

Asia Society Triennial to Feature over 40 Artists from 19 Countries



Nasim Nasr, 33 Beads (Unworried) #2 (video still), 2018. HD single-channel video, no sound. Duration: 2 minutes, 35 seconds, loop. Courtesy of the artist. Image courtesy of the artist

First citywide festival celebrating contemporary art from Asia will unfold at venues across New York City including Asia Society Museum, Governors Island,

the New-York Historical Society, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, Times Square Arts, and other locations

New York, January 29, 2020—Asia Society announced today that over 40 artists and collectives from 19 countries have been selected to participate in the inaugural Asia Society Triennial, a multi-venue festival of art, ideas, and innovation. Titled *We Do Not Dream Alone*, the exhibition opens to the public on June 5, 2020 at Asia Society Museum, as well as multiple locations throughout New York City.

The exhibition is cocurated by **Boon Hui Tan**, Vice President of Global Artistic Programs and Director of Asia Society Museum, and Artistic Director of the Triennial, and **Michelle Yun**, Senior Curator of Asian Contemporary Art and Associate Director of the Triennial.

The artists and collectives chosen for the Asia Society Triennial work across a variety of disciplines including painting, sculpture, photography, video, fiber art, and performance. They represent countries across Asia and the Asian diaspora, and bring together a spectacularly diverse range of works and viewpoints. Nearly half of the artists have been commissioned to create new work; many of these works are site-specific.

“Art has the power to connect us beyond borders and across cultures,” says Asia Society President and CEO **Josette Sheeran**. “It is a vital time to connect on our common, human dreams. This first-ever Triennial of Asian art will bring the power of visionary art and ideas to remind us that indeed we do not dream alone.”

To create a truly democratic and wide-reaching festival, Asia Society will partner with other New York cultural institutions and venues such as Governors Island and Times Square Arts Midnight Moment to bring the Triennial to locations across New York City and ensure it is free to all audiences. Led by **Agnes Hsu-Tang**, Ph.D., Executive Chair of the Triennial and Chair of its Steering Committee, the Triennial reaches beyond New York City and the visual art field to build seminal collaborations, including with the New York Philharmonic, Santa Fe Opera, and others to create a platform that brings together a diversity of art forms.

In addition to showcasing works by renowned performance artists such as **Susie Ibarra**, who will perform at New-York Historical Society, the Triennial will feature a newly commissioned work by contemporary composer **Huang Ruo** that will premiere at the Opening Night Gala on June 5. Huang Ruo, composer of the highly anticipated new opera *M. Butterfly*, is the Triennial’s inaugural composer-in-residence. “A contemporary art festival should be *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art, in itself,” says Dr. Hsu-Tang. “The Triennial advances the legacy of Asia Society Museum as a cultural vanguard of diverse artistic voices from and about Asia. This new international platform builds on more than six decades of institutional heritage of diplomacy and systematic engagement between Asia and America.”

About the artists and artworks

Artists in the exhibition work across today's mediums of artistic expression, reflecting the diversity of contemporary artistic practice. Whether the artists are early in their careers or more established, their works offer opportunities for wide-ranging conversations about art, identity, and politics.

"My cocurator and I have sought to commission artists and to find complex works that have not been widely seen in this country," says Mr. Tan. "In the face of an increasingly fractured world, where the old ties between cultures and civilizations have become undone, contemporary art has risen to prod, pull, and nudge us to resist pessimism. With this Triennial, we are pushing beyond our own walls to present artists and artworks that interrogate the complexities of the present moment and that invite viewers to consider new ways of seeing."

"Asia Society's purview across the region and the diaspora represents diverse cultures, religions, ethnicities, political ideologies, and identities," says Ms. Yun. "Consequently, as we considered which artists to include in our first Triennial, we initially cast a wide net. Ultimately, we focused our selection on artists whose practices actively and uniquely engage timely, yet universally accessible, issues relating to democracy, identity, gender, and sustainability. We are especially pleased to be collaborating with such a dynamic group of artists and venue partners to premiere newly commissioned works, many of them specific to New York City."

