020, fifteen catering facilities could be found at almost every building onsite, including bars and restaurants underneath the major indoor performance venue JC Cube and at the main outdoor space Prison Yard. Alongside the evident intention to run a hub where arts and leisure converge, the operation model also takes visitors' experience into consideration. As Zee Yau Eddy, Head of Performing Arts and Dance Season, stressed in one interview, Tai Kwun has not only placed emphasis on its programmes but also the overall audience experience on the site. In another interview, he reiterated that he did not want Tai Kwun to be just another venue for watching shows. 'We hope all visitors can immerse themselves in the artistic ambience at Tai Kwun while chilling out with their friends'.¹⁰ When it came to the planning of the shows' start time and duration, he was always mindful of making room for audience members to have time for pre-theatre dinner as well as after-show drinks — and not only at Tai Kwun alone. Sitting right next to the very beating heart of the city's nightlife, Tai Kwun also wanted to leverage its proximity to Lan Kwai Fong for visitors to delve into arts while being just a stone throw away from leisure.

Zee also noted that, based on field observations and surveys, the geographical location and the operational strategy (similar to the German model) have helped draw a crowd that were not regular show-goers to the performances at Tai Kwun, including dance shows that were often considered more niche. Most people in this crowd came to the shows because they wanted a taste of the cultural experience at Tai Kwun. Interestingly, despite being a tourist hotspot that has attracted thousands from all over the world, locals constituted a significant majority of the performance spectatorship. During the Dance Seasons of October 2018

and October 2019, the five major performances with around twenty concerts have attracted 1,790 and 1,721 audience members respectively, with most of them from Hong Kong.¹¹ While local programmes have not garnered many foreign tourists, they have brought a broad local audience, most of which have not been to any dance shows before, to the theatre. No doubt viewers were enticed to the artists' magical work for the Dance Seasons, but the setting of Tai Kwun also played a huge part. The central location has drawn many to get a taste of the site's leisurely ambience for entertainment and kept them back for performances after visits or drinks. The credit for such dynamics should go to Tai Kwun's strategic endeavours to create a hub where arts and leisure meet.

This outcome may also concern Zee's another remark in the interview. When he curated the Dance Seasons and invited artists and their works to participate, he prioritised maximising the crowd over attracting a certain segment of audience. Unlike other platforms such as the Hong Kong Arts Festival (HKAF) and initiatives by LSCD which often took the existing dance show-goers into consideration, such as inviting world-renowned masters to Hong Kong, Zee inclined to explore other alternatives to reach a more diversified audience. He added that he wanted his audience to enjoy the performances as part of their lives without pressure, without seeing them as some sort of high art. With great confidence in the viewers, Zee did not regard dance as a threshold of high art and hoped the site could facilitate public engagement so that the arts could easily trickle down into people's lives.

Perhaps this operating principle is possible because the complex is managed under the name of 'Tai Kwun — Centre for Heritage and Arts' by the Jockey Club CPS Limited, a not-for-profit company set up through HKJC's Charities Trust. It is never chiefly about performing arts, visual

arts, or conservation, but aims 'to build a culturally vibrant Hong Kong, to enrich lives and to promote social inclusion'.¹² So the shows at Tai Kwun and its Dance Seasons regard public experience with arts in life as their main goal, on the basis of the aforesaid German model.

Unique Space Enhances Distinctive Dance Season Experience

With the aforementioned aim to offer a threshold for non-high art, Dance Season has managed to attract more viewers to the shows. Yeung Chun-kong Daniel, local choreographer and 2020-2022 Council Member (Dance) of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, revealed his observations as an outsider on the unique edge of Tai Kwun venues in an interview. According to Yeung, since JC Cube was not ideal for large-scale performances due to its small stage, other locations were considered. Thanks to the limited restrictions and smaller audience capacity, multifunctional indoor space for exhibitions F Hall Studio (F Hall), outdoor area Prison Yard and other locations have given birth to shows with scales or formats distinct from traditional theatre. The inclination for a smaller and cosier setup was in fact developed from Tai Kwun's Dance Season.

