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Hong Kong Maritime Museum presents
Maritime Crossroads: Millenia of Global Trade in Hong Kong
A Special Exhibition on 6,000 Years of Hong Kong Maritime Stories

Hong Kong, 19 May 2021 – The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) announces the opening of a special exhibition that embarks the audience on a journey of discovery, spanning 6,000 years from the Neolithic to the Internet era. The exhibition unearths the fascinating maritime stories that turned Hong Kong into a cosmopolitan port city.

Maritime Crossroads: Millenia of Global Trade in Hong Kong runs from 3 June to 12 August 2021. Opening with a sculpture of Lo Ting, the mythical merman that speaks to the maritime roots of people in Hong Kong, the exhibition showcases 250 exhibits and artefacts including historic ceramics and paintings, latest local archaeological discoveries, a 3D print of an ancient rock carving, and two 19th century cannonades recovered from the seabed near Sai Kung, possibly used by pirates. Audiences can also engage with an immersive digital display of the museum's important 18th century Gentiloni painting, and a demonstration of the reclamation of Hong Kong's coastal line in the Victoria Harbour produced by the Department of Geography, The University of Hong Kong.

Organised and curated by the Hong Kong Maritime Museum, this exhibition displays two parallel yet highly connected narratives. The first examines the maritime stories of Hong Kong, whilst the second examines maritime interactions between Hong Kong, South China, East Asia, and the rest of the world. Five sections, namely 'Tracing the Maritime Roots', 'Meeting Points of Trade and Culture', 'Wonders and Encounters', 'Integration and Interaction' and 'Standing on the World Stage', with ten anchoring themes arranged in chronological order interweave the Hong Kong maritime stories into global perspectives.

"This exhibition illustrates the concepts of crossroads, flows, transitions, migration, and settlement through the circulations not only of commodities but also of people, their cultures, and their stories," says Prof. Joost Schokkenbroek, Hong Kong Maritime Museum Director.

Dr. Libby Chan, Assistant Director (Curatorial & Collection) of HKMM adds, "surrounded by the sea and depending on maritime resources, our lives are inseparably connected with the ocean. The long history of our activities at sea, our trading and cross-cultural interactions has deep roots in Hong Kong's heritage, and is still highly relevant today. The exhibition is also educational in a sense that its refreshing stories and underwater archaeological evidence complement the new Chinese History syllabus of secondary schools in Hong Kong,"

A series of talks, entitled 'Maritime Culture Salon', a curator's tour and education programmes will take place during the exhibition period to encourage discussions on topics in Hong Kong maritime history and heritage.

The exhibition is generously supported by the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund, Transport and Housing Bureau HKSAR. The general loans came from the city's Antiquities and Monuments Office, HKSAR; Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; University Museum and Art Gallery, The

香港海事博物館 HONG KONG MARITIME MUSEUM

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(Hong Kong Maritime Museum is incorporated with limited liability)

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University of Hong Kong; Zhuhai Museum; as well as prominent local collectors and the Museum collection. Digital exhibits from Museu do Oriente in Lisbon will also be featured.

For images, please download here: <http://bit.ly/maritimecrossroads>

Maritime Crossroads: Millenia of Global Trade in Hong Kong

Press Preview

Date: 2 June 2021

Time: 14:00-15:30

Venue: Special Exhibitions & Events Gallery & Long Gallery, Hong Kong Maritime Museum

Exhibition

Date: 3 June to 12 August 2021

Time: 09:30 - 17:30 (Mon to Fri), 10:00 - 19:00 (Sat, Sun & Public Holidays)

Venue: Special Exhibitions & Events Gallery & Long Gallery, Hong Kong Maritime Museum

Exhibition Highlights

Section 1: Tracing the Maritime Roots

Showcasing archaeological discoveries in Hong Kong, and the treasures from the HKMM and other private collections, the first section emphasises the importance of water in the civilizations that developed along rivers and coasts, with the case studies on the Yellow River, the Yangtze River and sea regions in the Asia-Pacific, and the emergence of the East Asian maritime network after the arrival of the Qin-Han imperial power along the south-eastern coast of China. In addition, while focusing on how early inhabitants connected to the Yue people and various cultures along the coasts and in the Asia-Pacific region, this section aims to understand the influences from the Han culture that spread across East Asia and conveys the concept of “diversity in unity” as maritime heritage developed.