Kimsooja is a multimedia conceptual artist who lives and works between New York, Paris, and Seoul, and whose work will be displayed at multiple Triennial locations. At Governors Island, Kimsooja will create a site-specific immersive installation, incorporating architecture, light, and sound. At other venues, the artist will activate her project *To Breathe—The Flags*, incorporating a cross-pollination of national flags into a unifying symbol that in the artist's words "is a wish for coexistence, for an ideal world in which individuals can unite in celebration of our distinctions and of our common humanity."

Israeli-born artist **Ghiora Aharoni** utilizes found, often ancient, culturally specific objects and texts to explore history, symbolism, and imagination in works that question age-old ideologies and ethnic conflicts as well as love, family, and sexuality. His contribution to the Triennial will include the use of phulkari, a traditional Punjabi dowry shawl that Aharoni inscribes with his own family biography texts, drawings, symbols, and objects of daily life, thereby overlaying them with new meaning and drawing them into conversation with contemporary ideas and artistic practice.

Anne Samat is a fiber and textile artist from Malaysia whose work addresses issues of identity, gender, and nationhood by pushing the boundaries of traditional Southeast Asian weaving techniques infusing her ornate and visually arresting woven sculptures with everyday household objects. She will be contributing a new, site-specific installation at Asia Society Museum. Chinese artist **Xu Zhen** has created a suite of sculptures composed of replicas of classical statues deemed the highest benchmark of

western and Asian civilizations. These become a means to explore preconceived hierarchies within the art historical canon and provoke dialogue on the sometimes violent nature of cultural appropriation. With irony, Xu's work raises issues relating to the body, craftsmanship, originality versus mass production, appropriation and authorship, agency, and the monetization of art. In a house on Governors Island, Iranian artist **Reza Aramesh** will create an installation of ceramic vases that recall Hellenistic artifacts, but incorporate images of contemporary war and torture, alluding to the continuity of conflict and barbarity as well as the history of Governors Island as a military outpost.

Arpita Singh, a world-renowned painter whose work has rarely been shown in the U.S., will be represented in the Triennial with a suite of paintings that reflect on the experience of the older woman in contemporary Indian society. **anGie Seah** is a performance and multimedia artist from Singapore whose practice explores the complexities of the human psyche through cathartic acts of spontaneity. For the Triennial she will collaborate with local communities to create a participatory installation as a humorous antidote to the emotional and psychological strains of contemporary life. **Lu Yang** attempts to reconcile the gap between the mysticism of religious practice and rational, scientific thought. Born and currently based in Shanghai, China, her multifaceted, multimedia practice entwines elements of Buddhism, neuroscience, gender, and physiology with pop-culture tropes including manga, science fiction, and video games. She will create a site-specific, interactive installation in a suite of rooms on Governors Island. **Mina Cheon** will create a participatory public artwork, in partnership with the New York Philharmonic, at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall. The work invites audience members to consider the unity of North and South Korea through consumption of one of the region's most popular and symbolic snacks, the Choco Pie. Cheon will also have an installation on Governors Island featuring a series of art history lessons given by her alter ego "Professor Kim."

Artists will also explore issues closer to home. **Xu Bing** and **Sun Xun** will create new works for a special project that responds to the Declaration of Independence and the principles of equality and moral leadership on which the United States government and American national identity is based. Guest curator: **Susan L. Benington**, Ph.D.

A list of Triennial artists is below.

Related programs

A range of interdisciplinary programs will be held in conjunction with the Asia Society Triennial, exploring the themes in the exhibition *We Do Not Dream Alone* and ranging from film, to food, to events looking at the global challenges of refugees and migration, artificial intelligence, and environmental concerns such as the scourge posed by plastics. Among the highlights are a film series focused on gender and gender expression in contemporary Asian cinema, guest curated by **Giovanna Fulvi**, International Programmer at Toronto International Film Festival, as well as a performance by drummer/composer Susie Ibarra, who is known for her unique blend of Asian and jazz percussive traditions, that will be presented in a free event at the New-York Historical Society's Patricia D. Klingenstein Library.

