

### **Dutch scholar appointed as new Director of Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM)**



**Dr Joost Schokkenbroek, Museum Director of HKMM (Designate)**

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum marks 2021 with the appointment of the internationally-renowned maritime history scholar, Dr Joost Schokkenbroek, as its new Director.

A citizen of the Netherlands, Dr Schokkenbroek is currently Executive Director at the Vancouver Maritime Museum in Canada and is also an emeritus Professor of Maritime History and Heritage at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Dr Schokkenbroek is tasked with navigating the HKMM through a transformative period of growth. He holds MA and PhD degrees in maritime history from Leiden University in the Netherlands and is the former Chief Curator of Het Scheepvaartmuseum (The Dutch National Maritime Museum) in Amsterdam (1991-2017). He has been visiting professor at (among others) Cornell University, Tufts University, Middlebury College, Higher School of Economics Saint Petersburg, Tokyo University and brings close to 35 years of experience in the field of museum leadership and maritime heritage.

Dr Schokkenbroek has published books, papers and lectured widely on maritime material culture, and the extensive historical ties based on maritime trade between the West and the East and particularly with China, Japan and Indonesia.

The new Director will formally take the helm at the HKMM on 1 March. He succeeds Mr Richard Wesley who is returning to his native Australia, after ten years in the post. During this period, Mr Wesley has overseen many internationally renowned exhibitions, improved community engagement and delivered significant increases in the Museum's profile and visitor numbers at Central Pier 8.

"The Hong Kong Maritime Museum is most fortunate to have met Dr Schokkenbroek during our quest for a successor to Richard Wesley. We are deeply grateful to Richard for his leadership of the HKMM over the last ten years and Joost Schokkenbroek is uniquely well-qualified to take over," said Mr Richard Hext, Chairman of the HKMM.

"The HKMM Board and Trustees were especially impressed with Dr Schokkenbroek's ambition for the institution, his excellent international network and his interest in creating new partnerships with universities to expand the study of maritime history, which explains so much of Hong Kong's commercial success," said Mr Hext.

Dr Schokkenbroek will also lead the development of HKMM's new Swire Marine Discovery Centre, a transformational initiative by the Swire Group Charitable Trust, which will open in 2022 and focus on ocean conservation and marine science education.

"I feel very fortunate and proud to have been given this opportunity to move to Hong Kong, one of the world's great cities, as Director of the HKMM, which has a most ambitious Board and great potential for growth," said Dr Schokkenbroek.

"One of my strongest beliefs is that a museum must be a meeting place for all and my task is to expand and improve the HKMM's physical presence and to further build its visitation, reputation, credibility and financial strength."

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### **About Hong Kong Maritime Museum**

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) was 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 was named as a TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Top 10 Museum in China in 2017, and is an independent, non-profit registered charity supported by the shipping industry, the business community, private 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 gift shop. The HKMM engages with the community of Hong Kong by providing education and public programming to schools, adults, community groups and families.

For further enquiries, please contact [marketing@hkmaritimemuseum.org](mailto:marketing@hkmaritimemuseum.org)