

(February 9, 2012 HONG KONG)

For Immediate Release

**Heritage military compound given a new lease of life**  
**The Hong Kong Jockey Club Former Explosives Magazine**  
**Transformed into cultural hub - Asia Society Hong Kong Center**

February 9, 2012 <Thursday> marks the day where the page of history is turned for the four former British military compounds in Hong Kong. Located at 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Former Explosives Magazine is revitalized and transformed into a new cultural and intellectual hub and houses the Asia Society Hong Kong Center. The compound celebrates its opening on this very day with the presence of the Chief Executive of HKSAR Government, the Honorable Donald TSANG, GBM, KBE as Guest of Honor at the opening ceremony together with officiating guests including: Mr. TUNG Chee Wah, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference & Former Chief Executive; Mr. Ronnie C. CHAN, Co-Chair of Asia Society and Chairman of Asia Society Hong Kong Center; Ms. Henrietta H. FORE, Co-Chair of Asia Society; Dr. Vishakha N. DESAI, President of Asia Society (New York); Mr. Charles ROCKEFELLER, Trustee of Asia Society; Mr. T. Brian STEVENSON SBS JP, Chairman of The Hong Kong Jockey Club, and Mrs. Edith Ngan CHAN, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center. The Center celebrated the milestone of collaborative effort between different sectors in heritage conversation. *"Recognizing the cultural value of this adaptive reuse project, the Hong Kong government together with the non-profit sector, local businesses, and committed individuals came together to preserve this heritage site"* said Mr. Ronnie C. CHAN who held in high regard the spirit of partnership in seeing the project to fruition, *"this center will contribute significantly to Hong Kong as a world city, a business center, and a cultural hub. We are pleased to play our part in enriching Hong Kong's cultural and intellectual scene."*

**Now and then – from Explosives Magazines to Cultural Hub**

Abandoned since the 1980s, the 1.4-hectare heritage site embodies three Grade 1 and a Grade 2 heritage buildings developed between the 1860s and 1940s, which were used to store and mix explosives. Housing the new Asia Society Hong Kong Center, the revitalized establishment is now open to public for the first time in history, and will carry the mission of Asia Society – to impact the local community through insightful programs across disciplines that celebrates cultural and policy diversity between the East and the West. Generously funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the heritage site is revitalized and injected with a new life as a venue.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Stevenson said the Jockey Club recognised the importance of preserving what were among the last vestiges of the British military presence in Hong Kong – buildings of significant historical and architectural merit, some dating from the mid-19th century. "We are delighted to be a participant in the project as it complements a number of the Club's community initiatives in heritage conservation, arts and culture and most importantly, creates more educational opportunities for the younger generations to learn from the past," he noted. "The Jockey Club is particularly proud to have its name attached to this great new facility. What's equally important is that this project is not just one of heritage preservation but also coupled with revitalization; the adaptive reuse of these

heritage buildings into what has now become a totally revitalised and functioning set of buildings to serve the community as a centre for arts, culture and contemporary affairs.”

The society is also grateful of the generous support from organizations and individuals including Maurice R. Greenberg, The Starr Foundation, Robert & Chantal Miller, The Joseph Lau Luen Hung Charitable Trust, Noble Group Limited, Alex & Sacha Yasumoto as well as Merle and Miriam Hinrichs.

