



EMBARGOED TILL MON, 21 MAY 2018

Finalists for the *Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* revealed

The exhibition of finalist artworks for the 4th edition of the juried contemporary art award to open on 25 May

21 MAY 2017, Singapore – The Singapore Art Museum and Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation announced the *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* finalist artworks today, which will be on view at an exhibition held from 25 May to 2 September 2018 at the National Museum of Singapore, the venue supporter for the Prize's finalist exhibition.

The triennial *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize* spotlights outstanding examples of contemporary art from emerging and established artists produced over the last three years, and for this fourth edition, has expanded in scope to include Central Asia in addition to the Asia Pacific region. The Prize is worth SGD 100,000, with SGD 60,000 awarded to the Grand Prize winner and SGD 15,000 each for two Jurors' Choice Award winners. A People's Choice Award of SGD 10,000 will also be offered to the artwork that receives the highest number of public votes on-site at the exhibition. The winners of *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* will be announced after an awards ceremony on 29 June 2018.

This year's finalist artworks were selected by a panel of distinguished jurors comprising Mami Kataoka (Chief Curator of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo), Bose Krishnamachari (President of the Kochi Biennale Foundation), Joyce Toh (Head of Content and Senior Curator at the Singapore Art Museum), Dr. Gerard Vaughan (Director of National Gallery of Australia) and Wong Hoy Cheong (artist and independent curator). The 15 finalist works were chosen from 113 artworks nominated from over 40 countries and territories. Ranging from painting to video and installation, the finalist artworks span the length, breadth and diversity of the Asian continent and beyond, hailing from Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. For more information on the finalist artworks, and quotes by the jurors on the selection process, please refer to **Annex A** and **Annex B**.

Over the course of the exhibition, visitors can look forward to artist performances, artist and curator dialogue sessions, panel discussions with the jurors, and various talks with artists, specialists and representatives from the art community, all of which will delve deeper into contemporary art practices of the region, as well as the themes explored by the artworks. For more information on accompanying programmes, please refer to **Annex C**.

Finalist artworks for the *Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018*

- Based extensively on archival material, Malaysian artist **Au Sow Yee**'s mixed media installation ***The Kris Project*** (2016) reimagines history by collapsing the divide between fact and fiction. Juxtaposing found footage from existing films with documentaries of wartime Malaya, the resulting narrative presents a fragmented, hypothetical history of Southeast Asia.
- A contemporary take on traditional rituals, South Korean artist **Bae Young-whan**'s four-channel video, titled ***Abstract Verb – Can you remember?*** (2016), features a feather-clad performer dancing and gyrating to a pounding, percussive beat – an interpretation of shamanistic dance rituals of various communities for an MTV age.
- Japanese artist **Chikako Yamashiro**'s ***Mud man*** (2016) addresses issues of cultural identity, geopolitics and the persistence of historical memory. Through a video shot in Okinawa and Jeju Island, the work features a lyrical and enigmatic narrative of a community of people awakened to poems of their history, nature, and other similar communities.
- ***Ex Nilalang (Balud, Dyesebel, Lola ex Machina)*** (2015) by Australian artist collective **Club Ate**, comprising **Justin Shoulder** and **Bhenji Ra**, is a video trilogy that reimagines Filipino myth and popular culture as celebratory narratives, drawing upon the artists' personal experiences as Filipino-Australians in an exploration of cultural and gender identity.
- Taiwanese artist **Fang Wei-wen**'s ***Republic of Rubber Tape*** (2016), features a structure that recalls his childhood home: the Kampong Ayer (Malay for "water village") in Brunei Darussalam, built entirely of wooden stilt houses and connecting walkways. Tape that surrounds the installation recalls countries' boundaries as depicted in maps, portraying an imaginary realm inspired by the artist's adolescence.
- A painting teeming with depictions of everyday life in Bali, interspersed with the artist's own versions of famous paintings from Western and Indonesian art history, Indonesian artist **Gede Mahendra Yasa**'s ***After Paradise Lost #1*** (2014) portrays an entire imaginary universe. The work also serves as a political analogy, with divisions between important figures of history and ordinary crowds broken down.
- Sculptures of 20 sleeping animals make up Indian artist **Jitish Kallat**'s ***The Infinite Episode*** (2016), depicting a zoological utopia, where the state of rest renders aspects of size, location and hierarchy irrelevant. The work prompts questions on coexistence and inequity – urgent issues that remain relevant to the human species.

- **Museum of the Lost** and **He was lost yesterday and we found him today** (2015) by Hong Kong-based husband-and-wife duo **Leung Chi Wo + Sara Wong**, portrays unidentifiable figures in a series of staged photographs that are based on images from their collection of archival material. Through the amplified presentation of these minor characters forgotten by history, the work questions the biases of historical representation.
- **Kaokao #1** (2014) by **Mata Aho Collective** from New Zealand is a sprawling installation of high-visibility tape produced from a form of Māori weaving, and featuring a chevron-shaped design called a *kaokao*. Conflating the military association of the chevron with the traditional use of the *kaokao* pattern on birthing mats, the artwork is a tribute to the strength and endurance of women.
- Vietnamese artist **Phan Thao Nguyen's Tropical Siesta** (2015–2017), is a 2-channel video installation that tells an imaginary tale of a rural Vietnam populated only by children. Set in an agricultural community, they reenact the observations recorded by French Jesuit missionary Alexandre de Rhodes (considered the father of the romanised Vietnamese script) as he travelled through Vietnam in the 17th century.
- Singaporean artist **Shubigi Rao's** interactive installation, **Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book. Vol I: Written in the Margins (2014–2016)** (2014–2016), interrogates issues surrounding the destruction of books and libraries. The installation includes drawings, a book on the topic written by the artist herself, and a series of videos featuring testimonies from individuals involved in such incidents, such as firefighters who tried to save libraries on fire, and cultural workers who smuggled books and paintings to safety.
- Alluding to the recent socio-political turmoil in his home country, Thai artist **Thasnai Sethaseree's Untitled (Hua Lamphong)** (2016) is a vibrant collage of coloured paper streamers overlaid on a canvas of Buddhist monks' robes, enfolding into its surface images of modern architecture, political violence in Thailand and printed texts of the new Thai Constitution, fusing symbols of everyday life and political upheaval.
- Vietnamese-American artist collective **The Propeller Group's AK-47 vs. M16** (2015) is a re-creation of the one in a billion chance of two bullets, shot from opposing sides of a battle, colliding into each other. The colliding bullets from an AK47, invented by the Soviets, and an M16, the brainchild of the U.S. army, highlights the horrifying scale of wartime and political violence throughout 20th century history.
- Kazakh artist **Yerbossyn Meldibekov's Brand** (2014–2015) comprise a series of leather panels crafted from the branded hide of the grunting ox, a species native to the highlands of Central Asia. Juxtaposing the use of natural materials from the region against the iconography of numeric symbols, the work also bears darker connotations, such as to similar atrocities committed during the second World War.

- An installation comprising concrete sculpture fragments, found objects and several videos, Japanese artist **Yuichiro Tamura's** *Milky Bay / 裏切りの海* (2016) explores the image and the idea of the body, based on the life of famed Japanese author, Yukio Mishima. Also informing the work are various narratives that make reference to episodes of post-war history in which bodies and the male physique feature prominently.

