

Singapore Biennale 2019 Artist Amanda Heng Wins 12th Benesse Prize

Benesse Prize ceremony kicks off the Biennale's 2020 Programmes at Singapore Art Week



Amanda Heng, Every Step Counts (live walk performance), 2019, Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Singapore, 13 January 2020 – Singapore Biennale 2019 participating artist **Amanda Heng (Singapore)** has won the 12th Benesse Prize. The award recognises an artist whose exhibited work embodies an experimental and critical spirit and demonstrates an artistic reflection around the theme of “Benesse” (Well-Being). Presented by Benesse Holdings, Inc (Benesse) in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum (SAM), the Benesse Prize has been the official award of the Singapore Biennale since 2016. In 2016, the Prize was won by Singapore Biennale 2016 artist Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand), who will be exhibiting a work at Benesse Art Site Naoshima, Japan in 2020.

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Amanda Heng and *Every Step Counts*

Amanda Heng's SB2019 commission *Every Step Counts* (2019) is a multi-disciplinary project that invites participation and encourages intimate conversation in her performative works. Often harnessing everyday situations to explore complex socio-political issues, Heng revisits her seminal 'Let's Walk' series that was first performed in 1999. Drawing upon the act of walking, the artist moves forward, looks back, turns inward and ventures outward with others. In so doing, she generates reflections and perspectives, as well as comes to terms with the limits and stamina of the aging body.

In addition to Heng, the artists shortlisted for the 12th Benesse Prize included: Dusadee Huntrakul (Thailand), Haifa Subay (Yemen), Hera Büyüктаşçıyan (Turkey), and Robert Zhao Renhui (Singapore). The jury for the 2019 prize includes Ade Darmawan, Artist and Member of ruangrupa; Eugene Tan, Director of Singapore Art Museum and National Gallery Singapore; Gong Yan, Director of Power Station of Art; Valentine Willie, Director of ILHAM Gallery, and Akiko Miki, International Artistic Director of Benesse Art Site Naoshima.

SB2019 during Art Week 2020

Singapore Biennale 2019 (SB2019) returns for its sixth edition, with 77 artists and art collectives from 36 countries and territories. Titled *Every Step in the Right Direction*, the international contemporary art exhibition invites the public to engage with the act of artistic exploration, drawing on the importance of making choices and taking steps to consider the conditions of contemporary life and the human endeavour for change. Commissioned by the National Arts Council and organised by the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), the Singapore Biennale is running until 22 March 2020 across 11 venues in the city, including National Gallery Singapore, Gillman Barracks, LASALLE College of the Arts, and Singapore Management University de Suantio Gallery.

During Singapore Art Week 2020 (11–19 January), SB2019 presents a range of programmes for visitors across the 11 venues. Highlights include **Jason Wee's** performance at WILD RICE (19 January), an Assemblage Workshop led by artist **Khairullah Rahim** and **Curator-led tours** (18

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January). Students will be empowered to organise events and programmes to engage other young audiences to explore the Singapore Biennale in **Youths Take Over** (18-19 January).

Diverse Programmes for All Ages

In the coming months, SB2019 invites visitors to engage with the exhibition through a range of programmes, activities and tours for all ages. Throughout the exhibition's run, **daily guided tours** are offered to gain insight into the featured artworks and artists at National Gallery Singapore and Gillman Barracks in English, Mandarin and Japanese, with a **free weekend shuttle bus** between these two sites every Saturday and Sunday.

SB2019 will also be reaching out to seniors through specially designed Biennale programmes, starting with free admission for **Merdeka and Pioneer Generation card holders**. The programmes include creative workshops, accessibility programmes and multilingual art tours, designed to engage young minds and senior members of the community. A series of themed curator tours will also be offered in February and March, starting with a special Valentine's Day tour of the Biennale. Over the two months, there will also be tours for families with kids, to commemorate International Women's Day, and more.