For instance in 2018, *Diary VI – Applause...* by local choreographer Mui Cheuk-yin, *Dollhouse* by Bill Coleman from Canada, *Kids* by Liu Kuanhsiang from Taiwan as well as the screenings of 'Jumping Frames International Dance Video Festival' organised by City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) were presented at JC Cube. *The Message Behind the Wall by 198491* is a triple-bill production by local choreographers Lee Wai-nang Joseph, Yau Ka-hei KT, and Wong Pik-kei Rebecca, and *Disco-Teca* by Chinese choreographer Ergao (He Qiwo) were performed in F Hall. In 2019, *MMM:RE* by McMuiMui Dansemble and *16 Strings and One Body* by Renana Raz from Israel were shown at JC Cube

while *Morphing* by Cheng Tak-yan Enoch and *Dream Team* by Dana Ruttenberg from Israel were performed in F Hall. *Mind Flowing — Workshop / Showcase / Battle* produced by Chan Wing-yip was held at Parade Ground.

Of note, *Disco-Teca* by Ergao leveraged the exhibition space F Hall by redecorating it into a disco that transcended time and ambience. As critic Daisy Chu described, 'Ergao turned the exhibition hall into a disco and audience members into clubbers. The tables and chairs were pushed to the walls to make room for a dance floor in the middle. Comics from the '80s were placed on the tables, above which were slogans from the same period projected on the walls. A group of dancers gave out idol cards with their portraits and biographies to spectators. It was said that *Disco-Teca* was meant to be performed in traditional theatre, but the adjustments made according to the unconventional venue have led to rather impressive results.'¹³ Ergao's show has unexpectedly created an exceptional ambience of another era for the audience to immerse in. Chu also remarked on how the venue's history and space complemented the programme with reference to *Confine* by KT Yau, one of three pieces in *The Message Behind the Wall by 1984/91*. 'KT Yau's *Confine* chose the outdoor Prison Yard to echo the topic of imprisonment and freedom. Like a dialogue with history, it attempted to build organic connections between performance and space while experimenting the performance at a different space.'¹⁴ It also illustrated the exchanges between the history and space of the programme as well as of the venue.

However, this essay begs to differ with the critic's observation about 'the emergence of different venues (meaning unconventional spaces) in recent years'.¹⁵ Given the city's space limitation, local creatives, especially in the field of dance, have been creating in places with varied textures

across Hong Kong, such as City Contemporary Theatre, bars, galleries, exhibition halls and other unofficial venues, since the '80s and '90s. No doubt Tai Kwun has brought more unconventional performance venues to the city, their presence does not explain why the site is a unique one. Mui Cheuk-yin, one of the 2018 Dance Season artist, compared the Season with other art festivals and described Tai Kwun's dance programmes between 2018 and 2019 as 'alternative' in an interview. She noted that unlike organisers who intended to attract the existing dance viewers with large-scale productions, such as HKAF which focused on the promotion of ballet and flamenco, Tai Kwun clearly wanted to pursue another direction. As Mui pointed out, the limited space at JC Cube played a vital role. Smaller audience capacity aside, the stage was so small — less spacious than that of ordinary venues or even some rehearsal rooms — that not even solo performance could make good use of it. That's why Tai Kwun refrained from inviting internationally acclaimed solo performances and instead opted for shows with a special edge. Mui considered this strategy very interesting and smart, as it allowed Tai Kwun's Dance Seasons to build a character distinct from others and bring a refreshing experience to viewers. Therefore, the space limitation has not only changed the mentality of artists, it has also changed how viewers understood dance.

The space defect of JC Cube has given birth to programmes unlike other arts festivals or at other theatres. The use of non-theatre space for performance purposes was no doubt interesting, yet far from innovative given the growing emergence of non-theatre performances in Hong Kong. That said, Tai Kwun's diversified programming strategy, alongside the emphasis on developing relationships with spectators in a cosy environment, has established a participant-friendly attitude at this landmark in Central. As Daniel Yeung said in an interview, 'To build a

character that belongs to Tai Kwun alone.’ Such character has also been developed upon the Dance Seasons’ endeavours to promote local arts and offer local creatives more room to explore various possibilities. Tai Kwun’s support for local productions and nurturing of choreographers were, to Yeung, particularly important to Hong Kong’s dance sector, especially after HKAF axed the ‘Contemporary Dance Series’ due to the halt of HKJC’s funding.

