

MEDIA ALERT

SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2019 INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Benesse Holdings, Inc partnership with Singapore Art Museum continues for a second edition

SINGAPORE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2019 – The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is pleased to announce a series of international collaborations as part of the Singapore Biennale 2019 (SB2019): *Every Step in the Right Direction*. The collaborations reinforce the importance of Southeast Asian art within the global context and reflect the contemporary concerns of art communities around the world.

Second Benesse Prize at Singapore Biennale 2019

SAM and Benesse Holdings, Inc. will work together once again on a second presentation of the **Benesse Prize** at the Singapore Biennale. The Benesse Prize was established at the Venice Biennale in 1995. Two decades after its inaugural edition, the Prize moved to the Singapore Biennale, with its 12th edition to be presented at SB2019. Organised by Benesse Holdings, Inc, the winner will receive a commission to create a work to be exhibited at Benesse Art Site Naoshima or the opportunity to have their works collected by Benesse Art Site Naoshima, and a cash prize of JPY 3,000,000 (about S\$40,000). The Benesse Prize, open to all artists whose artworks are exhibited at SB2019, seeks to recognise Asian artists whose bodies of work demonstrate the potential to engage with some of the key underlying concepts explored at Benesse Art Site Naoshima.

The international jury this year is made up of Indonesian artist and member of ruangrupa **Mr. Ade Darmawan**, International Artistic Director of Benesse Art Site Naoshima **Ms. Akiko Miki**, Director of SAM and National Gallery Singapore **Dr. Eugene Tan**, Director of Ilham Gallery **Mr. Valentine Willie**, and Director of Power Station of Art **Ms. Gong Yan**.

Shortlisted artists, selected by an international jury jointly appointed by SAM and Benesse Holdings, Inc, will be announced at the opening of SB2019 with the award presentation held during Singapore Art Week in January 2020. The inaugural Asian edition of the Benesse Prize was held in conjunction with Singapore Biennale 2016 and won by Thai artist Pannaphan Yodmanee.

Other International Collaborations

Several artworks presented at SB2019: *Every Step in the Right Direction* are the result of collaborations with or support from important cultural partners from the region and beyond.



Boedi Widjaja, detail of salt-infused concrete from *Black—Hut, Black—Hut*, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist.

Boedi Widjaja | *Black—Hut, Black—Hut*

Conceived as a co-commission between the **Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA)** and **SAM**, Singaporean artist Boedi Widjaja's *Black—Hut, Black—Hut* is an architectural installation with surfaces rendered in salt-infused concrete, which 'blooms' and changes appearance over time. Elements within the structure reference the raised flooring in various vernacular architectures, including the Queenslander house, the Javanese joglo, the Malay attap found in Singapore fishing villages, and void deck spaces of Singapore's HDB apartment blocks. Through the installation, Boedi investigates concerns regarding diaspora, hybridity, travel and isolation through his own lived experience of migration, culture and aesthetics. The work was first presented at APT9 in QAGOMA, and a new site-specific iteration will be presented in SB2019.



Chia-Wei Hsu, video still from *Stones and Elephants*, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist.

Chia-Wei Hsu | *Stones and Elephants*

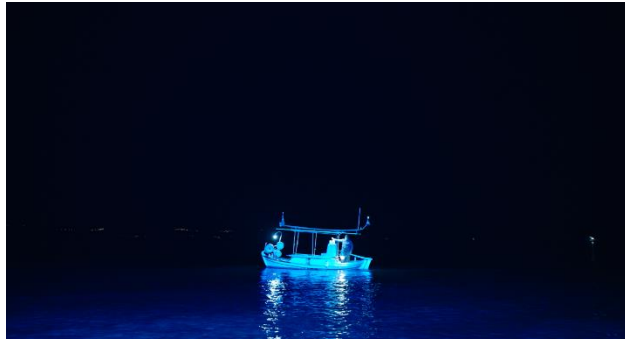
Taiwanese artist Chia-Wei Hsu will present *Stones and Elephants*, a work which connects colonial history with modern life by examining the historical relationship between the Dutch East India Company, the British East India Company and the local population. The story begins from the narration of two chapters of *The Hikayat Abdullah* - a literary work by a Malacca-born Munshi of Singapore, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir published in 1849. Through Hsu's video work, we are given an insight into the Dutch architecture of Malacca as described by Munshi Abdullah in his memoirs, and a parallel world shaped by supernatural beliefs and animal representations. Apart from the footage, keywords connected to the research have been programmed to be generated on a parallel screen, where viewers will be able to witness the keywords being searched online, as if an invisible researcher were present. This work is commissioned by SB2019 in collaboration with **KADIST**, a non-profit organisation based in Paris and San Francisco.