“We invite visitors to explore the tapestry of stories from across Asia Pacific and Central Asia at this fourth edition of the Signature Art Prize. As a contemporary art museum, and since inaugurating the Prize in 2008 with Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation, the Singapore Art Museum remains committed to championing contemporary art from the region. We are grateful for partners who support our vision, and thank the APB Foundation and the National Museum of Singapore for their support of this edition of the Prize.” says Edmund Cheng, Chairman of the Singapore Art Museum.

Frans Eusman, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, APB Foundation, says, “The Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation is delighted to ignite the development and appreciation of contemporary art in Singapore and the region through this partnership with the Singapore Art Museum. As a foundation committed to making a difference in people’s lives, we envision that the *Signature Art Prize*, along with its range of public, educational and outreach programmes, will inspire Singaporean artists, the general public and visitors alike.”

The *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* is presented by APB Foundation and organised by the Singapore Art Museum. The finalist artworks can be viewed from 25 May to 2 September 2018 at the National Museum of Singapore, the venue supporter for the Prize’s finalist exhibition. Visitors are invited to cast their votes for the People’s Choice Award. The winners of the Grand Prize, Jurors’ Choice Awards and People’s Choice Award will be announced at the awards ceremony on 29 June 2018.

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For more information, please read:

Annex A: Finalist artworks for APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018

Annex B: Quotes on nominations and finalists by the Signature Art Prize 2018 jurors

Annex C: Accompanying programmes for APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018

Annex D: Artwork captions for the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018 finalist artworks

For images, please visit <http://bit.ly/SignatureArtPrize2018>

About the Signature Art Prize

Inaugurated in 2008 by the Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation and the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), the triennial APB Foundation Signature Art Prize recognises outstanding examples of contemporary art from emerging and established artists within the Asia Pacific region. The APB Foundation Signature Art Prize is recognised as one of the highest accolades for contemporary visual art in Asia Pacific, and is open to all artworks regardless of medium, subject matter or size.

For the fourth edition, 113 artworks across 46 countries and territories were nominated by 38 independent, established professionals working in the field of contemporary art, each selecting up to three artworks that represent a significant development in the region's contemporary art landscape in recent years. This edition of the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize will mark the first time that the Prize includes nominations from the region of Central Asia, according due recognition to the visual production emerging from one of the most complex and dynamic regions in the world today.

Of the 113 nominated artworks from Central Asia, East Asia, Oceania, South Asia and Southeast Asia, 15 finalist works were selected by a distinguished panel of well-known international and regional art experts, and are presented in an exhibition held from 25 May to 2 September 2018 at the National Museum of Singapore, venue supporter of the Prize.

About the Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation

Instituted in June 1994, the APB Foundation seeks to ignite compassion and inspire through our philanthropic efforts. We set resources in motion to help people and organisations improve talents, enhanced educational and research endeavours as well as better living conditions. In turn, we fuel society and enable the communities, where we live and work, to flourish.

Committed to supporting Human Excellence, Creativity Development and Humanitarian Causes, the APB Foundation is involved in a variety of initiatives that range from arts funding and backing talent-building projects for human capital development, to engaging in meaningful partnerships with organisations or individuals who share our common goal to serve the society.

The APB Foundation is a registered Charity with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status in Singapore, and is managed and funded by Asia Pacific Breweries (Singapore) Pte. Ltd.

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 SAM at 8Q and partner venues such as the National Museum of Singapore.

SAM was the venue organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, becoming the main organiser in 2013 and 2016. SAM will continue to organise the next two editions in 2019 and 2022. 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

For more information, please contact:

Priscilla Li

Singapore Art Museum

DID: 6697 9761

Email: priscilla.li@singaporeartmuseum.sg

Lynn Sim

Singapore Art Museum




DID: 6697 9762

Email: lynn.sim@singaporeartmuseum.sg

ANNEX A

APB FOUNDATION SIGNATURE ART PRIZE 2018 FINALIST ARTWORKS






Note: The finalist artworks below are arranged in alphabetical order by country. Artwork captions are included in Annex D.

No.	Country	Artwork Image	Details
1	Australia		<p>Artist Name: Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra a.k.a. Club Ate Title: Ex Nilalang (Balud, Dyesebel, Lolo ex Machina) Year: 2015 Medium/ Material: Single-channel video Size/ Duration: 18:53 mins Nominator: Kyla McFarlane Image courtesy of the artists</p>
2	Hong Kong		<p>Artist Name: Leung Chi Wo + Sara Wong Title: "Museum of the Lost" and "He was lost yesterday and we found him today" Year: 2015 Medium/ Material: Vintage prints on paper and mixed media; archival inkjet prints (13 of a set of 28) Size/ Duration: 150 x 100 cm (archival inkjets prints; each); installation dimensions variable Nominator: Christina Li Image courtesy of the artists</p>
3	India		<p>Artist Name: Jitish Kallat Title: The Infinite Episode Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: Dental plaster (set of 20 sculptures) and low plinth Size/ Duration: Various dimensions Nominator: Gitanjali Dang Photograph by B.Huet/TUTTI</p>



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4	Indonesia		<p>Artist Name: Gede Mahendra Yasa Title: After Paradise Lost #1 Year: 2014 Medium/ Material: Acrylic on canvas Size/ Duration: 190 x 250 cm Nominator: Agung Hujatnikajennong Image courtesy of the artist</p>
5	Japan		<p>Artist Name: Yuichiro Tamura Title: Milky Bay / 裏切りの海 Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: Mixed media installation with videos, concrete sculptures, billiard tables with silkscreen, billiard balls, neon sign, bottle ships, drawings and found objects Size/ Duration: Dimensions variable Nominator: Naoki Yoneda Image courtesy of the artist</p>
6	Japan		<p>Artist Name: Chikako Yamashiro Title: Mud man Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: 3-channel video installation with textual components Size/ Duration: 24:21 mins Nominator: Hiroyuki Hattori Image courtesy of the artist and Yumiko Chiba Associates</p>
7	Malaysia		<p>Artist Name: Au Sow Yee Title: The Kris Project Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: Mixed media installation with video, objects, documents, photographs and lightbox Size/ Duration: Dimensions variable Nominator: Ong Jo-Lene Image courtesy of the artist</p>
8	New Zealand		<p>Artist Collective: Mata Aho Collective (Erena Baker, Sarah Hudson, Bridget Reweti and Terri Te Tau) Title: Kaokao #1 Year: 2014 Medium/ Material: Hi-vis reflective cloth tape and cotton Size/ Duration: 1200 x 220 Nominator: Emma Bugden Image courtesy of the artists</p>



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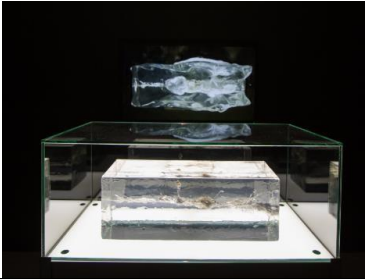