### **Inaugural exhibition - Transforming Minds: Buddhism in Art**

Program line-up beginning in the month of February is in line with the theme of TRANSFORMATION: In conjunction with the Asia Society Museum, New York, the inspiring inaugural exhibition Transforming Minds: Buddhism in Art uncovers the sublimely beautiful and spiritual world of Buddhist art. Organized by a dedicated team of museum professionals led by Curator, Dr. Melissa CHIU, the exhibition draws from Asia’s unique heritage and makes it relevant to our times. Showcasing traditional pieces dating back to the 2nd Century from the world-renowned Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of Asian Art together with contemporary works by leading Asian and Asian American artists namely Montien BOONMA, ZHANG Huan, Michael JOO and Mariko MORI, exhibition will be on display from February 10 to May 20, 2012. The exhibition is made possible by Presenting sponsor, The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation. Mr. Robert Y.C. Ho, Chairman of the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation said, “Our mission is to promote cultural awareness, mutual understanding, and an appreciation for Buddhist philosophy and art, which combined with the Ho Family’s commitment to Hong Kong’s transformation over the past 150 years, makes this important exhibition a fitting venue for expressing our vision and values.” Other than the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation, the exhibition is also generously supported by the Corporate Sponsor, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

### **Asia Society Hong Kong Center: Serving Hong Kong for 20 years**

The Asia Society Hong Kong Center (ASHK Center) was established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders, led by Sir Q.W. Lee, then chairman of Hang Seng Bank. It is the first overseas center of the 11 centers of Asia Society, a non-profit educational organization founded in New York.

The Asia Society Hong Kong Center at the Hong Kong Jockey Club Former Explosives Magazine carries historical, architectural and cultural significance to the city. The Center combines heritage conservation with a distinctive modern aesthetic that has created a dynamic complex allowing the Center to extend educational programs to the larger community. “Since our establishment in 1990, the ASHK has become a recognized regional knowledge-based platform for learning about Asia,” said Mrs. Edith Ngan CHAN, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center. “In the past five years, over 70,000 people have participated in our programs, more than 10% of whom are students. By providing intellectually and culturally stimulating programs championed by world renowned scholars and experts on the subject, we raise awareness in the communities – the key issues and trends affecting Asia to bring about policy considerations and action required,” said Mrs. CHAN.

**Asia Society: Doorway to the World**

“Asia Society is increasing its Asian and US footprint as well as expanding its global network of Asians and Americans in many fields and disciplines. Our strengths are in making connections and building understanding in the areas of business, policy, education, leadership and the arts. Asian cultures are receiving more attention everywhere. And, as matters of culture take on greater importance, so does Asia Society. We are becoming more relevant, more vital, more useful for the world at large,” said *Ms. Henrietta H. FORE, Co-Chair of Asia Society*. The Asia Society is a non-profit, non-governmental, educational organization dedicated to furthering understanding of the countries and cultures of Asia. Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in New York, the Asia Society now has 11 centers in the U.S. and Asia, including Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai and Washington. D.C. Dr Vishakha N. DESAI, President of Asia Society Global remarked “Asia Society is committed to developing a deep involvement in the region that takes into account the cultural roots of Asian civilizations as well as contemporary realities and future possibilities.” The new facilities are central to the 56-year-old Society and its plan of building dynamic multinational and multi-disciplinary networks as the world’s economic and cultural center of gravity moves toward Asia, said Asia Society President Vishakha N. Desai. “Asia Society aims to increase our impact and reach to convene people, connect ideas and cultures, and catalyze collaborative action that addresses the shared challenges of our rapidly changing, globalized world,” Desai said. “An enhanced Hong Kong operation will allow us to broaden and deepen our work. Connecting issues of the day with cultural traditions and perspectives was a unique contribution of our founder, John D. Rockefeller 3rd, and it remains a hallmark of the institution.”

**Opening details and inaugural activities**

Center	Opening hours	Tuesday to Sunday: 10.00 am – 6.00 pm. Every last Thursday of the month: 10.00 am – 9.00 pm. Closed: Every Monday and public holiday
	Admission Fee	Free
Heritage Tour	Fee	Free, every Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday
Asia Society Gallery (Former Magazine A)	Opening hours	Tuesday to Sunday: 11.00 am - 5.00 pm. Every last Thursday of the month: 11.00 am - 8.00 pm. Closed: Every Monday and public holiday
	Admission Fee for public	Adult: HK\$30 Seniors (aged 60 or above): HK\$15 Individuals with disabilities: HK\$15 Full-time students & aged 18 or below: Free