In addition, SB2019 will introduce a series of **Art & Wellness programmes** in its galleries to encourage awareness, mindfulness and art appreciation through events such as yoga, gong baths, and guided Meditations. The Biennale will also host a **two-day symposium 'Right Here, Right Now: Constellating Worlds in the Contemporary'** (6–7 March) that builds on its title to explore ways of confronting and re-working the world through contemporary art and examine how action and rightfulness can enable us to move in the right direction, together.

Please refer to the following annexes for more information:

Annex A: About the Benesse Prize

Annex B: Biographies of Shortlisted Artists for 12th Benesse Prize

Annex C: SB2019 Programmes Calendar

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The complete press kit and images can be downloaded from:

[https://suttonpr.egnyte.com/fl/8N9d9I9HNt/SB2019_Press_Kit_\(Sharing\)](https://suttonpr.egnyte.com/fl/8N9d9I9HNt/SB2019_Press_Kit_(Sharing))

A complete calendar of programme details can be found at <https://singaporebiennale.org/whatson>

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For further information, please contact:

Sutton

Victoria Kung

+852 9668 1092

sb2019@suttonpr.com

Singapore Art Museum

Gwyneth Liew

+65 6697 9753

media@singaporeartmuseum.sg

Editor Notes:

About the Singapore Biennale

The Singapore Biennale was established in 2006 as the country's pre-eminent platform for international dialogue in contemporary art. It presents and reflects the vigour of artistic practices in Singapore and the region within a global context, and fosters productive collaborations and deep engagement with artists, arts organisations, and the international arts community.

The Singapore Biennale cultivates public engagement with contemporary art through a four-month exhibition, and its accompanying public engagement and education programmes that include artist and curator talks and tours, school visits and workshops, and community days. It complements achievements in other areas of arts and culture, collectively enhancing Singapore's international profile as a vibrant city in which to live, work and play.

The 2006 and 2008 editions of the Biennale were organised by the National Arts Council. The NAC commissioned the Singapore Art Museum to organise the 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2019 editions.

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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 researched 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 revamp, 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 the National Arts Council

The National Arts Council champions the arts in Singapore. By nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement, our diverse and distinctive arts inspire our people, connect communities and profile Singapore internationally. We preserve our rich, cultural traditions while we cultivate accomplished artists and vibrant companies for the future. Our support for the arts is comprehensive – from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing. The Council welcomes greater private and corporate giving to and through the arts so that together we can make the arts an integral part of everyone's lives. For more information on the Council's mission and plans, visit www.nac.gov.sg.

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Annex A

About the Benesse Prize

The Benesse Prize was established in 1995 when Fukutake Publishing Co., Ltd. changed its corporate name to Benesse Corporation, and it was first awarded at the Venice Biennale in the same year. It was created to recognize the artistic endeavours of outstanding artists and support those who embody the corporate philosophy of the Benesse Group, which is “Well-Being.” Since 2016, the Benesse Prize has been the official award of the Singapore Biennale, presented in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum. In addition to a cash prize of JPY 3 million, the winning artist(s) receives a commission to create an artwork to be exhibited at Benesse Art Site Naoshima, Japan, or the opportunity to have their works collected at the Site.

Past Benesse Prize Winners

- 1st Benesse Prize (1995): Cai Guo-Qiang (China)
- 2nd Benesse Prize (1997): Alexandros Psychoulis (Greece)
- 3rd Benesse Prize (1999): Olafur Eliasson (Iceland, Denmark)
- 4th Benesse Prize (2001): Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller (Canada)
- 5th Benesse Prize (2003): Rirkrit Tiravanija (Thailand)
- 6th Benesse Prize (2005): Tacita Dean (UK)
- 7th Benesse Prize (2007): Adel Abdessemed (Algeria, France)
- 8th Benesse Prize (2009): Hans-Peter Feldmann (Germany)
- 9th Benesse Prize (2011): Adrian Villar Rojas (Argentina)
- 10th Benesse Prize (2013): Anri Sala (Albania, France)
- 11th Benesse Prize (2016): Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand), Soichiro Fukutake Prize: Zulkifl Mahmod (Singapore)

* The 1st through 10th Benesse Prizes were hosted by the Venice Biennale. (The 2nd Benesse Prize was hosted collaboratively.)