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9	Singapore		<p>Artist Name: Shubigi Rao Title: Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book. Vol I: Written in the Margins (2014–2016) Year: 2014–2016 Medium/ Material: Film clips, giclée prints with text, ink drawings, artist's book and table with three texts Size/ Duration: Dimensions variable Nominator: Jason Wee Image courtesy of the artist</p>
10	South Korea		<p>Artist Name: Bae Young-whan Title: Abstract Verb – Can you remember? Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: 4-channel video Size/ Duration: 6:37 mins Nominator: Jiyoon Lee Image courtesy of the artist and PKM Gallery</p>
11	Taiwan		<p>Artist Name: Fang Wei-wen Title: Republic of Rubber Tape Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: Site-specific installation with wood, bamboo, paper, rubber tape and found objects Size/ Duration: 1100 x 250 x 240 cm Nominator: Hsu Yuan-Ta Photograph by Hsieh Hung-Ming</p>
12	Thailand		<p>Artist Name: Thasnai Sethaseree Title: Untitled (Hua Lamphong) Year: 2016 Medium/ Material: Paper collage on Buddhist monk robes Size/ Duration: 800 x 400 x 5 cm Nominator: Gregory Galligan Image courtesy of Gallery VER</p>
13	Vietnam		<p>Artist Name: Phan Thao Nguyen Title: Tropical Siesta Year: 2015–2017 Medium/ Material: 2-channel video and oil paintings on x-ray film backings (set of 6) Size/ Duration: Various dimensions; 14:00 mins Nominator: Le Thuan Uyen Photograph by Phan Quang Studio; image courtesy of the artist</p>



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14	Vietnam		<p>Artist Collective: The Propeller Group Title: AK-47 vs. M16 Year: 2015 Medium/ Material: Ballistic gel blocks, bullet fragments and video (1 of a set of 21) Size/ Duration: 42.9 x 18.1 x 18.4 cm (each block); various video duration 2:48 min Nominator: Arlette Quynh-Anh Tran Image courtesy of the artist</p>
15	Central Asia		<p>Artist Name: Yerbossyn Meldibekov Title: Brand Year: 2014–2015 Medium/ Material: Hide (set of 8 pieces) Size/ Duration: Various dimensions Nominator: Valeria Ibraeva Image courtesy of the artist</p>

ANNEX B

QUOTES ON FINALIST ARTWORKS BY APB FOUNDATION SIGNATURE ART PRIZE 2018 JURORS

Mami Kataoka (Japan)

Chief Curator, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo



Mami Kataoka says, ***“The Signature Art Prize 2018 exhibition provides a glimpse into the multiplicity of political, social and economic histories and realities across Asia Pacific and Central Asia, as told through contemporary art. I look forward to the interesting dialogue that will arise from this platform, as well as between the 15 finalist artworks, each of which was produced in such diverse contexts.”***

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Mami Kataoka is Chief Curator of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. Since 2003 at museum’s inauguration, she has curated a number of exhibitions there including “Ai Weiwei: According to What?” (2009/ US Tour 2012-2013), “Lee Bul” (2012), “Makoto Aida” (2012), “Lee Mingwei and His Relations” (2014-2015), and “N. S. Harsha: Charming Journey” (2017). She was co-curator for “Sunshower: contemporary art from South East Asia 1980’s to now” (2017) among 14 curators at the Mori Art Museum and the National Art Center, Tokyo. She was also International curator at the Hayward Gallery in London from 2007 to 2009. Prior to this position, she was Chief Curator at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (1997-2002) and researcher at the NLI Research Institute on cultural policies and urban development projects (1992-1997). In 2012, she guest curated “Phantoms of Asia: Contemporary Awakens the Past” at Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, and was a Co-Artistic Director for the 9th Gwangju Biennale in South Korea. She is also Artistic Director of the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2016-2018). Kataoka serves as Board Member of CIMAM (International Committee for Museums and Collection of Modern Art) since 2014 and Professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design, Graduate School of Art and Design Studies.

Bose Krishnamachari (India)
President, Kochi Biennale Foundation



Speaking about the 113 artworks nominated for the 2018 edition of the *Signature Art Prize*, Bose Krishnamachari says, ***“In focusing on art production from Asia Pacific and Central Asia, the 2018 edition of the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize highlights the strong political and socially engaging narratives coming from the artists in the region. Many of the nominated artworks, which span different approaches and mediums, were conceptually strong and sensitively executed.”***

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An artist and independent curator, Bose Krishnamachari’s diverse artistic and curatorial practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, design, installation and architecture. He was Artistic Director and co-curator of India’s first Biennale – the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012, the Director of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2014 and 2016, and is President of the Kochi Biennale Foundation.

Bose Krishnamachari has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, including "Bombay Maximum City" at Lille 3000, "The Shape That Is" at Esplanade, Singapore (2006), Indian Art at the Swarovski Crystal World at Innsbruck, Austria (2007), "Gateway Bombay" at the Peabody Essex Museum (2007), "India Art Now: Spazio Oberdan" in Milan (2007), "Indian Highway" at the Serpentine Gallery (2009), the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Norway (2009), the Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2010), the Lyon Contemporary Art Museum, the Fondazione MAXXI, Rome (2011), and the ARTZUID Amsterdam (2011). His curatorial projects include "For an Image, Faster than Light" for the first edition of the Yinchuan Biennale in Yinchuan, China (2016), "The Bombay Boys" in New Delhi (2004), "Double-Enders" in Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Kochi (2005), and "AF-FAIR," at 1X1 Contemporary and 1X1 Gallery in Dubai (2008).

Joyce Toh (Singapore)
Head of Content and Senior Curator, Singapore Art Museum



Joyce Toh is Head of Content and Senior Curator at the Singapore Art Museum, where she oversees the Philippines collection and the Publications portfolio. Exhibitions that she curated and co-curated include: “5 Stars: Art Reflects on Peace, Justice, Equality, Democracy and Progress” (2015), “Sensorium 360°: Contemporary Art and the Sensed World” (2014), “Medium at Large: Shapeshifting Material and Methods in Contemporary Art” (2014) and “Thrice Upon A Time: A Century of Story in the Art of the Philippines” (2009–2010). Joyce was also involved in the Singapore Biennale 2016, “An Atlas of Mirrors” and Singapore Biennale 2013, “If the World Changed”, where she was a co-curator and part of the organising team that conceptualised the themes and frameworks for both editions; she also oversaw both biennale's catalogues and short guides. Her curatorial and research interests include conceptual art practices, and artworks that probe and plunge into the complexities of the human condition in its manifold dimensions. Joyce graduated with a Masters in Aesthetics from York University, U.K. (2005), and holds a Dual Degree in Art History & Public Communications from Syracuse University, U.S.A.

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Dr Gerard Vaughan (Australia)
Director, National Gallery of Australia



Gerard Vaughan says, ***“Many of the Signature Art Prize 2018 finalist artworks look to the past to find a point of analogy with where we are today, and as a way of interpreting the future. Collectively, the works – in addressing notions of identity, what is important to us and our society, and how our histories influence our current points of view – reveal fascinating perspectives and a whole range of issues that are important in contemporary Asia.”***

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Gerard Vaughan is Director of the National Gallery of Australia. With the support of the NGA team he has embarked on a program of re-thinking how Australia's national art collection (with its major strengths in Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous art, 20th century American art, European art and the art of the Asia-Pacific) could be displayed, in the nation's capital, in new ways. He was previously Director of the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. From 1994-99 he was inaugural Director of the British Museum Development Trust in London. A graduate of the universities of Melbourne and Oxford, he has a doctorate in art history from Oxford and as an art historian has always specialised in the history of taste and public and private collecting, public museology and the provenance of works of art.

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Wong Hoy Cheong (Malaysia)
Artist and independent curator



“Through the use of a range of media, and drawing from history, myth and memory; the finalist artworks for the Signature Art Prize 2018 explore the transnationality of place and identity – a fluidity engendered by globalisation and the internet,” says Wong Hoy Cheong.

