

## Honorary Fellow A Citation

### Professor KAO Mayching, BA, MA, PhD

Grounded in knowledge from the West and the East, nourished by exemplary virtue and integrity, and tended with industrious diligence, she has cultivated excellence in the academics of art, and in her life, outstanding achievements have blossomed like flowers.

Art presents the pursuit of beauty in life, reflecting and exploring it from an aesthetic perspective. It is a combination of artistic skill and the techniques and expression thereof. To truly be an artist, one must possess talent and instinct, superb skills and a wealth of experience. To truly be an expert in the arts, one must also possess extensive, deeply penetrating insight into its background and historical context. Professor Kao Mayching is exceptionally distinguished for her unique understanding and appreciation of the arts from both an artistic and academic stance.

Renowned as an art historian, connoisseur of painting, calligraphy and cultural relics, Professor Kao represents the spirit of the humanities. Throughout her career, she has devoted herself to the advancement of local arts education, and to the cultivation of young artists. Industrious and dedicated, she has been one of the staunchest advocates of the humanities, promoting the necessity of the arts for developing an artistic environment in the commercial metropolis of Hong Kong.

Professor Kao was born into an artistic family. Her father, Mr Kao Ling-mei, is a native of Nanjing, Jiangsu Province and a prestigious contemporary Chinese photographer. Her mother, Madam Jan Yun-bor, is an enthusiast of fine arts, in particular painting and calligraphy. Together, the couple established the Mei Yun Tang Collection, which comprises various collections of art, including many paintings

of Master Chang Dai-chien. For many years, Mr Kao Ling-mei and Master Chang were such close friends that they were like brothers to each other. Being the fifth child in the family and growing up in an art-rich environment, it should not be surprising that Professor Kao developed remarkable talents of her own, as well as a great passion for the arts. After finishing her secondary education, she enrolled in New Asia College at CUHK, where she majored in Fine Arts and graduated with outstanding performance in 1967. Having been awarded the Yale-China Association Scholarship to study in the United States, she went on to receive her Master's degree in Western Art History from the University of New Mexico in 1969, followed by her PhD in Asian Art History from Stanford University in 1972.

Professor Kao returned to Hong Kong, her alma mater, at New Asia College to become a professor in the Department of Fine Arts, beginning her untiring, lifelong dedication to arts education at CUHK. Between 1975 and 1977, and again between 1981 and 1984, she served as Chairperson of the Department of Fine Arts, during which time she established the Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Fine Arts programmes, a milestone achievement in the Department's planning and development. In 1981, Professor Kao was appointed Director of the Art Museum of the Institute of Chinese Studies at CUHK, where she spearheaded the Institute's development and the expansion of its collection, exhibition, and research of artwork. During her 18 years as the Director, she was responsible for many great achievements. When the Friends of the Art Museum was established, it fostered a closer relationship with the community both locally and abroad. To further this, Professor Kao organised frequent exchange visits and mutual visits of experts from various cultural institutions

in mainland China, greatly enhancing Hong Kong's understanding of the motherland's museums and traditional culture.

In 1994, Professor Kao was promoted to Chair Professor of the Department of Fine Arts at CUHK. Her areas of expertise were extensive, including ancient Chinese arts, paintings and calligraphy of the Ming and Qing dynasties, modern arts, and arts education, along with the histories of Sino-Western and Sino-Japanese artistic relationships and exchanges. Her spectacular accomplishments in research have received international praise. In 1999, Professor Kao retired from CUHK to become Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences at the Open University of Hong Kong, where she worked industriously to promote education in humanities and the arts for the public and society as a whole.

In 2003, Professor Kao retired from the Open University, but continued her tireless efforts to promote arts education and culture. In addition to serving as member and expert advisor in a number of advisory committees of the various HKSAR Government agencies, she also served as chairman and member of the arts development committees of many universities. Among the positions she has held are: advisor of the Tin Ka Ping Centre of Chinese Culture at the Open University of Hong Kong, advisory committee member of the Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University, and Chairman of the Management Committee of the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre.

Professor Kao's passion for supporting arts education has received widespread acclaim. To cultivate students and researchers interested in and inspired by the fine arts, she established the 'Professor Kao Mayching Scholarship' at the

Open University and the 'Professor Mayching Kao Fine Arts Fund' at CUHK. Furthermore, she established the CUHK's 'Professor Mayching Kao Art History Award', and was one of the sponsors of the 'Madam Jan Yun-bor Memorial Awards for Chinese Painting and Calligraphy', the 'Professor Johnson Chow Su Sing Chinese Painting and Calligraphy Award' and the 'Professor Tseng K'e-tuen Chinese Poetry and Calligraphy Award'. Her dedication to her alma mater, and to nurturing future generations, spreading Chinese culture, and promoting the arts, is admired by all.

In recognition of her contributions to the advancement of arts and humanities education in Hong Kong and internationally, as well as her devotion, donation to and support for New Asia College of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Mr Chairman, it is my great pleasure to present to you Professor Kao Mayching for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.