Koki Tanaka, production photo from the filming of *Abstracted / Family*, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist and Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou and Aoyama Meguro, Tokyo.

Koki Tanaka | *Abstracted / Family*

Japanese artist Koki Tanaka questions the coordinates and the mechanisms that contribute to the formation of a family through his video work *Abstracted / Family*, where the notion of 'family' is not one based on blood relation, but refers to a "quasi-family", wherein a group of people who happen to share the same time and space are united. Tanaka brings together four protagonists whose families descend from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil and the Korean peninsula, but are themselves native Japanese speakers and have been brought up in a Japanese cultural environment. Their co-existence in a typical Japanese suburban house requires them to be involved in diverse everyday life actions or work together as a group in creating a series of abstract paintings. On another side, the artist questions the stereotype that the Japanese are a homogenous race – an idea shared both by the local population, as well as the international public opinion. This work is co-commissioned by **Aichi Triennale** and SB2019, where it will be shown in a new form.



Wu Tsang, film still from *One emerging from a point of view*, 2019. Image courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin

Wu Tsang | *One emerging from a point of view*

The Asian premiere of a two-channel film installation by Asian-American artist, Wu Tsang, explores the stories of two young women who crossed paths but never met on the Greek island of Lesbos, where the Moria refugee camp, known for its inhumane living conditions, is located. The parallel narratives unfold in overlapping video projections, one presented in the style of a documentary, and the other in that of magical realism. Tsang's hybrid fiction-documentary departs from the traditional approach in telling a story of the island, migration, and the on-going crisis of refugees crossing into Europe through Greece. This work is co-commissioned and co-produced by **Sharjah Art Foundation** and **Onassis Fast Forward Festival**.



Marie Voignier, film still from *Na China*, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist.

Marie Voignier | *Na China*

French artist Marie Voignier will premiere a new film, *Na China*, based on her research on one of the most important sub-Saharan African communities in China. Through interviews with African businesswomen in Guangzhou, which has the largest African community in Asia, the film explores the different experiences of women traders from Cameroon and Biafra, some of whom settle in in the city, and some of whom only pass through. With the film's ambivalence between direct cinema and reenactment, fiction facilitates the interrogation and destabilisation of received truths and norms, allowing Voignier to surface and critique the predicaments of the contemporary world order. *Na China* is commissioned by **Biljana Ciric** and the **Guangdong Times Museum**.

Key Dates and Venues

Commissioned by the National Arts Council, Singapore and organised by SAM, the exhibition will take place in multiple nodes across a network of sites and will feature prominently at National Gallery Singapore and Gillman Barracks. Following the model of the 2016 edition, other cultural and heritage venues – including sites within the Bras Basah Bugis precinct – will also be explored to showcase SB2019 artworks.

The Singapore Biennale 2019 is an affiliate of the Singapore Bicentennial.

More details can be found in the Annexes.

Images can be downloaded from <https://suttonpr.egnyte.com/fl/c82AI06TvM>.

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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.

Organised by Singapore Art Museum | Commissioned by National Arts Council, Singapore
Supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

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.

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 building along Bras Basah Road is currently closed in preparation for a major building revamp, with museum programming continuing at partner venues.

SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013 and 2016, as well as the current edition in 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 and connect our communities. 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.