Collateral events and associated venues

In addition to the core Triennial *We Do Not Dream Alone* exhibition venues, a number of related projects are being organized at collateral sites. Among these are the New York-Historical Society exhibition titled *Dreaming Together: New-York Historical Society and Asia Society Museum* on view April 3, 2020–April 4, 2021. More than 35 works drawn from both institutions' collections generate dialogue about urban and natural environments, protest and rebellion, individuals and identities, and borders. The exhibition is curated at New-York Historical by **Wendy N. E. Ikemoto**, Ph.D., curator of American art.

Asia Society Triennial artist list (in alphabetical order):

Hamra Abbas (b. 1976 in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Lives and works in Boston, MA, U.S. and Lahore, Pakistan)

Ghiora Aharoni (b. 1969 in Rehovot, Israel. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.)

Song-Ming Ang (b. 1980 in Singapore. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Singapore)

Reza Aramesh (b. 1970 in Awhaz, Iran. Lives and works in London, UK)

Christine Ay Tjoe (b. 1973 in Bandung, Indonesia. Lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia)

Mina Cheon (b. 1973 in Seoul, Korea. Lives and works in Baltimore, MD and New York, NY, U.S.; and Seoul, Korea)

Cheuk Wing Nam (b. 1983 in Hong Kong. Lives and works in Hong Kong)

Daniel Crooks (b. 1973 in Hastings, New Zealand. Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia)

Vibha Galhotra (b. 1978 in Chandigarh, India. Lives and works in New Delhi, India)

Kyungah Ham (b. 1966 in Seoul, Korea. Lives and works in Seoul, Korea)

Joyce Ho (b. 1983 in Taipei, Taiwan. Lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan)

Susie Ibarra (b. 1970 in Anaheim, CA, U.S. Lives and works in New Paltz, NY; Bennington, VT; and New York, NY, U.S.)

Abir Karmakar (b. 1977 in Siliguri, India. Lives and works in Vadodara, India)

Kimsooja (b. 1957 in Daegu, Korea. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.; Paris, France; and Seoul, Korea)

Lao Tongli (b. 1982 in Guangdong Province, China. Lives and works in Guangzhou, China)

Dinh Q. Lê (b. 1968 in Hà Tiên, Vietnam. Lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and Los Angeles, CA, U.S.)

Li Jianjun (b. 1972 in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, China. Lives and works in Beijing, China)

Minouk Lim (b. 1968 in Daejeon, Korea. Lives and works in Seoul, Korea)

Lu Yang (b. 1984 in Shanghai, China. Lives and works in Shanghai, China)

LuxuryLogico Collective founded in 2010. [Members born in Taiwan: Chang Geng Hwa (b. 1980), Chang Keung-Hau (1980–2018), Chen Chih Chien (b. 1979), Lin Kun Ying (b. 1980). All live and work in Taipei, Taiwan.]

Prabhavathi Meppayil (b. 1965 in Bangalore, India. Lives and works in Bangalore, India)

Mountain River Jump! Duo founded in 2016. (Huang He b. 1985 in Guangzhou, China; Huang Shan b. 1985 in Guangzhou, China. Live and work in Foshan, China)

Kevork Mourad (b. 1970 in Qamishli, Syria. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.)

Nasim Nasr (b. 1984 in Tehran, Iran. Lives and works in Sydney, Australia)

Jordan Nassar (b. 1985 in New York, NY, U.S. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.)

Hetaim Patel (b. 1980 in Bolton, UK. Lives and works in London, UK)

Anne Samat (b. 1973 in Malacca, Malaysia. Lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

anGie Seah (b. 1979 in Singapore. Lives and works in Singapore)

Shahzia Sikander (b. 1969 in Lahore, Pakistan. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.)

Arpita Singh (b. 1937 in Baranagar, India. Lives and works in New Delhi, India)

Samita Sinha (b. 1978 in New York, NY, U.S. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.)

Sun Xun (b. 1980 in Fuxin, China. Lives and works in Beijing, China)

Melati Suryodarmo (b. 1969 in Surakarta, Indonesia. Lives and works in Gross Gleidingen, Germany and Surakarta, Indonesia)

teamLab Collective (founded in 2001 by Toshiyuki Inoko. Based in Tokyo, Japan)

Natee Utarit (b. 1970 in Bangkok, Thailand. Lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand)

Jason Wee (b. 1979 in Singapore. Lives and works in Singapore and New York, NY, U.S.)