An artist and independent curator, Wong Hoy Cheong has been exhibited and curated exhibitions in Malaysia and internationally. He had solo exhibitions at the National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; NUS Museum, Singapore; and Eslite Gallery, Taiwan, and has also participated in international exhibitions including the Venice, Gwangju, Istanbul, Lyon, Taipei and Liverpool biennials. He curated the posthumous retrospective of Ismail Hashim at the National Art Gallery (2015); was a co-founder and curator of a print and digital gallery, galleryw/owalls (2004-2007); and was the co-curator for Asia Pacific Triennial (1998). He was a Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore in 2008. He studied literature and critical theory, education and fine arts at Brandeis University, Harvard University and the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) in the United States of America.

ANNEX C

APB FOUNDATION SIGNATURE ART PRIZE 2018 PROGRAMMES

A series of programmes will take place throughout the exhibition period, where visitors can further engage with the ideas and concepts explored in the finalist artworks, and gain a deeper insight into the contemporary art development in the region. More information may be found at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/programmes

In Conversation with artist Fang Wei-wen and Dr Ma Shaoling

Date: Saturday, 26 May 2018

Time: 3pm–4.30pm

Venue: *Signature Art Prize* Programmes Room, National Museum of Singapore

Free

Join *Signature Art Prize* finalist Fang Wei-wen, Dr. Ma Shaoling of Yale-NUS and SAM curator, Louis Ho, during the opening weekend of the exhibition as they discuss themes central to Fang's work, *Republic of Rubber Tape*: borders, geographical movement and bicultural identity. Having been born and raised in Brunei before settling in Taiwan, Fang will discuss his unique background, as well as his use of materials such as found objects to express personal memories and the experience of displacement. He will also share his creative concepts and the processes involved in the making of the work.

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Artist Performance by Yuichiro Tamura

Date: Saturday, 26 May 2018

Time: 4.30pm–5.30pm

Venue: Exhibition Galleries (Basement Level), National Museum of Singapore

Free

Don't miss this performance held in conjunction with finalist Yuichiro Tamura's artwork, *Milky Bay / 裏切りの海*. Echoing elements of the installation, the hour-long performance will examine the human body as a medium. It draws inspiration from the narratives of Tamari Hitoshi and Yukio Mishima, who were closely associated with the development of bodybuilding in Japan after the second World War, and develops related themes present in the work. The performance is a prelude to the dialogue session, and viewers are welcome to attend both.

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Artist Dialogue with Yuichiro Tamura

Date: Saturday, 26 May 2018

Time: 5:30pm–6:30pm

Venue: Exhibition Galleries (Basement Level), National Museum of Singapore

Free

Join Tamura and SAM curator, Louis Ho, in conversation at the artist's installation space. They will discuss the significance of the life of famed Japanese author, Yukio Mishima, to the artwork. The artist will also speak about other narratives that inform this richly evocative work, including the development of bodybuilding in Japan, the history of post-war Yokohama and the discovery of the famous Riace statues in 1972. The dialogue session takes place after the performance.

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APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018 Jurors' Panel Discussion

Date: Saturday, 30 June 2018

Time: 11am–12.30pm

Venue: SAM Glass Hall

\$15 | Tickets available at www.apactix.com

Come meet the panel of distinguished jurors for this year's edition of the Signature Art Prize, and be a part of their discussion of the finalist artworks and prize winners. Gain insights into the judging process and selection criteria, and hear the jurors' thoughts on the search for the best contemporary art of the past three years from the Asia Pacific and Central Asian regions. Light refreshments will be provided.

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Insiders' Insights

Date: Saturday, 30 June 2018

Time: 7pm–8.30pm

Venue: Exhibition Galleries (Basement Level), National Museum of Singapore

\$25 | Tickets available at www.apactix.com

Gain fresh insights in this exclusive evening tour, as SAM curator Louis Ho and the *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* artists and nominators gather to speak about the artistic concepts, practices and processes for each work. Light refreshments will be provided before the tour.

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Specialist Talks

Dates: Selected Saturdays, July and August 2018

Time: 2pm–3.30pm

Venue: SAM Glass Hall

Free admission with ticketed registration; tickets available at www.apactix.com

Join experts and practitioners as they speak about contemporary issues and topics highlighted by the *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* finalist artworks; encounter new understanding of everyday issues through contemporary art. Visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg for details.

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HappyHourChats

Date: Selected Fridays, July and August 2018

Time: 7pm–8:30pm

\$10 | Tickets available at www.apactix.com

Mark these Friday retreats on your calendars; we'll be discussing pertinent themes from the *APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018* finalist artworks over a good round of beer! Listen to novel and varied viewpoints on contemporary art, and relax among good company and drinks during these laid-back sessions. Visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg for details.

Perspective Talks

Dates: Saturdays, 2 and 16 June, 7 and 23 July 2018

Time: 2pm

Venue: Exhibition Galleries (Basement Level), National Museum of Singapore

Free

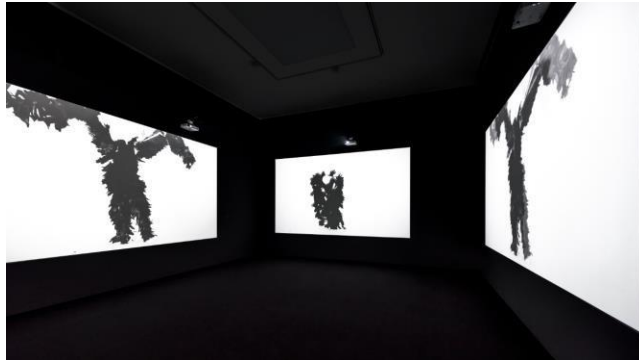
Catch two contrasting takes on one of the finalist artworks, in a series of short-and-sweet 10-minute talks. An educational programme co-presented by SAM and the Singapore Management University, this series juxtaposes a student's perspective against an arts practitioner's, to provoke thought on the multiple ways to approach and relate to an artwork. Visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg for details.

ANNEX D

ARTWORK CAPTIONS FOR THE APB FOUNDATION SIGNATURE ART PRIZE 2018 FINALISTS

Note: The finalist artworks in this annex are arranged by layout sequence in the exhibition space.

Bae Young-whan
South Korea



Abstract Verb – Can you remember?

2016

4-channel video

Duration 6:37 mins

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Jiyoung Lee

The title of Bae Young-whan's four-channel video, ***Abstract Verb***, is embodied by the central figure, a performer clad in a feathered costume. Silhouetted against a pristine backdrop, the figure's every gesture and act is a rush of impressionistic shape and colour, set to a pounding, percussive beat – the 'abstract verb' in the work's title finding expression in the human figure. The conceptual and visual core of the piece, then, is the motion of the human body, which here dances and gyrates in ways that represent a contemporary take on traditional rituals. Bae remarks of the exuberant choreography: "The dance [is] ... based on my own interpretations of different shamanistic dance moves from around the world ... of people that used to worship black birds such as ravens and eagles, a culture that existed not only in Korea but also in other parts of the world, including Siberia and Mongolia."

The movement of the body here, however, is not merely indebted to older patterns of cultural practice, but also, according to the artist, fuelled by the simple fact of "spiritual excitement", with sheer emotion driving the energy, vigour and power of the dance. The avian motif reinforces the tension between modern and pre-modern value systems suggested in the performance, with the artist observing: "Today, people and birds live in an uncomfortable place to fly. Modern people are degraded as the subjects of scrutiny and regulation, we are like birds that lost their ability to fly."