* Since the 11th Benesse Prize (2016), Benesse Prize has been hosted by the Singapore Biennale in collaboration with SAM.



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Annex B

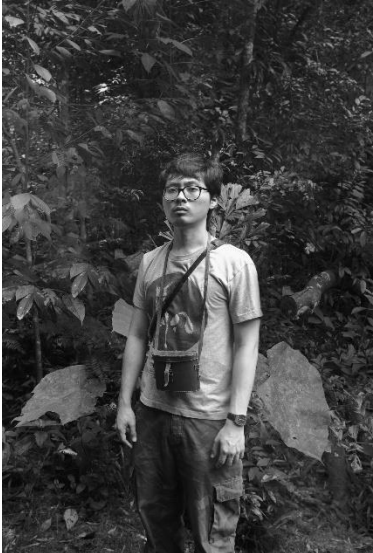
Shortlisted Artists for 12th Benesse Prize

Artist	Biography
<p>Amanda Heng (Singapore)</p> 	<p>Amanda Heng (b. 1951, Singapore) received a printmaking diploma from the LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore and a BA from the University of the Arts London. Heng was conferred the prestigious Cultural Medallion for Visual Arts in 2010, and has exhibited widely. Selected exhibitions include: 'Ties of History: Art in Southeast Asia' at Vargas Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, and Yuchengco Museum (Manila, the Philippines, 2018), and a retrospective, 'Speak To Me, Walk With Me' at Singapore Art Museum (2012). Heng's 'Let's Walk' series was also chosen as a conceptual anchor for the 14th edition of the Singapore Fringe Festival in 2018. She lives and works in Singapore.</p>
<p>Dusadee Huntrakul (Thailand)</p> 	<p>Dusadee Huntrakul (b. 1978, Bangkok, Thailand) works across a variety of mediums, including sculpture, ceramics, drawing and painting. Defined by an austere charm, his artistic practice navigates topics ranging from archaeology to anthropology, economics and the socio-cultural. His works have been presented in both solo and group exhibitions locally and internationally, including 'SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now' at the Mori Art Museum and the</p>

	<p>National Art Centre (Tokyo, 2017). He lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand.</p>
<p>Haifa Subay (Yemen)</p> 	<p>Haifa Subay (b. 1992, Dhamar City, Yemen) is a Yemeni street artist, who creates murals that call attention to the human toll of the war ravaging her country. Frustrated with the silence surrounding the conflict, Subay took to the streets of Sana'a on 17 August 2017, creating a mural titled Behind the Destruction. It would be the first in her ongoing '#SilentVictims' campaign, a series of murals highlighting the humanitarian crisis caused by the war. Today, Subay leads and creates street art with a group comprising mostly women, with the team focusing on work that gives voice to the experiences of Yemeni women and children. Subay lives and works in Sana'a, Yemen.</p>
<p>Hera Büyüktaşçıyan (Turkey)</p> 	<p>Hera Büyüktaşçıyan (b. 1984, Istanbul, Turkey) integrates metaphors from local myths and historic and iconographic elements of different geographies to open up new narrative scopes. She locates the figure of the Other between the twinned spectres of absence and invisibility in order to weave connections between identity, memory, space and time. She has held several solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions in Turkey and abroad. Some of her residencies include Delfina Foundation (London, 2014) and Villa Waldberta (Munich, 2012–2013). She graduated from the</p>

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	<p>Faculty of Fine Arts at Marmara University in 2006. Büyüktaşçıyan currently lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey.</p>
<p>Robert Zhao Renhui (Singapore)</p> 	<p>Robert Zhao Renhui (b. 1982, Singapore) is a multi-disciplinary artist who blends reality and fiction in his works. Strongly informed by his observations and ongoing research into the natural world, Zhao adopts a practice that investigates and unravels the intertwining relationship between humans and their habitats. His work has been exhibited at numerous solo and group presentations in Singapore, London, Shanghai and more, including the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Brisbane, 2018) and JIWA: Jakarta Biennale 2017. Zhao was a finalist for the Hugo Boss Asia Art Award 2017. He lives and works in Singapore.</p>