3D printing of rock carving at Big Wave Bay
Bronze Age
Big Wave Bay, Sai Kung, Hong Kong
On loan from the University Research Facility in
3D Printing (U3DP), The Hong Kong Polytechnic
University)

This stone carving shows how the early inhabitants were influenced by the animal motif brought to Hong Kong along the coast from the Central Plain of the Yellow River, and its connectivity with zoomorphic images in the Asia-Pacific.

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	<p>Merman Lo Ting sculpture Oscar Ho Hing Kay Fibreglass 1998 On loan from Mr. Oscar Ho Hing Kay</p> <p>Lo Ting, an imaginary half-fish half-human, was based on a historical person, Liu Xun, who fled to and lived around the coast of Lantau island. In the Tang poem Records of the Unusualness in Lingnan Liu Xun wrote: “Lo Ting, who fled to the islands and lives wildly there, eats mussels, and uses shells to build walls”. This story echoes the long architectural practice of making shell walled houses in the Lingnan region.</p> <p>Image from Ha Bik Chuen Archive. Courtesy of the Ha Family and Asia Art Archive.</p>
	<p>Green-glazed tower boat Pottery Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220 CE) Gift of Sir Adrian Swire</p> <p>The large anchor on the Eastern Han ship model demonstrates the advanced naval architecture and technology that can sail as far as India and Sri Lanka during the Han dynasty.</p>

Section 2: Meeting Points of Trade and Culture

The trade network developed during the 2nd to the 6th centuries and established the connection among East Asia, the Indo-Pacific region and the Persian Gulf. Yet it was still indirect. In the 7th century, political integration occurred in the Tang Empire and the Arabic countries in West Asia. Rapid leaps in navigational technology occurred simultaneously in East and West Asia. From the Persian Gulf to Japan, the exchange of customs and culture by traders, envoys and monks went along with prosperous maritime trade in the 7th to the 14th centuries. Meanwhile, Guangzhou had more frequent overland exchanges with the Central Plains after the development of a Dayu Mountains link with Nanxiong in the Tang dynasty and became the major outpost port of China. Hong Kong also served as a transit port

for merchants to supply necessities and transfer goods during their long voyages.

	<p>Porcelain bowl base sherd with characters “店口” Minnan Kilns, Fujian Province, unearthed from Sacred Hill North Song Dynasty to Yuan Dynasty (960–1368 CE) On loan from Antiquities and Monuments Office</p> <p>This Fujian pottery base inscribed with a character of “shop X” found in Kowloon City demonstrates there was an active ceramics export business in Hong Kong.</p>
	<p>Pottery kendi Cizao Kiln, Fujian Province, unearthed from Sacred Hill North Song Dynasty to Yuan Dynasty (960–1368 CE) On loan from the Antiquities and Monuments Office</p> <p>This Kendi, made in Fujian, was used for exporting to the Southeast Asian Islamic market.</p>
	<p>The worship of Tin Hau in Joss House Bay, Sai Kung (detail) Lui Shou-kwan (Lü Shoukun) (1919–1975) Ink and colour on paper 1961 On loan from Mrs. Susan Chen Hardy</p> <p>The Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea) Temple in Joss House Bay was built in 1266 with a stele carved in 1274, telling the story of repairing the temples of South and North Fat Tong Mun (Tung Lung Chau and Joss House Bay) during the reign of Xianchun, Southern Song Dynasty. Nowadays worshipping Tin Hau is an important tradition of not only the boat people, but coastal area in the East and Southeast Asia.</p>