People’s Dance

Local productions — the skeleton, if not the highlight, of Tai Kwun’s dance seasons — have formed another basis for the German national theatre model brought forth by Trencsényi.¹⁶ The model’s emphasis on native language (or local identity) is political. And such a political message is independent from any kind of top-down authority and marks a step towards the realisation of citizens’ cultural values. According to Eddy Zee, ‘Tai Kwun puts the quality of artists before that of productions when conceiving and considering programmes for different seasons.’ For the Dance Seasons in particular, he strategically introduced a veteran choreographer and his/her works every year, while working with young outstanding choreographers and dancers for long-term collaboration. The span of one to three years for future planning offered young artists the space, time, and resources to create. Zee also revealed the hope to empower young artists into converting their short pieces, such as *The Message Behind the Wall by 198491* by Joseph Lee, KT Yau and Rebecca Wong, into full-length productions when he invited his young counterparts on board. His goal, as Zee admitted, was to create a seedbed for local choreographers, so that they could establish themselves in Hong Kong as well as venture overseas. However, as short pieces alone were not enough in a highly competitive world, young artists must present works of forty-five minutes or more within the following few years.

Indeed, such administrative thinking that prioritised artists over productions was truly few and far between in Hong Kong. Daniel Yeung added that while the HKAF's Contemporary Dance Series or the 'New Force in Motion' Series by the LCSD Cultural Presentations Section have also dedicated some efforts to nurturing newcomers, follow-up direction was sorely lacking. Tai Kwun, comparative speaking, has truly embraced the mission to support the younger generation. Likewise, Mui Cheuk-yin found the LCSD's nurturing programme a bit disorganised. For example, one artist was invited to present a full-length show one year but was asked to do a short piece the next year. Mui cited the ladder of development of the dance sector in Belgium as an example: newcomers are presented with many opportunities before the best ones are selected to perform on a larger stage and eventually become in-house choreographers or national representatives. As such strategic planning has not been seen in Hong Kong so far, she discussed with Zee and hoped Tai Kwun could be a platform for two groups — first for veteran choreographers and second for budding dancers with great potential. The latter would be allowed time and opportunities before taking on larger stages such as HKAF or other international platforms to showcase longer, more comprehensive productions.

Long-term partnership with local choreographers involves issues such as the perceptiveness for artists and administrative risks, which depend on whether the organiser has the vision to assess the artists' development as well as future administrative commitments. Mui Cheuk-yin highly commended the Performing Arts Team of Tai Kwun in this regard. By comparison, HKAF and LCSD's Festival Office have invited local artists to perform but only by year. The pressure that came with hosting festivals as scheduled also overshadowed the need to nurture artists. Furthermore, Mui stressed that it took more than reading some proposals or watching

one to two shows to discover talents. It required efforts to closely observe the sector as well as time to talk to different parties, to understand the need of artists and identify suitable candidates. Mui brought back the example of Belgian to illustrate how such a window of opportunity could be opened. First, it needs a venue for practice and a long time frame for regular release of works. Second, an artistic director, instead of administrative staff, should be in charge of the venue, so as to ensure the decision of collaboration can be made under the artist's lens. Zee, albeit not an artistic director in name, has already served such a role and achieved stunning results in 2018 and 2019.

The dance seasons have fully shown its priority for choreographers' needs and people-oriented strategy in the execution of programming, much to the praise of participating choreographers. Mui thought this outcome was owed to Zee's years of experience in the industry and understanding of what it took to achieve success in choreography and creative endeavours. When Tai Kwun's Performing Arts Team engaged in choreography, instead of following administrative procedures from the perspective of producing products, it adopted the mindset of choreographers and ensured sufficient conversations for offering room and support. Mui pointed out that dance creations, in particular, required space and time for artists to wait and polish their works, which for most cases could not report their progress stage by stage to the administrative department. Mui thought that Tai Kwun has offered a lot of freedoms and support in this respect. Another example is Rebecca Wong who has sustained a long-term partnership with Tai Kwun since 2018. She also agreed that Tai Kwun has followed a considerate and humanised work model rarely seen in the city throughout the collaboration. When she was invited to create experimental performances in 2018, Tai Kwun allowed her to try out different venues onsite during the non-official opening hours one month

prior to her shows, so that she could explore different opportunities. This arrangement allowed the choreographer a chance to adapt to the venue, so that she could build connections with it and explore more possibilities. It is better for dancers to better understand the warmth and rhythm for the purpose of design and experiment, especially at a new location such as Tai Kwun.