Annex C

Events and Programmes Calendar

For more information, please visit: <https://www.singaporebiennale.org/whatson>

Date & Venue	Event Title	Registration & Ticketing	Details
SINGAPORE ART WEEK EVENTS (11-19 JAN)			
17–19 Jan, 10am–7pm <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	Singapore Biennale 2019 Open House	Free	Enjoy free admission to SB2019 at National Gallery Singapore during Light to Night Festival. Opening hours will also be extended to 10pm on 17-18 Jan.
17 Jan, 7pm till late <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Art After Dark	Free	Galleries are open until late.
18 Jan, 1.30–3pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Poetry performance inspired by <i>Coping Mechanisms</i> by Pooja Nansi	Free with registration	Five poets (Bani Haykal, Norah Lea, Zeha H, Shivram Gopinath and Cyril Wong) perform works inspired by <i>Coping Mechanisms</i> .
18 Jan, 7.30–8.30pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Curator Tour of SB2019	\$15	An SB2019 curator guides participants through SB2019 at Gillman Barracks, offering insight into artworks and artistic practices.
18 Jan, 4–6.30pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Assemblage Workshop by Khairullah Rahim	\$20	A hands-on assemblage workshop led by multimedia artist Khairullah Rahim. Participants will learn more about his approach to working with objects as material and about the ideas behind them.
18 Jan, 2-3pm 19 Jan, 2-3pm, 4-5pm	Nature Walk with Robert Zhao Renhui	Free with registration	Led by Biennale artist Robert Zhao Renhui, a morning trek through the secondary forest

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<i>Gillman Barracks</i>			of Queen's Own Hill reveals the history of the Gillman Barracks area and its transformation from plantation to military barracks and nally, to present-day art enclave.
19 Jan, 2pm <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	Artwork activation of <i>Telling Stories from Outside and Inside</i> by Veronica Troncoso	Free admission	Three performers tell the stories of migrant workers living in Singapore through their bodies, their words, their voices and their own stories.
19 Jan, 7pm & 9pm <i>WILD RICE @ Funan</i>	Performance of <i>Quora Fora: A Rehearsal</i> by Jason Wee	Free with registration	Artist Jason Wee performs his SB2019 piece, <i>Quora Fora: A Rehearsal</i> .
18–19 Jan, 3–3.30pm & 6–6.30pm <i>LASALLE College of the Arts</i>	Artwork activation of <i>Properties</i> by Gary-Ross Pastrana	Free admission	The theatrical props presented in <i>Properties</i> are activated by P7:1SMA, a contemporary dance company.
18–19 Jan, 1–3pm <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	<i>Vestigios</i> , a performance by Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen	Free admission	Danish performance artist Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen responds to Carlos Villa's artwork, <i>Ritual</i> (1980) with a new durational piece <i>Vestigios</i> (2019).
18–19 Jan 12–7pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Youths Take Over	Free	Students organise SB2019 programmes for youths, by youths. They include photoboosts, music performances, a 'Human Library' to exchange oral histories, as well as Black Out Tours.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK ACTIVATIONS, WORKSHOPS AND PERFORMANCES			
8 Feb, 2-3pm, 4-5pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Nature Walk with Robert Zhao Renhui	Free with registration	Led by Biennale artist Robert Zhao Renhui, a morning trek through the secondary forest of Queen's Own Hill reveals the history of the Gillman Barracks area and its transformation from plantation to military barracks, to present-day art enclave.
29 Feb and 21 Mar, 7am – 10am	Live Walk Performance by Amanda Heng	Free participation	Walking route: Between SAM Hoardings and Esplanade Tunnel, where her SB2019 work <i>Every Step Counts</i> is sited.
8 and 22 Mar, 2pm <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	Artwork activation of <i>Telling Stories from Outside and Inside</i> by Veronica Troncoso	Free with Biennale admission	Three performers tell the stories of migrant workers living in Singapore through their bodies, their words, their voices and their own stories.
16 Mar <i>WILD RICE @ Funan</i>	Performance of <i>Quora Fora: A Rehearsal</i> by Jason Wee	Free with registration	Artist Jason Wee performs his SB2019 piece, <i>Quora Fora: A Rehearsal</i> .
21 and 22 Mar, 3-3.30pm & 6-6.30pm <i>LASALLE College of the Arts</i>	Artwork activation of <i>Properties</i> by Gary-Ross Pastrana	Free admission	The theatrical props presented in <i>Properties</i> are activated by P7:1SMA, a contemporary dance company.