Section 3: Wonders and Encounters

Portugal's establishment of Macau as its outpost marked the early contacts between Europe and East Asia. After the first engagements with different European competitors, a global network emerged with prosperous trading and colonisation. Competition between Spain and Portugal was severe, and both wished to control as many colonial territories as possible along the African coast. As a result of the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), Spain and Portugal explored and claimed new territories and voyages in the unknown American continents. Protestants from the Dutch Republic were not as adamant as the Jesuits from Spain and Portugal in propagating Christianity in the East. The Dutch merchants gained trust from the Japanese Shogunate in 1609. The Dutch East India Company, established in 1602, provided world news and knowledge to the Shogunate during the Christianity ban in Japan, in exchange for trading opportunities in Nagasaki.

Hong Kong actively engaged in this global maritime trade. Examples demonstrate this such as a large number of blue-and-white porcelain shards unearthed in Penny's Bay, Lantau Island date to the late Ming dynasty (1464–1522), Matabaan jars, and pottery pieces from Annam (now Vietnam) and Siam (now Thailand). These discoveries indicate that Hong Kong was located along the trading routes between China and South-East Asia, serving as a port for water and food supply, ballast disposal or smuggling.



Carved and polychrome wooden figure of Koxinga

Early Qing Dynasty

Gift of Mr. James Chen in remembrance of his sister Mrs. Susan Chen Hardy

Koxinga, also known as Zheng Chenggong, was born in Hirado, Japan. His father was a Chinese merchant and a pirate named Zheng Zhilong. Koxinga was a Chinese Ming loyalist who resisted the Qing conquest of China in the 17th century. In 1655, Koxinga was bestowed the title of Prefecture Prince by Emperor Yongli of Southern Ming dynasty. In 1661, he defeated the Dutch outpost in Taiwan, established the Kingdom of Tungning in Tainan and died at the age of 37 at the year after. Koxinga is regarded as a hero and thereafter worshiped as a god in coastal China, Southeast Asia, and Taiwan.

Sitting on a crimson wooden stand, the figure was sculpted with a hidden compartment at the back to store sutra or ceremonial objects. The figure wears the

	<p>Ming-style official robe and hat, decorated with moustache and calm face, that well reflects the righteous image of Koxinga and the craftsmanship prevalent in Fujian and Taiwan.</p>
	<p>Plate with blue & white decoration of "Tallship" Porcelain Kangxi Period, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1710</p> <p>The ship shows the style of Dutch or British Indiaman, in its multiple double-rigged masts and two-tier deck. This was a popular China pattern on porcelain for export in the early 18th century. Though a western subject as the central motif, the broad rim is decorated with alternating panels of Chinese brocade designs and boy carrying a lotus. The boy motif symbolises the Chinese rebus 'May you continuously give birth to distinguished sons'.</p>
	<p>Spanish galleon <i>San Felipe</i> (1690) Wood 2005</p> <p>An improved design of the Spanish Armada, was later used for very large galleons trading between Mexico and Manila. The older high carrack forecastle is absent, allowing the ship to sail to windward and still hold its course. Many such 1,000-ton galleons were built in the Philippines with the help of Chinese shipwrights. They were short vessels, but of great beam and light draught. Elevated at bow and stern, they had a half-moon appearance. They had four decks and carried guns.</p>



Gentiloni Painting: Zhaoqing, late 18th century (Digital Display)

