

MEDIA RELEASE

**Singapore Art Museum Co-Presents *They Do Not Understand Each Other*
at Hong Kong's Tai Kwun Contemporary**

Featuring works from the collections of SAM and the National Museum of Art, Osaka, the group exhibition will run at Tai Kwun Contemporary from 25 May to 13 September 2020



Ho Tzu Nyen, *EARTH* (video still), 2009-2017, Collection of Singapore Art Museum; Image courtesy of the artist

Singapore, 25 May 2020 – Singapore Art Museum (SAM) co-presents *They Do Not Understand Each Other* together with The National Museum of Art, Osaka (NMAO) from 25 May to 13 September 2020, at Tai Kwun's art galleries in JC Contemporary, Hong Kong. The group exhibition brings into dialogue 25 artworks, including 23 works from the permanent collections of SAM and NMAO, and two new commissions by Kohei Sekigawa and Akira Takayama.

They Do Not Understand Each Other considers what it means to engage with one another and looks at the potential of art in facilitating understanding. It is jointly curated by Dr. June Yap, Director, Curatorial, Collections and Programmes, SAM and Ms. Yuka Uematsu, Curator, NMAO, and produced by and hosted at Tai Kwun Contemporary, which serves as a platform for the encounter of two national-level collections of contemporary art. Local and international audiences can experience the exhibition online at [Tai Kwun's website](#).

Of the artworks featured in the exhibition, 11 are from SAM's collection, ranging from video works, installations to photography. The works span across Singaporean and Southeast Asian artists including Agnes Arellano, Charles Lim, chi too, Chua Chye Teck, Ho Tzu Nyen, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Ming Wong, Than Sok and Wit Pimkanchanapong. On exhibit are four SAM acquisitions which have not been shown before as part of the museum's collection. These include *Like Someone in Love #10* by chi too, *EARTH* by Ho Tzu Nyen, *Srie Bun II* by Than Sok, and *Sea State 9: Proclamation (drag), (drop) and (pour)* by Charles Lim.

From NMAO's collection, 12 artworks by artists from Japan, Puerto Rico, Singapore, and South Korea are featured. With a diverse range of artworks by artists from different parts of the world, the exhibition offers a unique perspective on representation and cultural exchange. Here, the artists appear as mediators, even as they perform for and from within the frame of cultural presentation and exchange. In observing culture and the nature of culture, these artworks reinforce the agency of art and its power to represent.

Dr. June Yap offers insight into the exhibition's underlying themes and selection of works, "*They Do Not Understand Each Other* reflects upon the negotiations and expectations of culture. It engages with the themes of cultural understanding, the nature of relations and their assumptions, in art and beyond. These ideas underpin the curatorial approach Yuka and I took in our response to each other's collections, and which has manifest in the selection of artworks, as well as how we saw the artworks being experienced collectively and relative to each other."

Explaining the exhibition in detail, Dr. Yap continued, "While the exhibition features the artworks of two museum collections, they are connected visually or conceptually, speaking to and for each other, even across nationality and generation. These include the juxtaposition of NMAO's Kazuo Shiraga works *Chishousei Kakoko* and *Chikeisei Soutoki* with SAM's Charles Lim video works from the series *Sea State 9*. Here, the Japanese postwar avant-garde Gutai painter's energetic canvas can be read as echoing as much as reinforcing the flow and cascade of sand in the Singapore contemporary artist's capture of the motions of reclamation. The body of the painter is simultaneously transposed on the body of land; with movement and transformation both visually and conceptually conveyed. Another example is the pairing of NMAO's batik textile-dyed artwork by Saori Akutagawa (Madokoro), *From a Myth "The Birth of*

Gods” with SAM’s film by Ho Tzu Nyen on the subject of iconic European paintings and painters, *EARTH*. With their deeply visceral imagery and inter-cultural references, these two artworks depict the binary nature of being - of beginnings and ends, the banal and extraordinary.”

This partnership extends the international collaborations that SAM has with other institutions and organisations around the world, such as Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art and Benesse Holdings, Inc. Eugene Tan, Director of SAM, adds, “While our buildings are closed for redevelopment, SAM has been working with international partners such as Tai Kwun, the National Museum of Art, Osaka and ILHAM Gallery to exhibit works from our collection. This collaboration continues SAM’s mission to profile contemporary artists from Southeast Asia internationally and to examine how artists from the region are contributing to the discourses of art globally.”

They Do Not Understand Each Other is on from 25 May to 13 September 2020 at Tai Kwun’s art galleries in JC Contemporary, Hong Kong. It is the second collaborative international exhibition that SAM has presented during the period of its museum buildings’ redevelopment.

For more information, please [click here](#) to download the exhibition guidebook and images, and refer to [Annex A](#) for information on the exhibition venue and dates.

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About the Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art-thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges.

SAM occupies two buildings: the old St Joseph's Institution on Bras Basah Road, built in 1855 and now a National Monument; and SAM at 8Q, a conservation building across the road on Queen Street that was the old Catholic High School. The museum buildings are currently closed for a major building redevelopment, with museum programming continuing at partner venues until the buildings re-open.

SAM is the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. To find out more, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

About Tai Kwun — Centre for Heritage and Art

Opened in May 2018, Tai Kwun — Centre for Heritage and Arts is the fruition of a joint partnership between The Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Government of the HKSAR to conserve and revitalise the buildings of the Central Police Station (CPS) compound. The site is managed and operated by The Jockey Club CPS Limited.

The CPS compound comprises three declared monuments (the former Central Police Station, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison), with a total of 16 heritage buildings and some outdoors spaces, on a 13,600 square-metre site in the heart of Central. An international-grade non-commercial art gallery and an auditorium have been added to contribute to the adaptive reuse of the site.

Tai Kwun is the colloquial name used by police officers and the public alike to refer to the former police headquarters and the surrounding CPS compound. The name has been adopted by The Jockey Club CPS Limited as a reminder of the historical importance of the site.

In 2019, Tai Kwun received the Award of Excellence in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation in recognition of its achievement in conservation and revitalisation. This is the Awards' highest honour.

About National Museum of Art, Osaka

A unique object based on an image of bamboo greets the visitor to NMAO, a completely underground art museum. The NMAO collection of about 8,000 works by Japanese and overseas artists predominantly from 1945 onwards is Japan's largest collection of contemporary art. The collection is displayed in fascinating thematic exhibitions that change several times a year, providing an introduction to the important artists and works essential for an understanding of contemporary art.

Annex A: Exhibition Venue and Dates

Dates:

25 May 2020 to 13 September 2020

Address:

Tai Kwun, 10 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong

Opening Hours:

Daily: 10am to 11pm

Admission is free

The entire site of Tai Kwun is open to the public daily from 10am to 11pm, while JC Contemporary is open from 11am to 8pm daily (except Monday from 2pm to 8pm). Visitors are encouraged to book their free Tai Kwun Pass online via https://www.taikwun.hk/en/visit/taikwun_pass prior to visiting for guaranteed admission. Walk-ins are also welcome, subject to site capacity conditions. Please check [Tai Kwun's website](#) for the latest updates.