

It's art in the park with new signs and benches

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Jennifer Ngo

You could call it a benchmark for publicly accessible art.

Some of the city's innovative artists have brought art to the park in the shape of new signs and creatively designed benches.

Quarry Bay Park has been designated to showcase the work of two architects and three art and design graduates, in a pilot project called Park Deco, a government scheme to bring art to the people.

If successful, Hong Kong's parks

could soon be brimming with art, all for free.

"The aim is art made for users – chairs that old people can lounge in, benches which kids will like to bounce on, and seats where people can relax on," said Connie Lam Suk-yee, executive director of the Hong Kong Arts Centre, who with Public Art Hong Kong, collaborated with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department on the project.

The three different sets of benches chosen all incorporate innovative design concepts.

Design graduate Cyrus Chung Ho-wai named his set of benches "Branches". They feature solar-powered LED lights on bird cage-shaped lampshades hanging from curling branch-like hooks.

"The bird cages are inspired by the old men who hang out at the park with their birds in cages in the daytime. I hope to bring that also into the nighttime, so it becomes a permanent part of the park," Chung said.

Architect Daniel Hui Tsun-yin's enlarged musical notes work as relaxing seats, but also as interactive furniture. The insides of the "Musical Chairs" are made of different materials and give off interesting sounds like a drum kit when tapped.

Douglas Ho's "Assembled Topology", comprising 17 modular seating units feature recyclable material resembling a clinging vine, and are child-friendly with a bouncy texture.

The signs in the park have been redesigned by two other design graduates from the arts centre. Traditional messages like, "No skateboarding" are replaced by friendly messages such as, "Pack your skateboard and enjoy the sea view".

Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs Raymond Young Lap-moon said: "If this is successful, we hope to take this project into Hong Kong's other parks."

The project cost HK\$3 million and is the first of many such offerings.



Design graduate Cyrus Chung's work, called "Branches", features as part of a Park Deco project in Quarry Bay Park. Photo: David Wong