Annex A: Artist List

Annex B: Artistic Director and Curator Biographies

Annex A: Singapore Biennale 2019 – Artist List

1. Busui Ajaw (Thailand)
2. Raymundo Albano (The Philippines)
3. Ruangsak Anuwatwimon (Thailand)
4. Arnont Nongyao (Thailand)
5. Boedi Widjaja (Singapore)
6. Karolina Bregula (Poland)
7. Hera Büyüktaşçıyan (Turkey)
8. Chang En-Man (Taiwan)
9. Kray Chen (Singapore)
10. Sharon Chin (Malaysia)
11. Celine Condorelli (UK)
12. Dusadee Huntrakul (Thailand)
13. Ha Bik Chuen (Hong Kong)
14. Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (USA)
15. Amanda Heng (Singapore)
16. Hsu Chia-Wei (Taiwan)
17. Hu Yun (China / Serbia)
18. Kahlil Robert Irving (USA)
19. Ismail Zain (Malaysia)
20. Mathias Kauage (Papua New Guinea)
21. Le Quang Ha (Vietnam)
22. Soyung Lee (South Korea)
23. Lim Sokchanlina (Cambodia)
24. Jen Liu (USA)
25. Temsüyanger Longkumer (India / UK)
26. Lani Maestro (The Philippines / Canada)
27. The Mamitua Saber Project
28. Min Thein Sung (Myanmar)
29. Petros Moris (Greece)
30. Pooja Nansi (Singapore)
31. Ngoc Nau (Vietnam)
32. Nabilah Nordin (Singapore / Australia)
33. Okui Lala (Malaysia)
34. Alfonso Ossorio (USA)
35. Paphonsak La-or (Thailand)
36. Gary-Ross Pastrana (The Philippines)
37. Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier (Laos / UK)
38. Phare, the Battambang Circus (Cambodia)
39. Post-Museum (Singapore)
40. Prapat Jiwarangsan (Thailand)
41. Khairullah Rahim (Singapore)
42. Hafiz Rancajale (Indonesia)
43. Tracey Rose (South Africa)
44. Miljohn Ruperto (USA)
45. Ali Akbar Sadeghi (Iran)
46. Haifa Subay (Yemen)
47. Dennis Tan (Singapore)
48. Koki Tanaka (Japan)
49. Zai Tang (Singapore / UK)
50. titre provisoire (Germany)
51. Veronica Troncoso (Chile / Germany)
52. Wu Tsang (USA)
53. Wendelien van Oldenborgh (The Netherlands)
54. Carlos Villa (USA)
55. Marie Voignier (France)
56. Vandy Rattana (Cambodia / France)
57. Vanghoua Anthony Vue (Australia)
58. Juliana Yasin (Singapore)
59. Zakaria Omar (Brunei)
60. Zakkubalan, in collaboration with Ryuichi Sakamoto (USA / Japan)
61. Robert Zhao (Singapore)

Annex B: Singapore Biennale 2019 – Biographies of Curatorial Team Members



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

Patrick Flores, Professor of Art Studies at the Department of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines and Curator of the Vargas Museum in Manila

Patrick Flores is Professor of Art Studies at the Department of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines, which he chaired from 1997 to 2003, and Curator of the Vargas Museum in Manila. He was one of the curators of *Under Construction: New Dimensions in Asian Art* in 2000 and the Gwangju Biennale (*Position Papers*) in 2008. He was a Visiting Fellow at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in 1999 and an Asian Public Intellectuals Fellow in 2004.

Among his publications are *Painting History: Revisions in Philippine Colonial Art* (1999); *Remarkable Collection: Art, History, and the National Museum* (2006); and *Past Peripheral: Curation in Southeast Asia* (2008). He was a grantee of the Asian Cultural Council (2010) and a member of the Advisory Board of the exhibition *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989* (2011) organized by the Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe and member of the Guggenheim Museum's Asian Art Council (2011 and 2014). He co-edited the Southeast Asian issue with Joan Kee for *Third Text* (2011). He convened in 2013 on behalf of the Clark Institute and the Department of Art Studies of the University of the Philippines the conference "Histories of Art History in Southeast Asia" in Manila. He was a Guest Scholar of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles in 2014. He curated an exhibition of contemporary art from Southeast Asia and Southeast Europe titled *South by Southeast* and the Philippine Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015.



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

Andrea Fam, Assistant Curator, Singapore Art Museum

Andrea Fam is an Assistant Curator at the Singapore Art Museum where she oversees the Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam portfolios. She holds a B.A. (Hons) degree in Criticism, Communication and Curation in Art and Design from Central Saint Martins, London, UK. She has curated and co-curated several exhibitions at SAM, namely, the 2016 Singapore Biennale, *An Atlas of Mirrors*, *Imaginarium: Over the Ocean*, *Under the Sea*, *Odyssey: Navigating Nameless Seas* and *A New Horizon*, a *Yellow Ribbon Community Art Exhibition*. Her research interests include investigations into the implications and impact of borders.