Besides, regarding the freedom artists enjoyed at the Dance Season, Wong echoed Mui that Tai Kwun's administrative staff seldom intervened in the creative process. When working on her new show for Tai Kwun, the collaboration went well and smoothly. The administrative staff was helpful with technical support and keen to explore different possibilities with choreographers. The people-oriented approach spoke for itself as Wong felt that the administration cared more about the artists and their conditions than the status of production. HKAF, which had relatively more human resources and space, required Wong to design an interim work-in-progress preview solely for administrative purpose and staff to check the progress. Artists were obliged to spend their already limited rehearsal time on an interim report for internal review. Not only has it exerted more pressure on the creative team, it was also a burden to the creative process of the new show.

Another participating choreographer KT Yau said in an interview that she was happy throughout her collaboration with Tai Kwun, from invitation to creative process and showtime. Yau also mentioned the respect Tai Kwun's Performing Arts Team has shown to choreographers as well as its people-oriented approach to programming. That said, other parties in the administrative structure and programming of Tai Kwun could hardly always put people first in curation. In response to the screenings of '2018 Jumping Frames International Dance Festival' (Jumping Frames)

at Tai Kwun, CCDC Assistant Project Manager Danny Wong noted that the Performing Arts Team belonged to one of the three major areas in the organisation structure. The other two were Contemporary Art and Heritage, while Marketing was a separate department. Wong found the venue partnership with Tai Kwun no different from others. The programming demonstrated a lack of coordination between different venues, evident in the timetable clashes where Jumping Frames videos were shown at F Hall, JC Cube and Laundry Steps at the same time. The Marketing Team was at times in conflict with Tai Kwun's mission to promote arts and cultures to visitors and ease members of the public into arts. While the Dance Season had plenty of programmes to offer, there were also many contemporary art and heritage activities within the same period. The arrangement only created an impression that Tai Kwun had a wealth of programmes without shining the spotlight on the Dance Season. Wong cited the website and brochures of Tai Kwun as another example. Instead of a chronological itinerary, the programmes were sorted according to categories. Viewers needed to know the show title before searching the schedule to find out if the time slot fitted his/her availability and interests, rather than simply checking the schedule after hearing about the Dance Season. Those who just wanted to know what programmes were on at Tai Kwun without any prior knowledge might find the layout unfriendly.

Nonetheless, Wong highlighted that Tai Kwun, as a cultural landmark, has its own promotional channels, which would give it an edge in movie marketing over other venues. But as a new premise, its facilities and support services might be less mature than other places. JC Cube, one of the very few theatres equipped with 4K digital cinema projector for screenings, imposed more restrictions on play format than other venues back in 2018. Resources-strapped independent artists, in particular, had

neither the time nor the money to convert their works into the designated play format (DCP). CCDC and artists thus needed to settle on their own the basic issues and costs incurred, though improvement to the situation was seen in 2019. Another deviation from LCSD venues in 2018 was that backstage crews of Tai Kwun would not be responsible for issues with screening even after testing, meaning the staff of CCDC must be present at the control room to watch Tai Kwun crews play the show. Wong and his colleagues could not take care of the auditorium entrance of JC Cube and the control room upstairs at the same time due to the distance between them, so they ended up calling in more staff to help. This procedure was different from how the LCSD venue crews took over the screening at the control panel after completing testing. Similarly, in terms of manpower allocation, Tai Kwun has not carefully thought out every execution detail when they first designed the rundown. Take a screening at 7 p.m. as an example. The backstage crew did not expect the client would need two hours of testing prior to the screening and did not bring up the issue of crew meal break until halfway through. It was also something Wong never had at any LCSD venues.

