Entry Details

Entry Category: Best PR Campaign – Public Awareness
Name of Campaign: Event Horizon – Introducing Hong Kong’s most extensive public art project
Name of Organisation: British Council
Name of Brand: Event Horizon Hong Kong
Name of PR Agency: Sinclair Communications
Click image or link below to view video.
https://youtu.be/ncqbPcA_QUg
Event Horizon was presented in Hong Kong by British Council for six months (19 Nov 2015 - 18 May 2016). It was the most extensive public art project ever to be installed in the city. By British artist Sir Antony Gormley, it encompassed a collection of 31 life-sized naked sculptured figures, with 27 installed on rooftops and 4 on street level. Event Horizon launched in London in 2007, followed by Rotterdam, New York, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Hong Kong was its Asian debut. +60 stakeholders were involved to make Event Horizon a success, each with complex and sensitive needs.

**PR brief:** With no marketing budget, Integrated PR was the only tool for driving awareness and understanding. A strong integrated PR strategy was critical to gain massive local media coverage as quickly as possible.

The key objective of the project was to encourage discussion and advocacy of Public Art in Hong Kong.

This campaign was truly dependent on successful media relations
A not for profit project, the agency was a “sponsor” of the event. All activation costs were covered through sponsors and partners, from printing through to event space.

**Target audience**
Hong Kongers and visitors to HK.
From a media perspective, reach was both local and international, news to lifestyle, and arts to business - covering hard and soft news pages and opinion editorials.
Core Strategy

- **Creating public discussions** through maximised presence on TV, radio, newspapers, films, magazines, websites and books on the topic of public art in HK.
- Surround the audience with **multi-platform stories** about the project, while sharing the latest updates through dedicated owned channels.
- **Influencer endorsement** was used to shape public opinion, enabling the positioning of Event Horizon as community driven project. Outreach was key to drive positive opinion (via local artists for example) and ensure minimal negative publicity.
- **Lead the conversation** by softly introducing the artist’s vision and installation concept through pitching select local and international media to have an interview with the artist 2-3 months prior to launch.
- Ensure a **high impact international media publish** a strong positive story during the installation period to help lead the local conversation, and mitigate shock in local editorial.
- **Reinforce the cultural and educational value** of the project to the larger community by highlighting the project’s extensive education and outreach programme which included a teacher’s workbook sent to +1,200 HK public schools.
- Aware of the **sensitive nature of the installation particularly in HK**, reinforce that Event Horizon had been seen and accepted in other international art centric cities and that HK would be the **Asian debut, positioning the city as a global art hub**.
- Ensure that all **+60 stakeholders had consistent external communications** and timely updates.
Strategy

Campaign Concept
• **Lead a change in public opinion**, championing the positive role of public art in the cultural development of a city/nation by creating an open discussion, while always being mindful of managing negative issues.
• Champion Event Horizon as **HK’s most extensive public art project** ever endeavoured, and foster online and offline engagement about public art in HK.
• Prior to installation, **create general public awareness, excitement and anticipation** for the Event Horizon, ensuring to attract local, international and art media attention.

Creative Rationale
• The creativity of this project was born in **our ability to meet the risk of critical and ill-informed news reports, with an increased level of understanding and engagement** within both the general and media communities.
• By driving discussion on why Hong Kong is the perfect Asian destination for this project that asks citizens to stop, engage and perhaps re-assess their current position in the world by looking within themselves, **we gave this project perspective and context** – it was about more than the sculptures, it was a larger cultural experience for Hong Kong, that saw the community come together to become a reality.
• We **created a call to action** that Hong Kongers could get behind, and **help people easily understand the project**: #LookUpHK.
Execution

The integrated PR campaign relied upon traditional and online media, social media, digital, and marketing through direct and stakeholder channels.

