

MODERATOR LEE WENG CHOY:

Maggie Tsai couldn't make it today so we have the Director of the Art Foundation, Vivian Hsiung, to speak on her behalf.

MS VIVIAN HSIUNG:

Good afternoon, I am Vivian. I have afraid I have to speak in Chinese because it will be easier to me.

We have been invited by ACCF to explain why Fubon Art Foundation is a business-based foundation and actually, we have been around for almost 10 years. What sort of advantages would that be to businesses and to other people? Well, actually I am going to speak about that so you know what we are doing in Taiwan.

The Fubon Group in 1961 first started. It was an insurance company and then in 1992 we used the name "Fubon" as the new company identity. So in 1961 it was Cathay Insurance, in 1992 it was Fubon. So for the past more than 10 years Fubon had business in financial businesses and also in communications and multimedia, and there are about 15 companies under the Fubon Group and now we are actually a multinational corporation. You can see in Hong Kong, in Taipei, in Beijing and in the greater China region there are various branches of Fubon in operation. So that's the company, Fubon the company.

Now, under the Fubon Group there are four foundations. There is one on charity, one on education, one on art and another foundation funded by lotteries, revenue coming from the government. So there are four foundations.

Now I would like to tell you more about the Fubon Art Foundation. We were established in 1997. Definitely there is a mission. The reason why business wants to set up such art foundations is these must first of all be art lovers themselves and you can see many of them, even on the mainland, you will see many of the businessmen are also art collectors.

So there is a story. Our CEO, who is a lady, her father was a young man who was given assistance to study in Japan so in Taiwan, actually, Mrs, she is very well respected in Taiwan. So the family history has much influence on Mrs, that is our CEO, and Maggie is also a great art lover. She is a new member of the family and so that's why the idea of the affirmation came about and eventually came to fruition. So the mission statement is art is a commitment to life.

Now, of course, when we set up a foundation it must serve a number of purposes. Why should a business start a foundation? I have worked in the foundation for six years and I think we have well defined purposes. One, we want to build this function in the community and with the influence of the businesses we are able to upgrade the quality of the people and we also want to build a corporate image.

In Taiwan there are many corporate foundations. Perhaps I could briefly explain how foundations are set up in Taiwan. The Taiwanese Government, through a central body, would offer incentives. That is 10 per cent of the total revenue of a business can be used to set up a foundation and that's tax free, that particular part, but for Fubon, we have four foundations and they have some 2 trillion revenue per year which far exceeds the maximum limit, even of this room, so to us it's not an incentive any more. So that goes to show that we are just trying to set up foundations. So 10 per cent of 2 trillion is \$200 million and is a lot of money to spend on foundations in Taiwan.

You might think it's easy to spend money, it's always easy to spend money, but sometimes I find it's more difficult to spend money than to make money, if you ask me.

The Fubon Art Foundation was established in 1997, as I mentioned. Actually, there is a very important guiding thought. That is, how can we get businesses to do this.

In the past 10 years or so arts only took place in galleries and in museums. It hardly took place in business venues so I will explain how we can make use of business venues then.

You can see from this Power Point a very simple organisation chart of the foundation. We have a chairman with 11 board supervisors who are responsible for our budget and also, looking at the implementation of projects, and there is a CEO responsible for implementation. Then I am the director, I am responsible for making sure that everything is implemented smoothly and therefore departments, one on exhibitions, one on education and publicity and we have a design department and then there is another department on administration.

You can see from the organisation chart and you can somehow tell what we are doing from the chart. We are a buffet of art exhibits. It is an annual exhibition. We want to achieve a zero distance between art and the participant. We make use of space of Fubon for exhibitions like a buffet bus: you have art delivered to you rather than having to go to a museum or a gallery. So it's art outreaching, and since Fubon started as a big insurance company, they have been involved in arts insurance and they have been sponsoring museums, galleries and other arts organisations, they have been involved in arts-related insurance and therefore, we want to do something for the arts sector. So there are a number of different exhibitions, and also annually there will be 150 to 250 arts education seminars and lectures; you have to pay for attendance.