Summing up the feedback from participating choreographers quoted above, the Performing Arts Team led by Eddy Zee had placed choreography and nurturing people at the core. The open-minded attitude to the performances and the audience has also made significant contributions, bringing a more humanised touch to the curation of dance shows in Hong Kong. However, this attitude was only because of the quality and working style of the Performing Arts Team. The screenings of *Jumping Frames* showed that the administration of Tai Kwun was no different from other establishments, let alone the administrative hiccups of new venues. The humanised approach was also missing in its marketing or backstage management.

I would also like to substantiate the people-oriented proposition of Tai Kwun with my curation for *MMM:RE* of the 2019 Dance Season. The Performing Arts Team's attentive attitude to artists did come through during collaboration. However, they acted to a large extent in personal capacity when they promised creative freedom to artists and shouldered the subsequent risks. The reason was because, under the funding system of HKJC, the Performing Arts Team did not have the power to change the bureaucratic rigidity that was incompatible with the practical needs of artistic creation. Even though the Team started to get in touch with art groups and artists a year prior to the Dance Season scheduled in October, HKJC could not approve the programmes of the fiscal year until it started in July, meaning Tai Kwun needed to finish signing the contract and confirming the shows with the artists within three months or less. In other words, the contract period only allowed art groups or artists three months to organise staff, choreograph and rehearse upon the confirmation. The time span was unrealistic for putting on a show, let alone nurturing talents that needed much more time. So, the team behind *MMM:RE* had a preliminary discussion with Tai Kwun and started working a year beforehand without a contract. As the whole plan could still be called off before that, we needed to bear the risks for investing trust in the Performing Arts Team, risks that would not exist in other arts festivals. Meanwhile, the Performing Arts Team has taken a huge risk for working without complying with the production ethics of HKJC. So strictly speaking, the team did not represent HKJC or Tai Kwun when they invited artists to get involved. The collaboration was possible because of their vision and trust, as well as plenty of administrative efforts to convince HKJC and Tai Kwun.

Therefore, this section heading 'People's Dance' carries double meaning. First, Tai Kwun did put its people-oriented mission into practice by offering artists the greatest freedom and support needed to complete

their works and allowing talents with more time to develop their arts. Second, in terms of administration and system, HKJC and Tai Kwun have fully demonstrated, as the city's largest charity and arts sponsor, the bureaucratic rigidity ignorant of the reality and practical needs of arts development. The security of staff and artists were sacrificed to ensure the Dance Season could proceed in a smooth manner. On the basis that went against the contract, the personnel management that overcame issues arising from faulty administrative measures was indeed a 'dance of people' born out of an unhealthy system.

Conclusion

Based on the three arguments above — first, Tai Kwun is both a venue and a curator that aims to shower its audience with an overall immersive experience apart from providing spaces for performances; second, the diversified and down-to-earth performances have highlighted Tai Kwun's edge and left audience with a warm and friendly impression; third, the Performing Arts Team's care for artists and its determination to nurture talents are certainly worthy of praise. So, the Dance Season has lived up to the 'people's theatre' vision and handed the venue to people, including tourists, spectators, artists while without sanctifying, refining, or using the shows for trades. However, in terms of administration, HKJC clearly cared less about the logic of performing arts production than LCSD or other arts venues. The priority for bureaucracy was not only exemplary of dehumanisation, the unreasonable procedures also required a lot of manpower and resources to tackle and accommodate.

In the end, time will tell whether Tai Kwun can truly embrace the German national theatre model and give the venue's power back to the people. But one thing for sure is that Tai Kwun has held pretty much the same principle since the public consultation in 2008: 'Creating a

destination for both locals and tourists, of all ages and background, alike; Injecting arts and cultural elements into the Compound, in addition to commercialising parts of the historical buildings; Providing public spaces for the general public.¹⁷ Tai Kwun has been expanding its shops and restaurants and has become home to fifteen eateries as of 2020.¹⁸ Unlike its neighbour in Central, which was set to 'champion "Enterprising Creativity" (turning Creativity to Business)', it did not intend to become a people's shopping mall.¹⁹ Tai Kwun may have a lot of administrative restrictions, but as long as arts performances and exhibitions, instead of restaurants and shops, are still major to Tai Kwun, it still has the potential to become a true 'people's theatre'.

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