Media Strategy

- **Communications began months in advance** of the first sculpture being mounted, giving the agency enough time to position the project, educate media and the community, and create buzz.
- **Discussed filming and interview angles with media** that would raise awareness of the project and create buzz and anticipation in the market.
- **Built the profile of the artist** through media interviews and a roundtable discussion. Talking points were developed on “Why HK is ready for public art of this scale”.
- **Developed ‘project advocates’**; business owners, artists and influencers, to speak about the installation and public art in the media both before and during the installation.
- **Conducted a press conference that introduced +60 stakeholders to the media**, followed by a QnA session with the artist.
- **Third party endorsement** was key to shaping public opinion. We approached project advocates, business owners, artist and influencers, to speak about the installation and public art in the media.
- **Media partnerships** helped maximise coverage via both online and offline channels.
Execution

Stakeholder Management
• Led stakeholder briefings on the installation and communications plan, actively listening and responding to feedback, a key element of the educational process.
• We celebrated that ‘the HK community had come together’ to bring the project to life. Over 60 stakeholders were involved with one belief: public art inspires public discussion for the good of the community. They reached out to their databases to show their support and involvement, with links to the project website, social media and hashtags.

Community Involvement
• The public talk and VIP panel discussion, part of the education and outreach programme, were recorded by news and video crews so that they could be viewed either through live streaming or on TV and online at a later time.
• Guided tours for students and art lovers were conducted along with teacher development workshops and a hands on children’s workshop. An education pack was created to help teachers talk about public art in classrooms.

Social Media and Digital assets
• A mini site, Facebook and Instagram page were built specifically for this project to be a source of key information while allowing for social competitions. KOLs and key media were encouraged to share the installation news on their social channels to reach a wider audience. User generated content was constantly shared with fans.
Results

We successfully created discussion about public art in Hong Kong within the community and media.

146 teachers signed-up for the five workshops from November 2015 to January 2016, and two additional workshops were scheduled due to popular demand.

There were 6,819 education pack views that complemented these activities.

385 students participated in the 20 guided tours. Due to popular demand, additional media and community guided tours were arranged.

Local publications acknowledged Event Horizon as the city’s most extensive public art exhibition, with article headlines questioning “What Is Public Art” and “Why Do We Need Public Art” in leading influential publications:

TATLER, SCMP, South China Morning Post, Apple Daily, 蘋果日報, 藝術地圖, ARTMAP, metro, Pop

PR value
USD17 million from Aug 2015 to May 2016

Media Articles
+350 in local and international publications

943 attended the public talk at University of Hong Kong, 400 attended the panel discussion at Asia Society, and 21,511 people viewed the talks online.
Results

**Education programme was extremely well received** including guided student tours by HKYAF, a series of teacher development workshops and a hands on children’s workshop with the artist.

**Branded map and marketing collaterals well received** by the Hong Kong community.

We **countered negative articles with new more positive stories** on public art published later on the same media platforms. This shows the **change in conversation over the course of the installation**, from the initial shock and curiosity, to acceptance and understanding. The change in the media’s tone shows a growing advocacy for the project over time within the community.
Media Coverage

2015-11-13, Apple Daily
Hong Kongers are scared by this installation and are calling “999” + a list of all sculpture locations
Print Cir.: 239,500

2015-11-26, Apple Daily
Print, App and Online Interview with Antony Gormley about Event Horizon
Print Cir.: 239,500
App Cir.: 1,972,953

2015-09-20, Sing Pao Daily News
Introducing Event Horizon
Cir.: 82,563

2015-09-26, Hong Kong Economic Journal
Introducing Event Horizon
Cir.: 61,000

2015-10-04, Oriental Daily News
Introducing Event Horizon
Cir.: 536,614
PR Value: HKD 126,909

2015-10-17, Hong Kong Economic Times, Article by Bernard Chan
Public art in Hong Kong

2015-11-04, The Art Newspaper
Interview with Antony Gormley about Event Horizon

2015-10-17, CNN Style video and article
Interview with Antony Gormley about Event Horizon
Cir.: 20,175,117

2015-08-12, SCMP
Announcing Event Horizon
Cir.: 104,552

2015-11-26, Hong Kong Economic Times, Article by Bernard Chan
Public art in Hong Kong
Engagement Activities

‘Making Space’ - A public talk by Sir Antony Gormley at The University of Hong Kong. Live streamed by CoBo Social and recorded by Now TV.

Sir Antony Gormley addresses the public and key stakeholders at official launch of Event Horizon in Hong Kong at Statue Square Gardens.

Sir Antony Gormley interviewed by local media publication Apple Daily about Event Horizon in Hong Kong.

User-Generated Content through social media. Event Horizon hashtags #LookUpHK #EventHorizonHK secured 2,175 public posts.