There are two target groups: the staff of Fubon and also outsiders. As I have said, we have been trying to facilitate art, using Fubon as a corporate platform. I will be talking about that more in a moment.

Under the exhibition side, let me use some photos to illustrate. Fubon is a conglomerate in financial and insurance and it's also involved in construction and property development. In the downtown of Taipei there are a number of buildings owned by Fubon so we can make use of the open space or the passageway, the lift lobby and also the external walls for various exhibitions. You can see from this picture, this is an activity, outdoor activity, for installation art.

This is what we did with one of the passageways for a sculpture exhibition. This is the work of a famous Japanese artist. This is the plaza and this is a temporary installation made of straw, a space created by straw looking like a heart. You can smell the odour of straw here. There are also large installations here and even at the pavement outside an office building you can see other installations. These are nest-like installations along a road. At one point some of them were actually taken up by some birds. This is the same one on the theme of bird nests.

So some colourful nests were installed to replace the previous spherical artwork to provide permanent homes for birds because of this special space we have.

This is within an office building and unlike galleries and museums, there are already existing fixtures. Whether in the bank, whether for Feng Shui or geomancy reasons you see lions. So the lions are always there and the artists put some gold balls in between the two lions and people working at the bank like them very much because working in a bank is just like holding a gold rice bowl.

Also, this is the passageway between two offices and some smaller installations can be put there so that the passageway can be more lively and is not just a dull space.

Apart from our own space we also organise special exhibitions elsewhere. This is what we did in 1998/1999, a landmark exhibition entitled "Land Ethic". This is close to the Xingyi region. At that point the lots were vacant, the luxury residential developments had not yet been built so you can see this round structure which is made up of hundreds of smaller components and the idea was to let future occupants of the residential space where once upon a time there was such a magnificent art piece there, it is another exhibit in a vacant lot, but this is a foundation of a future office building. At that point it was turned into a maze and at some behavioural art exhibitions some turtle shaped objects were put there.

Let me turn to the Art Fair. Actually, it was held also once in Hong Kong in the Hong Kong Arts Centre in the year 2000 at the

invitation of Hong Kong and a number of Taiwanese artists came to stage their exhibitions. We thought that was a very good event.

Later we went to the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art for the same exhibition and then there was a re-run in Taipei. It's a kind of a special project.

Next, at the Hong Kong Arts Centre event and the other one at Perth there are some contrasting items and sometimes the object is constructed slightly differently.

When this art fair returned to Taiwan we extended it to the community which was a great challenge because we used to be making use of our own space and buildings but when we reached out we had to discuss the matter with many collaborators, shop owners and property owners.

This is a glass fibre work in front of a building, a small sculpture near the stairways and this is a disused old building. This is a window display area. This book shop is famous, called Chong Pin in Taipei. Large installations on wall surface. This is a shopping area and we put a work there. Actually, this item was later acquired by this boutique gift shop. We want to do away with the distance between art and life and this is in a salon for beauticians and hairdressers. This is video art through some monitors. This is a hairdressing salon but in this particular art a boat person was featured and we used more than 10,000 metal spoons to create this artistic impression describing the movement of life.

This is a coffee shop, some object which is like the fingerprint of a giant. This is a furniture shop. We made use of the red sofa there will for some figurine display.

This time they also joined the Very Fun Park Art Fair. This is also an arbitrary board. This is also an interesting one. It has great human interaction. It's put in the basement of a florist. Everybody who went there could also blow into the paper ball. So in the end that's why the basement was full of paper balls. The number of paper balls actually meant the number of people who went to see the installation.

This one is put in a shop, actually the negative films of the pictures he took with his mother, so it's to pay tribute to his mother. This is a disused water tower. It's the summer so it's like that horse kept trying to reach the top of the water tower to drink some water. This is a small restaurant. This is to just record whatever he tries to express.