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Bae Young-whan (b. 1969, Seoul, South Korea) portrays social realities of Korean society through various mediums such as sculpture, painting, photography, video and installation. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Oriental Painting from Hongik University, Seoul. Over the course of his career, Bae has staged multiple solo exhibitions in Seoul, at venues such as Shinsegae Gallery (2017), Platform-L Contemporary Art Center (2016), PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art (2012) and Artsonje Center (2009). His work has also been featured in the SeMA Biennale Mediacity Seoul (2014), Sharjah Biennial 11 (2013), at the Korean Pavilion in the 51st Venice Biennale (2005) and in the 3rd to 5th Gwangju Biennale (2000, 2002, 2004), as well as in group exhibitions worldwide.

Yerbossyn Meldibekov

Kazakhstan



Brand

2014–2015

Hide (set of 8 pieces)

Various dimensions

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Valeria Ibraeva

Brand is a series of wall panels crafted from the leather of the grunting ox, a species native to the highlands of Central Asia. The practice of branding cattle, which is an age-old custom among the nomadic communities of the region, was modernised during the Soviet period, when the convention of marking animals with their owners' coats-of-arms was replaced by the use of numbers. The work, then, juxtaposes two seemingly simple techniques – the use of natural materials from the region, and the iconography of numeric symbols, the abstraction and seriality of which appear in the work of contemporary artists such as On Kawara. At the same time, **Brand** bears darker connotations. As the artist remarks: “Ten years ago I met an old man in Berlin. His hands were covered with deformed scars, consisting of digits. It struck me that the numbers were tattooed by the Nazis when he was much younger. When I saw these large deformed scars on the hides ... I instantly recalled that old man.”

Kazakh artist Yerbossyn Meldibekov was trained as a sculptor during the Soviet regime. By the time of his graduation, however, the Soviet Union had ceased to exist, and, with its collapse, gone were his dreams of a career within the socialist system of art production. Instead, he turned his attention to a critical examination of the legacy of Soviet visual language and traditional Kazakh culture in the free market era.

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Yerbossyn Meldibekov (b. 1964, Tyulkubas, Kazakhstan) graduated in 1992 from the Department of Monumental Sculpture, at the Almaty State Theatre and Art Institute in Kazakhstan. Having witnessed the fall of the Soviet Union and the ensuing social and political disarray, Meldibekov makes ironic and politically loaded works that examine post-Soviet Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Meldibekov has participated in major group exhibitions at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2015); Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg (2014); Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (2014); the Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane (2012); and the Central Asian Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale (2005). He has staged solo exhibitions in London, Germany and Hong Kong, with his most recent at the Kasteev Museum of Arts in Kazakhstan (2015). Meldibekov lives and works in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Au Sow Yee

Malaysia



The Kris Project

2016

Mixed media installation with video, objects, documents, photographs and lightbox

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Ong Jo-Lene

The three phases of Au Sow Yee's ***The Kris Project*** are presented here as a single installation. The primary point of departure for Au's historical investigations is what has been referred to as the golden era of the Sinophonic film industry, which flourished in the 1950s and '60s across Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Based extensively on archival and field research, the work reimagines history by collapsing the divide between fact and fiction, and between the moving image and filmic collage; it utilises found footage from a range of existing films, from Cathay-Keris movies to documentaries of wartime Malaya. Through Au's juxtapositions, significance and dialogue emerge anew.

The first phase, *The Kris Project I*, creates the persona of a fictional filmmaker named Ravi, through whose lens a 'pseudo-film' of found documents and images is put together. *The Kris Project II: If the Party Goes On* begins with questions arising from the untimely death of Loke Wan Tho, founder of the Cathay movie empire, and portrays an alternate history in which Loke survived the plane crash in 1964. The third phase draws on the Cathay studio's first overseas film, *A Night in Tokyo*. These fragmented narratives, shifting uncomfortably between faithful representation and historical speculation, suggest possibilities for raising the spectres of Southeast Asia's history within broader interpretive frameworks.

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Au Sow Yee (b. 1978, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) is based in Taipei and Kuala Lumpur, and works in video installation and other mediums. She holds a Master and Bachelor of Fine Arts, majoring respectively in filmmaking and theatre arts. Her work has been featured in various international exhibitions and screenings, most recent of which include group exhibitions at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2017); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017); Bangkok Art & Culture Centre (2017) and Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2016). Au is a co-founder of Rumah Attap Library & Collective in Kuala Lumpur, co-founder and co-curator of the Kuala Lumpur Experimental Film and Video Festival (KLEX, 2010, 2011, 2016), as well as a guest writer for numerous online and print magazines.

Gede Mahendra Yasa
Indonesia



After Paradise Lost #1

2014

Acrylic on canvas

190 × 250 cm

Private collection

Nominated by Agung Hujatnikajennong

After Paradise Lost #1 is rendered in the popular Batuan style of painting. The Batuan school developed in Bali in the late 1930s, and is characterised by a dense, layered composition that populates the canvas surface with a teeming array of figures, spaces and incidents. Mahendra views this depiction of the masses as a political analogy, with divisions between important figures of history and ordinary crowds becoming blurred. He has depicted not only the bustle of everyday life on the island – Hindu temples, masked Barong dancers, tourists and surfers, as well as women dressed in traditional costume – but also included his own versions of famous paintings from Western and Indonesian art history. He juxtaposes, for instance, Raden Saleh's iconic painting, *The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro* (1857), which commemorates a turning point in the anti-colonial struggle in the Dutch East Indies, with Dutch painter Nicolaas Pieneman's depiction of the same subject, *The Submission of Prince Diponegoro to General De Kock* (c. 1930–35); as well as Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (c. 1818–19) with Saleh's own *A Flood in Java* (c. 1865–1876).

As an artist, Gede Mahendra Yasa's primary object of investigation has been the practice and discourse of painting, his medium of choice. The 'After Paradise Lost' series represents the artist's engagement with Balinese painting, a chief thematic concern being the relation of Balinese painting to the history and development of modern art in Indonesia, and particularly in Java.

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Gede Mahendra Yasa (b. 1967, Bali, Indonesia) studied painting at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Denpasar, and works in a variety of paints and materials on canvas. He was one of the founders of the currently defunct artist collective and art space, Klinik Seni TAXU (TAXU Art Clinic), which was formed in response to the production of 'traditional' Balinese paintings for tourists. Comprising ethnically Balinese artists, TAXU held exhibitions and released publications from 2002 to 2006. In 2014, Mahendra also founded Neo-Pitamaha, a collective that researches the genealogy of Balinese visual tradition and issues of cultural politics. Besides having exhibited with both collectives from 2002 to the present, Mahendra has presented his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad.

Phan Thao Nguyen
Vietnam



Tropical Siesta

2015–2017

2-channel video and oil painting on x-ray film backings (set of 6)

Various dimensions; video duration 14:00 mins

Collection of the artist and private collector

Nominated by Le Thuan Uyen

Tropical Siesta forms part of Vietnamese artist Phan Thao Nguyen's larger project, 'Poetic Amnesia'. The latter is based on the artist's research into the life and work of French Jesuit missionary, Alexandre de Rhodes, who is considered the father of the romanised Vietnamese script still in use today. ***Tropical Siesta*** is a two-channel video installation that tells an imaginary tale of rural Vietnam, informed by de Rhodes' colourful observations as he travelled through the country in the 17th century.

