

**For Immediate Release****Asia Society Hong Kong Center Mourns the Loss of Honored Artist Hon Chi-fun**

(Hong Kong, 26 February, 2019) Asia Society Hong Kong Center is greatly saddened by the passing of renowned Hong Kong artist Mr. Hon Chi-fun (b. September 22, 1922) at around 2 am on February 24, 2019. Mr. Hon passed away in peace at a hospital in Hong Kong surrounded by his loving family. He was 96 years old.

On behalf of the Center, Ms. S. Alice Mong, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center, said, “We are deeply heartbroken by the loss of Mr. Hon Chi-fun, a pioneering modern artist who played a pivotal role in building this city’s art ecology. A self-taught maverick, Mr. Hon was always ahead of his time in his unique approach to addressing issues of culture, identity and philosophy in his work. His unwavering artistic passion, as he painted until his body no longer allowed him to, exemplifies the resourcefulness and dedication of an incredible artists working against all odds. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and loved ones, particularly his wife Ms. Choi Yan-chi and their son Hon Wang-kwong.”

In 2017, Hon Chi-fun was honored by Asia Society and Asia Society Hong Kong Center with an Asia Arts Game Changer Award for his outstanding contributions to modern art in Hong Kong. During his acceptance speech for the award, he mentioned being born an artist, and being grateful that he had met his destiny by pursuing his artistic career. Over forty years earlier, in 1969, Hon was the first Hong Kong artist to receive a fellowship grant from the prestigious John D. Rockefeller III Fund, which into the Asian Cultural Council in 1980. In this way, Hon’s artistic achievement has always been recognized for its bridging of cultures and commitment to the reinvention of artistic tradition.

Born in Hong Kong in 1922 as the oldest of eight children, Hon attended the elite secondary school Wah Yan College Kowloon on a full scholarship with the top rank of his form, where he studied traditional Chinese poetry and calligraphy, amongst other subjects. His hopes for attending university were dashed by the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong. He moved to mainland China working in the import/export business in Guangzhou and Shanghai to support his family. In 1956, he settled back in Hong Kong and took up a job as a postal inspector for the Hong Kong Post. A drive to create artwork overcame him, and he found himself painting at all hours outside his job. By the 1960s, Hon was exhibiting regularly and he rose to prominence as one of a selection of local artists that created avant-garde, experimental work that combining various medium, new intellectual tides, culture and popular music. Hon was also a co-founder of the leading collective Circle Art Group (1964-1971), their innovative works spoke a global vision, frequently exhibiting in Chatham Gallery and the City Hall Museum and Art Gallery (now the Hong

Kong Museum of Art); they traveled their exhibitions overseas and helped forge the beginnings of a local art scene.

One of Hong Kong's most revered visual artists, Hon Chi-fun pioneered the creation of a personal avant-garde art style that spoke to unique themes. Through monumental airbrush paintings, sophisticated Daoist screen prints, multimedia works, Hon re-wrote the rules with his sophisticated command of various materials, while also addressing the social and historical context of every text and tool he came across. In doing so, he created artwork that was radical in its vulnerability, as he unflinchingly addressed his emotional and romantic feelings in his work, which was as groundbreaking then as it is now.

Celebrated for his transgressing of artistic norms, Hon earned the respect of local curators, critics and scholars for his compositions that defied categorization. His inclusion of his personal poetry in his work, as well as voracious love of reading and calligraphy, also drew the attention of writers and poets, many of whom have written extensively about the literary aspect of his paintings. In many ways, the notion of modern art in this city is indelibly shaped by Hon's voice and visual language, as he is cited in countless academic studies of Hong Kong art history.

To honor the legacy of this groundbreaking artist and his meaningful connection to Asia Society's founder, John D. Rockefeller III, Asia Society Hong Kong Center is proud to present *A Story of Light: Hon Chi-fun*, the first career-spanning exhibition of the artist in over a decade. Works from respected local institutions, including Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Heritage Museum and M+, as well as private collections and the artist's own archive, will be on view at the Chantal Miller Gallery from March 12 through June 9, 2019. This exhibition is free and open to all, as we welcome members of the public to join us in recognizing one of Hong Kong art's most respected artists.

**Media Briefing and Tour for *A Story of Light: Hon Chi-fun*:**

March 11, 2019 at Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Time: 15:00-16:30

Ms Choi Yan-Chi, wife of Hon Chi Fun will attend and answer the questions during the media briefing.

Date of Exhibition: March 12 to June 9, 2019

<https://asiasociety.org/hong-kong/exhibitions/story-light-hon-chi-fun-guangdegushihanzhixun>

Media enquiry:

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#RSVP form are enclosed with this press release.

### **Arts & Culture at Asia Society Hong Kong Center**

Asia Society Hong Kong Center actively provides access to art, cultural education and experiences for all audiences. Since moving into the historic former Explosives Magazine in 2012, the Center has held over 20 art exhibitions both in its world-class gallery, and indoor and outdoor space throughout its outdoor heritage site. The Center organizes exhibitions that respond to local contexts with an international outlook and celebrate the convergence of talent in Hong Kong. A diverse arts and culture program includes artist talks, concerts, dance performances, lectures, panel discussions, and film screenings. Guided tours, workshops, and events for families, schools, companies, clubs and groups are offered regularly.

The state-of-the-art facilities in historic heritage buildings at Asia Society Hong Kong Center feature a unique location for art exhibitions that open to all. The Chantal Miller Gallery is a 4000sqft space named in 2014 in recognition of Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Miller's donation of HK\$100m to the Center to promote Hong Kong as an international platform for the arts; the transformative gift marked the single largest donation to the arts by an individual in Hong Kong at the time. The gallery has presented a range of groundbreaking events ranging from *Transforming Minds: Buddhism in Art* (2012) displaying works from the Rockefeller Collection and contemporary artists, to first solo exhibitions in Hong Kong for acclaimed artists **Xu Bing** (2014), **Yoshitomo Nara** (2015), **Shazia Sikander** (2016), and recently recognized the painting careers of pioneers **Fang Zhaoling** (2017) and **Pan Yu-lin** (2018) as part of *Asia Society Hong Kong Center's 20th Century Chinese Female Artist Series*.

RSVP

**Media Tour and Preview Reply Slip*****A Story of Light: Hon Chi-fun***

Company's Name	:	_____
		TV/ Radio/ Newspaper/On-line/Others: (Please select)
Reporter's Name	:	_____
No. of People to Attend	:	_____
Contact Number	:	_____
Email Address	:	_____
Remarks	:	_____

I will also attend the Cocktail Reception and the Opening Ceremony at 6:30pm on March 12, 2019.