Wen Hui (b. 1960 in Yunnan Province, China. Lives and works in Beijing, China)

Xu Bing (b. 1955 in Chongqing, China. Based in Beijing, China and New York, NY, U.S.)

Xu Zhen® (b. 1977 in Shanghai, China. Lives and works in Shanghai, China)

Ken + Julia Yonetani (Ken Yonetani b. 1971 in Tokyo, Japan; Julia Yonetani b. 1972 in Tokyo, Japan. Live and work in Katoomba, Australia and Kyoto, Japan)

Composer-in-residence **Huang Ruo** (b. 1976 Hainan, China. Lives and works in New York, NY, U.S.)

The Asia Society Triennial is organized by **Boon Hui Tan**, Vice President of Global Artistic Programs and Director of Asia Society Museum and Artistic Director of the Triennial; and **Michelle Yun**, Senior Curator of Asian Contemporary Art and Associate Director of the Triennial. **Agnes Hsu-Tang**, Ph.D. is the Executive Chair, leading the Steering Committee and guiding Triennial collaborations with other cultural organizations.

The Asia Society Triennial Steering Committee includes:

Agnes Hsu-Tang, Ph.D. (Executive Chair)

David Barboza

Lilly Chan

Niv Fichman

David Henry Hwang

Golnar Khosrowshahi

Mee-Seen Loong

Charles Rockefeller

Hao Sheng

Andreas Teoh

Robert Wong

Asia Society Museum presents a wide range of traditional, modern, and contemporary exhibitions of Asian and Asian American art, taking new approaches to familiar masterpieces and introducing under-recognized arts and artists. The Asia Society

Museum Collection comprises a traditional art collection, including the initial bequests of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, and a contemporary art collection. Through exhibitions and public programs, Asia Society provides a forum for the issues and viewpoints reflected in both traditional and contemporary Asian art and in Asia today.

Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational institution based in New York with state-of-the-art cultural centers and gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Houston, and offices in Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, Sydney, Tokyo, Washington, D.C., and Zurich.

Asia Society Museum is located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street), New York City. Find out more at AsiaSociety.org/NY and @AsiaSocietyNY.

For updates about the Asia Society Triennial, visit AsiaSociety.org/triennial

Asia Society Triennial Venues

Governors Island

Governors Island is a 172-acre island in the heart of New York Harbor nestled between Lower Manhattan and the Brooklyn waterfront. Eight minutes from the energy and excitement of the City, the Island is a popular seasonal destination. An award-winning new park is complemented by dozens of unique historic buildings, environmental educational facilities, a rich arts and culture program and a 22-acre National Monument managed by the National Park Service. Unlike anywhere else in New York, Governors Island offers peaceful settings with sweeping views of the Harbor, Lower Manhattan skyline and Statue of Liberty. Looking ahead, the Island will be activated year-round with expanded educational, commercial and non-profit uses.

For more information, please visit www.govisland.org

Times Square Arts

Times Square Arts collaborates with contemporary artists to experiment and engage with one of the world's most iconic urban places. Midnight Moment is the world's largest, longest-running digital art exhibition, synchronized on electronic billboards throughout Times Square nightly from 11:57pm to midnight.

David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center

In 1962, Philharmonic Hall—renamed Avery Fisher Hall in 1973 and later renamed David Geffen Hall in 2015—became one of the first buildings to be completed on the Lincoln Center site and home to one of its first resident organizations, the world-renowned New York Philharmonic, the oldest symphony orchestra in the U.S. Today, David Geffen Hall hosts notable performances by acclaimed orchestras and artists from around the globe, as well as galas, film premieres, graduations, and conferences.

Associated/Collateral Locations

New-York Historical Society

The New-York Historical Society, one of America's preeminent cultural institutions, is dedicated to fostering research and presenting history and art exhibitions and public programs that reveal the dynamism of history and its influence on the world of today. Founded in 1804, New-York Historical has a mission to explore the richly layered history of New York City and State and the country, and to serve as a national forum for the discussion of issues surrounding the making and meaning of history.