It was bread that actually gave off smell. This piece came to Hong Kong and came to others and so eventually it would give off a smell because it would rot so there is a lot of interaction and so you can see that. This is just another bread piece. This is to make use of technology so it is a dark room without any light. This one is another highly interactive installation, the seesaw.

So actually, on the properties in other districts where there is room for exhibition we always stage exhibitions. So it shows how we are trying to persuade businesses how such art exhibitions would actually bring to them very interesting observations and also, it will help build the corporate image. So you have seen there are three different kinds of or two different forms of exhibition.

So we can see how it reaches the corporate platform but then Fubon also has a phone company so they actually have all the information, the location and so on, with music. It's actually uploaded on the content list and it's for free, the people can actually use the phone to find out information about exhibitions. This was a unique practice when we started it and in fact, newspapers have reported that we have done what was thought impossible by a phone company.

I would like to quickly take you to another section. Actually, what I would like to show you is what we do with the large museums and galleries. We do a VIP night service. So what we do is we sponsor insurance of the museums or galleries and therefore, one night the museum or gallery opens to VIP clients of Fubon at night. So the Taiwanese National Museum and other museums and galleries have done that for us because we sponsor their insurance, so our clients are given tours at night and they got to know more about the museum.

We also use this as a means to say thank you to our clients; this is part of our corporate hospitality program.

Now, our foundation needs to hold a lot of talks and lectures to explain why we do that. So every year we have 200 lectures for those working and for our own staff as well. They cover topics like cosmetics, wine appreciation, wine tasting or how we should discuss artistic review and so on. So it covers a wide range of topics and we offer plenty of choices.

So this is one way we did a lecture. You see there are various possibilities in terms of forms of lectures. You can see all of these lecturers, they are very popular in Hong Kong, and every lecture could attract over 100 participants. Also, we recorded all the lectures and we have produced VCDs. It is also uploaded to our website for free download so it's hoped that tomorrow we will be able to learn about these various topics.

We also have many different workshops, like young Taiwanese could go to, say, Italy to learn from the masters.

Well, next year will be our 10th anniversary. Actually, in Taiwan Fubon has won a lot of applause for what we are doing. We even got an award of Cityscape -- Urban Landscape Award that is. We have the recognition of not just a sector, even the Taipei Government has given recognition to our work.

Next what I would like to share with you is a corporate foundation. It is about marrying arts and distance first. There must be trust established between art and businesses. Others will have then the full freedom of creativity. If artists believe that businesses are truly interested in their artistic talents and their works and it is not just as a commodity then the artist will rest assured. It is all about trying to build mutual trust and Fubon is able to do this work for 10 years because Fubon is a great art loving group to start with and that is very important. So we have passion for art and also the foundations and the business. So the foundation will be able to tell the businesses, give advice, or rather, the business could give guidance on cost efficiency. So that's very important for the foundation as well.

Artists' expression, obstacles standing in the way, yes, of course, is important of artistic ideals. But I think anywhere what matters most is that but in a way it gets things done. So ideals are, of course, important, and they must be shared, but can we actually get something done? Yes, we can turn it into practice. I think that's very important; I think that's what business always focuses on.

Our future goals. You can see, of course, through art we are able to build a good corporate image but at the same time we would like everybody to know that this mode of operation is well worth recommending. So if I could also inform you that Fubon Bank is officially in Hong Kong in mid-December. We are going to stage an exhibition here and then it will become an annual exhibition. So we will be a free art gallery that we will build among the community and we would like to bring in some of the best artists' works. Of course, what we like most is "Art is Life, Life is Art". That's our ultimate goal. Art shouldn't be accessed in such an indirect way. There must also be the approachable facet of art. So I think that's all for my presentation.

Actually, we have also prepared a video but because I think I have spent too long on my presentation I am not showing the video, but there will be 100 copies of the videos outside. If you would like to know more about us, of course you could always visit our website, but there is also a small souvenir that you can also collect outside. Thank you very much.