The universe created by Phan is one populated only by children, who make up an agricultural community. They engage not only in farming work, but play games of make-believe – recreating, for instance, de Rhodes' accounts of various barbaric methods of punishment, as well as his documenting of a folktale of the worship of a Chinese princess as a water goddess. Accompanying the installation are several paintings, rendered on x-ray film backings, of images from the videos. The artist remarks of the world she has created: "I wish to construe a realm of works that are interconnected ... by means of which genres can coexist in a dreamlike, democratic utopia. In such a realm, the grandiose and the humble, the brutal and the fragile, the documented and the fictional, the stable and the ephemeral, the fantastic and the practical cohabit."

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Phan Thao Nguyen (b. 1987, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) holds a Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Drawing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In addition to her work as a multimedia artist, she is a co-founder of the collective, Art Labor, which explores cross disciplinary practices and develops art projects that benefit the Vietnamese community. Phan has exhibited widely in Vietnam and abroad, including recent solo exhibition *Poetic Amnesia* at the Factory Contemporary Art Centre, Ho Chi Minh City (2017); group show *Anywhere But Here* in Bétonsalon, Paris (2016); as well as travelling exhibition *Concept Context Contestation: Art and the Collective in Southeast Asia*, which showed at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre and Goethe-Institut, Hanoi (2015). She is the 2016–2017 Rolex Protégée.

Shubigi Rao
Singapore



Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book. Vol I: Written in the Margins (2014–2016)

2014–2016

Mixed media installation with video clips on monitors, giclee prints with text, ink drawings, books and table with 3 texts by a poet, historian and librarian

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Jason Wee

Written in the Margins represents the first complete portion of Shubigi Rao's ongoing project, ***Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book***. ***Pulp*** examines issues surrounding the destruction of books and libraries, and its first volume sees Rao interviewing individuals and researching sites in Europe connected to contemporary manifestations of the phenomenon. She is also writing several books on the topic, with the first, included in the present work, published two years ago.

Margins is designed as an interactive installation. A series of video interviews is indexed by a handmade card catalogue; the footage features a range of testimonies, from those of fire-fighters who tried to save the burning national library in Sarajevo during the Yugoslavian troubles of the 1990s, to a lector employed to preserve the purity of the Croatian language by expunging all Serbian and Russian words from Croatian national television. One interviewee speaks of her weekly protest outside the rebuilt Sarajevo city hall, which no longer houses the library, whilst another testifies to the efforts of cultural workers who, during the siege of Sarajevo, saved books and paintings by smuggling them out. Other components of the installation include photographs, books, texts, ink drawings, as well a conceptual guide to the project visualised as a phytogenetic tree – a taxonomic mind-map of the work's thematic contours and classifications.

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Shubigi Rao (b. 1975, Mumbai, India) is a Singaporean artist and writer. She works in decade-long stretches on linked ideas, and made her books and artwork from 2003 to 2013 under her male pseudonym, S. Raoul. Her current ten-year project, ***Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book (2014–2024)***, has, in the works, a film, five books and ink-and-paper works about the history of book destruction and the book as activism and resistance. She recently held a solo exhibition in Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2017), and has participated in notable group shows worldwide, including the 3rd Pune Biennale, India (2017), 10th Taipei Biennale (2016), Singapore Writers Festival (2013, 2016) and 2nd Singapore Biennale (2008). She has been awarded residencies in India (2017), Berlin (2016) and Singapore (2015), and is a part-time lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore.

Club Ate (Bhenji Ra + Justin Shoulder)

Australia



Ex Nilalang (Balud, Dyesebel, Lola ex Machina)

2015

Single-channel video

Duration 18:53 mins

Collection of the artists

Developed for APT8

Nominated by Kyla McFarlane

Ex Nilalang is a video trilogy that draws upon the artists' personal experiences as Filipino-Australians to complicate notions of cultural and gender identity, reimagining mythological tales as celebratory narratives. The first chapter features Filipino performer Jai Jai dressed as a glammed-up *mananangaal*, a succubus of Filipino folklore capable of detaching its torso from its lower body and sprouting huge wings. She croons a local ballad, "Balud", bemoaning the loss of part of her body. The second, 'Dyesebel', is based on the titular character of a popular television series in the Philippines, which tells the story of a mermaid's adventures. Here, one of the mermaids is played by Bhenji Ra, along with other performers from Manila's transgender community. The last chapter sees Shoulder dressed as an "ancestral jeepney spirit", a fantastical hybrid creature whose morphology is derived from the jeepney, a form of public transportation ubiquitous in the Philippines. The autobiographical undertones of the performance relate to the artist's grandfather, who was himself a jeepney driver.

As Bhenji Ra observes: "Ex Nilalang was a way to start reclaiming mythologies, to try to create new mythologies that were more celebratory, or even weaponised. The work looked at the way we [LGBTQI+ and Bakla communities] have survived and continue to survive, in club and entertainment lands, and as sex workers; what are these crafts and tools that we use to navigate and keep our power?"

This project was assisted by a grant from Arts NSW, an agency of the New South Wales Government and supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian State and Territory Governments. The program is administered by the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA).

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Club Ate is a Sydney-based collective founded by artists Bhenji Ra (b. 1990, Sydney, Australia) and Justin Shoulder (b. 1985, Sydney, Australia), whose artistic and performative practices are rooted in Sydney's underground music and club scene. Both artists draw from their own experiences and personal relationships as queer, bi-cultural Filipino-Australians in their art making.



ASIA PACIFIC BREWERIES
FOUNDATION



Bhenji Ra is an interdisciplinary artist who reframes performance through a combination of dance, choreography, video and installation. Her work is often concerned with the dissection of cultural theory and identity. She uses spectacle and her own personal histories to explore themes of race, sexuality and gender, giving voice to hidden and marginalised communities, and suggesting alternative modules of community.

Justin Shoulder works in performance, sculpture and video. His main body of work – entitled ‘Fantastic Creatures’ – comprises invented beings and alter-personas based on interpretations of mythology, folktale and fantasy. These creatures are embodied through movement and elaborate, hand-crafted costumes and prostheses, and forge connections between queer, migrant, spiritual and intercultural experiences.

Fang Wei-wen
Taiwan



Republic of Rubber Tape

2016

Site-specific installation with wood, bamboo, paper, rubber tape and found objects

240 × 1015 × 200 cm

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Hsu Yuan-Ta

Republic of Rubber Tape is a long sculptural structure constructed from wood and bamboo, and resembling a piece of scaffolding. It is interspersed with bridges, plastic containers, raffia string and other packing materials, and features a miniature house. The structure recalls the artist's childhood home: Kampong Ayer, or water village, in Bandar Sri Begawan, Brunei. Kampong Ayer is built entirely of wooden stilt houses and connecting walkways, and is one of the oldest surviving communities of its type in the world. Tape surrounds the installation, in an outline that recalls the shapes and silhouettes of countries as they are commonly depicted in maps. The artist remarks: "Here, the borderline created by the length of the rubber tape refers to a realm that only exists when it is recognized by others. The wooden structure is an evocation of my childhood, spent in a land far away from my present home. ***The Republic of Rubber Tape*** is a mythical kingdom conjured out of my imagination, memories and personal experiences."