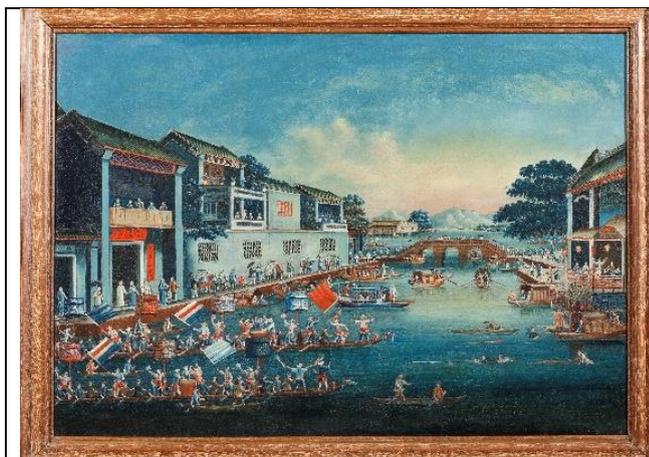
China
c. late 18 century

A 19th century manuscript note in Italian on the reverse of the panel. English translation: 'Cav. Camillo de Rossi, grandfather of the Marchesa Natalia de Rossi in Farraioli, bought the views of the four Chinese ports in the city of Rio de Janeiro. He found himself in Brazil as Secretary under the Papal legation to King John VI of Braganza, probably in 1807, when the King had left Portugal which was then occupied by the French.'

Section 4: Integration and Interaction

Mercantilism resonated among European countries and beyond. Britain, followed by other European countries, started to establish its empire with colonies around the world that facilitated control of resources, production streams and trading networks. As an example, cotton was planted in the Americas and India, was transported to spinning mills in Manchester, and subsequently shipped to China for sale. Production, processing, and wholesales in different regions were connected through the sea.

In the Tang dynasty, an advanced maritime trade system, *Shibosi* (Superintendent's Office), was established. Canton had long been an official foreign trade port. After lifting the Great Clearance of the coastal area in the Qing Kangxi period, four ports were re-opened for trading. The tax revenue of Canton Customs continued to exceed the sum of the other three ports of the Pearl river region combined. Canton maintained its essential role as a trade and transit hub.



Dragon boat racing at Spring Festival

Oil on canvas

Late 19th century

On loan from Mr. Anthony J. Hardy

This is an unusual painting of dragon boats racing at a time other than the Duanwu (mid-summer) Festival. The lettering on the building on the left notes a spring festival and marks a local success in national examination.



Verandah chair with headrest and extension for legs

Bamboo, with a cane seat and incised decoration

Made in China for export market

19th century

Given the heat and humidity of the long summers of Canton, cane and bamboo were popular materials for making furniture. The addition of wheels and a stretcher to the chair were new designs that adapted to foreign merchant's need in their Chinese residences. The verandah chair was particularly suitable for people in tropical cities such as Canton, Macao and Hong Kong, and they were popular commodities in Europe and America as well.

**Cannonades**

Bronze

Salvaged from Basalt Island, Sai Kung
c. 1830sOn loan from the Antiquities and
Monuments Office

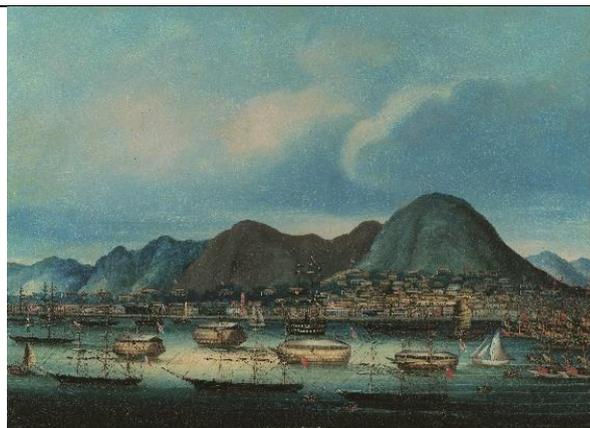
British cannonades, (c. 1830) found off Basalt Island in 2017 during underwater archaeology. The excavation, preservation and exhibition is a collaboration with AMO, HKMM and the community Underwater Archaeological Group.

Found in Hong Kong waters and used in commercial vessels or stolen by local pirates, the cannonade demonstrates Hong Kong was on the trading routes for Western vessels which were active here before Victoria Harbour was opened up for free trade.

Section 5: Standing on the World Stage

Hong Kong's geographical advantage is epitomized in its inextricable connections with ocean. In negotiations with the Qing government during the First Opium War, the British Plenipotentiary Sir Charles Elliot realized that the deep-water haven and fresh-water source in combination with the strategic location contributed to the strength of Hong Kong as a more favourable port than Zhoushan.