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

John Tung, Assistant Curator, Singapore Art Museum

John Tung oversees the Thai contemporary art portfolio at the Singapore Art Museum. He holds a BA (Hons) in Arts Management conferred by Goldsmiths, University of London (LASALLE) and an MA in Cultural Management from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he graduated on the Dean's List. His research interests include post-colonial theory, cultural policy and cultural theory. His artistic interests span varied genres, and exhibitions he has curated at the Singapore Art Museum include *Imaginarium: Over the Ocean*, *Under the Sea* and *Odyssey: Navigating Nameless Seas*, and most recently, *Cinerama: Art and the Moving Image in Southeast Asia*. He is also one of the co-curators of the Singapore Biennale 2016 – *An Atlas of Mirrors*.



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

Anca Verona Mihuleț, Art Historian and Independent Curator based in Seoul

Anca Mihuleț has been supporting artists to research on topics such as the implications of knowledge, history, margins or landscape, with a focus on hidden stories, post-colonialism and invisibility. Between 2006 and 2013, together with Liviana Dan, she curated the exhibition program of The Contemporary Art Gallery of the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu. In 2013, she was the curator of *Reflection Center for Suspended Histories. An Attempt*, presented as one of the two Romanian Pavilions at the Venice Biennale. In 2015 and 2016, together with Patrick Flores, Mihuleț curated the exhibition *South by Southeast*, which was showed at Osage Gallery in Hong Kong and at The Guangdong Times Museum. Between 2015 and 2017, in collaboration with Diana Marincu, she curated *The White Dot and The Black Cube*, hosted at The National Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest.



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

Goh Sze Ying, Assistant Curator, National Gallery Singapore

Goh Sze Ying is an Assistant Curator at National Gallery Singapore. At the Gallery, she has worked on exhibitions *Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.* (2018), *Lim Cheng Hoe: Painting Singapore* (2018), and *Listening to Architecture: The Gallery's Histories and Transformation* (2017). Her research focuses on photography and art in Singapore in the mid-twentieth century, with an interest in how artistic practice relates to mobility and place. She graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London with a MA in urban sociology in 2015. Formerly based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, she has worked on exhibitions and public programmes with a focus on artistic interventions located within the urban public space. Her past projects include *Between States* (2017), *ESCAPE from the SEA* (2017), and *more than one (fragile) thing at a time* (2016).



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

Renan Laru-an, Independent Researcher and Curator based in Manila

Renan Laru-an is a researcher, a curator and the Public Engagement and Artistic Formation Coordinator of the Philippine Contemporary Art Network at the Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center. In his research-oriented curatorial work, Laru-an studies 'insufficient' and 'subtracted' images and subjects at the juncture of development and integration projects through long-term inquiries, such as *Herding Islands, Rats, and the Anthropocene* (2015), *Lightning Studies: Centre for the Translation of Constraints, Conflicts, and Contaminations (CTCCCs)* (2016), *The Artist and the Social Dreamer* (2017), and *Promising Arrivals, Violent Departures* (2018). He has been (co-)curator of festivals and exhibitions, including the 8th OK.Video – Indonesia Media Arts Festival, Jakarta (2017) and *A Tripoli Agreement*, Sharjah (2018). Between 2012 and 2015, he directed the self-organized, multidisciplinary platform and 'virtual' organisation DisLab | Research and Criticism.



Photo Credit: Singapore Art Museum

Vipash Purichanont, Independent Curator based in Bangkok

Vipash Purichanont is an independent curator and a co-founder of Waiting You Curator Lab, a curatorial collective based in Chiangmai. Purichanont received his doctoral degree in Curatorial/Knowledge from the Department of Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths, University of London. Purichanont's practice has its roots in collaboration. Most of his theoretical work focused on notions of collectivity and community as well as caring and sharing. Although most of Purichanont's curatorial projects are structured around Southeast Asia, his main objective is to initiate a meaningful conversation between the region and the globe. He was an assistant curator for the 1st Thailand Biennale (Krabi, 2018). Purichanont is shortlisted for the ICI Gerrit Lansing Independent Vision Curatorial Award in the same year. He is currently a lecturer at the department of Art History, Faculty of Archeology, Silpakorn University, Bangkok.