Fang Wei-wen was born and raised in Bandar Seri Begawan, the capital of the Sultanate of Brunei. He moved to Taiwan at the age of 18 to obtain his art education. While trained as a painter, his more recent works utilise quotidian objects as a means of channelling personal memories, and expressing an abiding sense of cultural dislocation.

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Fang Wei-wen (b. 1970, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei) is of Kinmenese descent, and lives and works in Tainan, Taiwan. He received his early education in Bandar Seri Begawan, before moving to Taiwan to obtain his Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts. He has held solo shows all over Taiwan, such as at Licence Art Gallery, Tainan (2016); Zspace, Taichung (2015) and KYU Art Center, Kaohsiung (2013). Group exhibitions that he participated in include *Utopia* at Mizuuro Workshop in Tainan (2017), *Inside/Outside: Contemporary Tainan Art* at Tainan Cultural Center (2016), and *The Pioneers of Taiwanese Artists, 1961–1970* at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (2014).

The Propeller Group

Vietnam



AK-47 vs. M16

2015

Ballistic gel block, bullet fragments and video (1 of a set of 21)

18.1 × 42.9 × 18.4 cm (gel block); video duration 2:48 mins

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

Nominated by Arlette Quynh-Anh Tran

AK-47 vs. M16 was inspired by a historical incident that almost never was: the collision and fusion of two bullets on an American Civil War battlefield, a phenomenon that statisticians concluded has the possibility of only one in a billion. Working with ballistics experts through a long process of trial and error, The Propeller Group has recreated this phenomenon, capturing the explosive, exquisite impact at the instant when both projectiles meet. Two bullets – one from an AK-47, which was invented by the Soviets, and the other from an M16, the brainchild of the U.S. army – were fired through a block of ballistic gelatin, a material that closely approximates the density of human flesh, and is primarily used as a medium to test the effects of firearms.

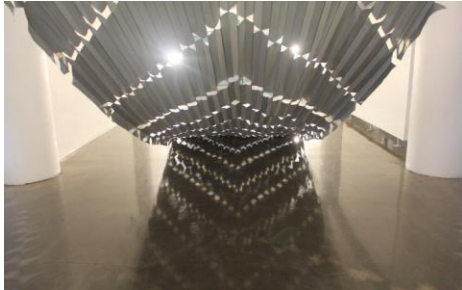
The almost sublime beauty of the moment of collision is preserved in the gel, and the encounter of both trajectories documented in a companion video. The entire body of work consists of 21 sets of gel blocks and their respective videos, of which one set is presented here. The number 21 refers to the 21-gun salutes typical of military honours. As the artists put it, “The work is a profound epitome of 'confrontation': between two bullets, between the two armies escalating the Cold War, between the two front lines using these two different guns during the Vietnam War ... this lightning moment of two single fire lines slowed down and frozen forever realizes the horrifying scale of wartime and political violence throughout 20th-century history.”

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The Propeller Group (est. 2006, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) is an artist collective originally founded by Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Phu Nam, and later joined by Matt Lucero. It currently has revolving membership, and appropriates various structures of collaboration into a platform for collectivity. The collective’s multimedia works use the languages of advertising and politics to initiate conversations about power, propaganda, and manipulation. It recently staged solo exhibitions at the Blaffer Art Museum, Houston (2017) and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2016), and has participated in major exhibitions including the Yokohama Triennale (2017), Venice Biennale (2015) and 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane (2012). Its work can be found in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art, New York, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, and Singapore Art Museum, among others. The artists live and work in Ho Chi Minh City.

Mata Aho Collective

New Zealand



Kaokao #1

2014

Hi-vis reflective cloth tape and cotton

1200 × 220 cm

Collection of the artists

Nominated by Emma Bugden

A sweeping, dramatic installation that enacts a play of light and shadow, ***Kaokao #1*** is constructed from 200 metres of high-visibility tape, and draws upon the Māori heritage of the Mata Aho Collective. It is executed in a traditional *tukutuku* lattice pattern, which is a form of Māori weaving typically performed by two people; it involves passing or threading material through a panel to a person sitting on the other side. This work utilises a particular *tukutuku* design, known as *kaokao*, that features a chevron-shaped motif. While the chevron is most often understood as a military symbol, for the Māori, the *kaokao* pattern is commonly attributed to a warrior's strength. It also features on birthing mats, signifying new life and growth.

The conflation of a military icon and traditional motif associated with birth is intended, according to the artists, “to represent the unlimited strength and warrior-like endurance of women to create and bring new life.” The hi-vis material used for the piece also speaks to contemporary lived Māori experience: it is familiar in many building, labouring and manufacturing industries in New Zealand that employ large numbers of the Māori community. In its usage here, Mata Aho has recontextualised a material typically seen in male-dominated industries within a female-centric aesthetic to evoke the invisible labour of women.

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Mata Aho Collective (est. 2012, Wellington, New Zealand) is a collaboration between four Māori women who produce large-scale fibre-based works as commentary on Māori life. Their conceptual framework is built upon the realities and complexities of *mātauranga Māori*, or traditional Māori wisdom, in the contemporary context. The collective consists of Erena Baker (Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangātira), Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe), Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi), and Terri Te Tau (Rangitāne ki Wairarapa), who came together for their first exhibition during the Enjoy Public Art Gallery Summer Residency, in Wellington, 2012. They have since exhibited regularly throughout New Zealand, facilitated workshops and presented at tertiary and art institutions.

Yuichiro Tamura

Japan



Milky Bay / 裏切りの海

2016

Mixed media installation with videos, concrete sculptures, billiard tables with silkscreen and found objects

Dimensions variable; various video durations

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Naoki Yoneda

The image and the idea of the body is central to Yuichiro Tamura's installation, ***Milky Bay***. Enfolded within the work are subtle references to various episodes of post-war history in which bodies and the male physique feature prominently. These narratives include, and are informed by, the story of Yukio Mishima, considered one of the most important Japanese authors of the 20th century. Mishima attracted controversy for his right-wing political views, and was a proponent of bodybuilding, regarding bodily strength as the basis of national prowess.

Milky Bay presents an immersive environment that recreates the interior of the seamen's club in Yokohama, from which Mishima set sail for his world tour, ending in Greece, on Christmas Day in 1951. The work also includes narration by two male voices, one of which portrays the character – reminiscent of Mishima's bodybuilding coach – who had been attracted to Allied occupation soldiers in post-war Yokohama, and later went on to be one of Japan's leading bodybuilders. Other references in the work include a murder case from 2009, in which two dismembered bodies washed up in the sea near Yokohama; the episode bears certain parallels to Mishima's novel, *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*. Also cited is the 1972 discovery, in the sea near Riace, Italy, of the famous Riace Warriors, two full-sized Greek bronze statues of nude male figures. These disparate narratives are embodied in fragments of a concrete sculpture as well several videos, which document the making of the sculpture and a miniature model of a ship – based on the S.S. President Wilson, on which Mishima set sail from Yokohama – and contain scenes reimagining the recovery of the Riace statues from the sea.

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Yuichiro Tamura (b. 1977, Toyama, Japan) holds a doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts, and works primarily in video and installation. He was a guest researcher for the Institut für Raumexperimente at the Berlin University of the Arts, as part of Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs' Programme of Overseas Study for Upcoming Artists. His film *NIGHTLESS* won an Excellence Prize in the Art Division at the 14th Japan Media Arts Festival (2011). He was also a finalist for the Nissan Art Award 2017. Tamura has participated in group shows in Japan and overseas, including the Yokohama Triennale (2017); at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017); Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum for Contemporary Art – Berlin (2017); Queens Museum, New York (2015) and SeMA Biennale Mediacity Seoul (2014). He lives and works in Atami, Japan.