The transformed site will provide a unique venue for educational programs for students and the general public on heritage, arts, culture and contemporary affairs. Diverse and inspiring public forums under three key pillars of Business & Policy; Heritage & Architecture; and Arts & Culture will be held in the month of February. Three forums will be available for free on February 10:

- 1) Business & Policy Forum – **Transforming Ties: US-Asia Relations in the 21st Century**
- 2) Heritage & Architecture Forum – **Transformation of the Former Explosives Magazine: The Future of the Past**
- 3) Arts & Culture Forum – **Transforming Minds: Buddhism in Art**; Presenting Sponsor: **The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation**; Corporate Sponsor: **Bank of America Merrill Lynch**

Mrs. Edith Ngan CHAN, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center remarked “Building on our 20 years of experience and network in Hong Kong, the ASHK Center will continue to broaden our collaboration with the local community, artists and various organizations in outreach and programing to further add to Hong Kong an educational and cultural center of the highest international standards.”

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**About the Patron Donor – Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust**

香港賽馬會  
The Hong Kong Jockey Club

The Club can trace its long tradition of donating to charitable causes back to at least 1915, but it was in the 1950s as Hong Kong struggled to cope with post-war reconstruction and a massive influx of immigrants, that this role became integral to its operation. In 1955, the Club formally decided to devote its surplus each year to charity and community projects. In 1959, a separate company, the Hong Kong Jockey Club (Charities) Ltd, was formed to administer donations. This company has in turn evolved into The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, established in 1993.

In 2010/11, the Charities Trust donated a record HK\$1.62 billion to some 114 charities and community projects. The Trust's donations over the past decade have averaged well over HK\$1 billion a year. Partnerships with charity groups and non-governmental organisations allow the Trust to reach further and wider into the community.

**Inaugural Exhibition – “Transforming Minds: Buddhism in Art”****About the presenting sponsor: Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation**

何鴻毅家族基金  
THE ROBERT H. N. HO  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation is a private philanthropic organization engaged in strategic, long-term projects in Hong Kong and around the world. Its mission is to foster and support Chinese arts and culture, as well as to promote deeper understanding of Buddhist philosophy and to apply to them to everyday life. In addition to exhibit, the Foundation is supporting the related public programmes, education programmes and film series.

Since 2001 the Ho family has been building a global network of Buddhist learning through the support of Buddhist studies at leading universities including Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Hong Kong, the International Buddhist College in Thailand, the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto. In 2010, the Foundation provided funding for *The Buddha*, a documentary film by David Grubin about the life and teachings of the Buddha, which was broadcast on PBS in North America. The Foundation has provided funding for The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The Ho Family has also initiated the establishment of [www.buddhistdoor.com](http://www.buddhistdoor.com), one of the largest and most visited global websites on Buddhism.

Since 2005 in Hong Kong, the Foundation develops projects to engage young people in art, culture and creativity. Since 2005 the Foundation has reached nearly 40,000 young people through photography, literary writing, and body movement programmes.

**About the corporate sponsor: Bank of America Merrill Lynch**

Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small- and middle-market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk management products and services. Bank of America is among the world's leading wealth management companies and is a global leader in corporate and investment banking and trading across a broad range of asset classes, serving corporations, governments, institutions and individuals around the world. The company serves clients through operations in more than 40 countries. Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the marketing name for the global banking and global markets businesses of Bank of America Corporation. Lending, derivatives, and other commercial banking activities are performed globally by banking affiliates of Bank of America Corporation, including Bank of America, N.A., member FDIC. Securities, strategic advisory, and other investment banking activities are performed globally by investment banking affiliates of Bank of America Corporation (“Investment Banking Affiliates”), including, in the United States, Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated, which is a registered broker-dealer and a member of FINRA and SIPC, and, in other jurisdictions, locally registered entities.