EVENTS FOR ALL AGES			
26 Jan, 12–6pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Singapore Biennale Celebrates: Chinese New Year	Free	SB2019 invites visitors to celebrate this festive occasion with your loved ones

			through fun, family-friendly activities at the Biennale.
1–2 Feb, 2–5:30pm <i>Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium</i>	Singapore Biennale 2019 x 2019 Asian Art Biennial Collaborative Film Screenings and Talks	Free	A two-day series of film screenings and panels featuring video works presented at the 2019 Asian Art Biennial, which was co-curated by SB2019 artist Hsu Chia-Wei and local artist/curator Ho Tzu-Nyen. Screenings will be followed by discussions with selected artists and local curators/researchers. This is presented in collaboration with National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts.
14 Feb 7:30–8:30pm <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	Curator Tour: Valentine’s Day edition	Free with Biennale admission	Singapore Biennale curator Goh Sze Ying guides visitors on a special Valentine’s Day edition tour of the Biennale. Designed for friends, singles, couples, and families.
15 Feb–21 Mar, Sat: 2–3:30pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Toddler Art Workshops	\$35 per parent/child pair	Led by Jelly Bean Attic, workshops include a tour followed by an art-making activity where toddlers will learn spatial reasoning and practice coordination and motor skills through different themed workshops, suited for children between 18 months and 4 years old.
21 Feb, 3.30–4.30pm	Kopi, Teh and Contemporary Art	Free with Biennale admission	Multilingual guided tour of SB2019 led in Hokkien, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil.

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<i>National Gallery Singapore</i>			Kopi (coffee) and teh (tea) will be served at the end of the tour. Designed for seniors.
22 Feb–14 Mar, Sat: 10.30– 11:30am <i>Asian Civilisations Museum</i>	Step into the Story with SRT	\$35 per parent/child pair	Developed by the Singapore Repertory Theatre, this is an experiential journey in the Biennale’s galleries in the to learn new skills and gain creativity and confidence in a multi-sensory workshop. Suitable for children between 3 and 4 years old.
February–March <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Art & Wellness Programmes	Ticketing details available soon	Including Yin Yoga and Meditation, Zumba, Gong Baths, Meditation and Creative Journaling. Details available soon.
29 February	Curator Tour: Leap Year edition	Details available soon	On this special day that happens once every four years, a Singapore Biennale curator takes visitors on an exploration of Biennale works that touch on the relationship between humans and nature.
February and March	Curator Tour: Art for Families with Kids	Details available soon	A Singapore Biennale curator leads visitors on Biennale tours that are fun for the whole family.
6 Mar, 3.30– 4.30pm <i>Gillman Barracks</i>	Kopi, Teh and Contemporary Art	Free with registration	Multilingual guided tour of SB2019 led in Hokkien, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil. Kopi (coffee) and teh (tea) will

			be served at the end of the tour. Designed for seniors.
6–7 Mar <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	Singapore Biennale 2019 Symposium: Right Here, Right Now: Constellating Worlds in the Contemporary	Free with registration	This symposium builds on the Biennale’s title to explore ways of confronting and re-working the world through contemporary art.
8 Mar	Curator Tour: Women Artists of the Singapore Biennale	Details available soon	In celebration of International Women’s Day, a Singapore Biennale curator leads a tour highlighting Biennale works by women artists.
14 Mar 11am, 1pm, 2pm <i>National Gallery Singapore</i>	Art & Poetry: A Spoken Word Trail	Free with Biennale admission	Using the spoken word, local poets reflect on and respond to select Biennale artworks.