In the 1860s, steamships began to replace clippers. River channels along the Pearl River had become shallower due to natural sedimentation. Comparatively, a wide and deep-water harbour in Hong Kong, in combination with regular maintenance dredging and advanced port facilities like shipyards, dockyards and lighthouses, is favourable for seagoing vessels berthing and transiting. Hong Kong gradually transformed into an international maritime hub.



Hong Kong Victoria Harbour

Oil on canvas

Early 1870s

Gift of Anthony J. Hardy

This painting shows the central harbour at the point when Hong Kong was taking off as a port from its slow-growing early years. A close look shows ships from Britain, the United States, France and the Netherlands, as well as a host of Chinese vessels off the Western District. The American ship – an auxiliary steam warship – helps us date the painting to the early 1870s. The ship is likely to be the USS *Colorado*, the flagship of the US Navy's Asiatic Squadron, formed in 1868 to replace the preceding East Indies Squadron (1831–1868).



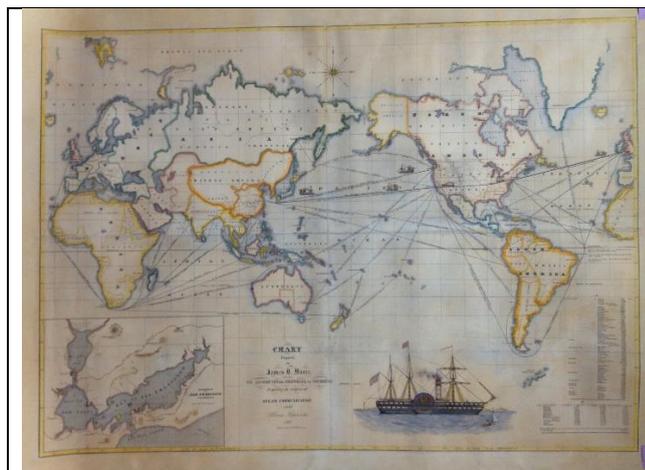
Hong Kong and the Harbour

Gouache on pearl

Late 19th century

Hong Kong Maritime Museum Collection

This is a typical tourist souvenir of the period, with a delicately, if rather primitively rendered scene of Hong Kong Island across Victoria Harbour painted on the inside of an oyster shell. These shells have a long history in China Trade art. The pearl oyster, of the family Pteriidae, is not a true oyster but is the main pearl bearing shellfish. The pearl oyster has long been cultivated in the South China sea and in Dynastic times Tolo Harbour was famous for its pearls. Because of the thickness of the nacre - or mother-of-pearl - the best known objet d'art use of these shells was for low relief carving, many for use as baptismal gifts for use in a child's baptism.

**A chart showing the steamship routes between the West and China, Japan, etc.**

Drawn by James B. Moore, engraved by H. Gollmer

1850

Gift of Wallem Group

This 19th-century chart shows the steamship routes between Hong Kong and the West, China and Japan, for the transport of labourers, resources and goods.

About Hong Kong Maritime Museum

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) is founded by members of the Hong Kong Shipowners Association to help Hong Kong residents and visitors to the city explore its unique maritime heritage. HKMM is an independent, non-profit registered charity supported by the shipping industry, the business community, individuals and the Hong Kong SAR Government. The HKMM is a cultural institution that tells the stories of Hong Kong's relationship with the sea, including the trades between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta and the World, and the vital roles played by so many ships in those stories.

The Museum opened its door to the public at Murray House in Stanley in 2005 and relocated to Central Pier No. 8 in the heart of the Central Harbour Waterfront in 2013. Today the Museum displays over 1,200 objects in 15 galleries, attracting about 130,000 visitors annually. The HKMM also houses various event spaces, a resource centre, its rooftop (social enterprise) Café 8 which enjoys wonderful harbour views, and a museum shop. The HKMM engages with the community of Hong Kong by providing education and public programming to schools, adults, community groups and families.

www.hkmaritimemuseum.org

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