Jitish Kallat
India



The Infinite Episode

2016

Dental plaster sculptures (set of 20) and low plinth

Various dimensions

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Gitanjali Dang

Twenty different species of fauna, depicted in a state of dreaming sleep, make up Jitish Kallat's ***The Infinite Episode***. Cast from dental plaster, the sculpted animals are wide-ranging, including a giraffe, swan, rhinoceros, elephant, kangaroo, ostrich, penguin and camel, among others. The artist asks: "In ***The Infinite Episode***, the fundamental transformation that occurs in the moment of sleep is that the species surrender scale. Would a sleeping lion and a sleeping mouse share the same scale of body in the state of repose?" In other words, what the work portrays is an animalian utopia: the creatures, despite real-life divergences, are here represented approximately equal in size. They share not simply a physical space, but a state of being – sleep – wherein corporeal scale has been made irrelevant.

That various species have been brought together in such proximity also suggests an idealised realm, rather than actuality. The giraffe and ostrich, for instance, are native to the African continent, while the kangaroo is mostly found in Australia; in the wild, camels inhabit a geographical belt spanning the Middle East to Central Asia and Mongolia, regions unfamiliar to the penguin. Moreover, the natural hierarchies of predator and prey, e.g. between lion and buffalo, bear and deer, are refuted; these creatures sleep mere inches apart, made amicable in slumber. Kallat's work, through a deceptively simple affirmation of likeness and proximity, provokes broader deliberations on coexistence, hierarchy and inequity – urgent issues that remain relevant to the human species.

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Jitish Kallat (b. 1974, Mumbai, India) is a widely exhibited artist whose practice spans a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, photography and installation. His recent solo exhibitions include a mid-career survey at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (2017), as well as presentations at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2016) and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2015). He has also shown in numerous group shows and major institutions, including the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2018); Setouchi Triennale (2016); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2016); Queens Museum of Art, New York (2015); Busan Biennale (2014); Tate Britain (2011); Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon (2011); MOCA Taipei (2010); the 6th Gwangju Biennale (2006) and 5th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2006). Jitish Kallat was curator and artistic director of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in Kerala, 2014.

Thasnai Sethaseree

Thailand



Untitled (Hua Lamphong)

2016

Paper collage on Buddhist monk robes

400 × 800 × 5 cm

Collection of the artist

Nominated by Gregory Galligan

Thasnai Sethaseree's massive artwork is a vibrant, tactile collage on a canvas of layered Thai Buddhist monks' robes, that enfolds into its surface sheets of newspapers, images of modern architecture and political violence in Thailand, as well as printed texts of the new Thai Constitution and the 17th-century poem, "Prophetic Lament for Sri Ayutthaya". Laid over these various materials are strands of brightly-coloured paper streamers, rendered in the traditional Lanna paper cutting technique native to the region, and commonly seen in festivals in northern Thailand. The artist refers to his aesthetic here as "magical realism", one that is strongly evocative of everyday life in the kingdom. The luminous hues contribute, he remarks, "an electric frisson across the painting's foreground akin to the psychedelic neon tube lighting of a Thai temple fair."

Underlying this sense of celebration, however, are subtle references to the socio-political turmoil that Thailand has experienced in recent years, reinforcing the notion that beneath the veneer of ordinary life lies a fragile political truce. Referencing the culture of the north suggests the political division between north and south, while the allusion to the historic Hua Lamphong station in Bangkok hints at regional tensions. Built in 1916, the station became a symbol of modernisation and bureaucratic centralisation; it has attracted controversy of late over the proposal to have a high-speed rail take its place, provoking further questions about the centralisation and decentralisation of politics in Thailand.

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Thasnai Sethaseree (b. 1968, Bangkok, Thailand) is best known for conceptual and relational works that are usually ephemeral, although his practice has recently turned to sculpture and painting. Recurrent themes include issues of memory, migration and the nature of knowing. Sethaseree was trained in fine art, and holds a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from Chiang Mai University. His work has been featured in group exhibitions in notable institutions abroad, such as Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago (2016); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila (2013) and Seoul Museum of Art (2011), as well as in solo exhibitions in various art spaces in Thailand. He lives and works in Chiang Mai.

Leung Chi Wo + Sara Wong
Hong Kong



Museum of the Lost and ***He was lost yesterday and we found him today***
2015

Vintage prints on paper and mixed media; archival inkjet prints (13 of a set of 28)
Dimensions variable; 150 × 100 cm (archival inkjet prints; each)
Collection of the artists and Blindspot Gallery
Nominated by Christina Li

A series of monumental photographic portraits confronts the viewer, the faces hidden from view. The subjects of ***He was lost yesterday and we found him today*** are caught in the tension between representation and absence, existence and exclusion. Their backs are turned to the camera, denying the audience the benefit of seeing their faces, yet they dominate the encounter by dint of the sheer force of their presence. Hong Kong-based husband-and-wife duo, Leung Chi Wo + Sara Wong, portray unidentifiable figures in this suite of staged photographs that are based on selections from their collection of newspapers, magazines, brochures and other printed material; these published sources form a companion body of work, ***Museum of the Lost***. Presented here are part of both suites of nominated work.

Leung and Wong's re-enactments are centred on anonymous individuals who appear in archival images, always as peripheral persons who happened to fall within the camera's gaze. In the grand narrative of history, these figures are but minor characters – here recontextualised, or decontextualised, as an interrogation of the discourse of historical representation. According to the artists, the image remains as testament to the existence of these bit players: "In his analysis of photography and its elusive noeme or essence, Roland Barthes determined a simple definition of photography's truth: anyone who has been photographed, no matter how minor, is irrefutably proved to have been there. Although we might never know these persons in any appreciable way, they have occupied a place in the past."

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Leung Chi Wo + Sara Wong are visual artists based in Hong Kong. They began collaborating in 1992, and both are co-founders of Hong Kong contemporary art space Para Site.

Leung Chi Wo's (b. 1968, Hong Kong) practice ranges from photography and video to text, performance and installation. He holds a Master of Fine Arts and Post-Diploma (Culture of Photography), and has been awarded residencies in Vienna (2009), Sapporo (2005) and New York (1999). His numerous solo exhibitions include presentations at OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen (2015) and Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre, Hong Kong (2014). He is an Associate Professor at the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong.

Sara Wong (b. 1968, Hong Kong) was trained in fine art and landscape architecture. She has participated in artist-in-residence programmes in New York (1999), Switzerland (2001) and Norway (2002), and staged solo exhibitions in Canada and Hong Kong. Her recent group exhibitions were held at Hong Kong's M+ (2013) and Germany's Edith Russ Site for Media Art (2010). In addition to her work as a visual artist, Wong is a practicing landscape designer who teaches at the Hong Kong Design Institute, and a board member of Para Site.

Chikako Yamashiro

Japan



Mud man

2016

3-channel video installation with textual components

Dimensions variable; video duration 24:21 mins

Collection of the artist

In cooperation with the Aichi Triennale (2016)

Nominated by Hiroyuki Hattori

Mud man tells the story of a community visited by bird droppings that resemble clumps of mud falling from the sky. These droppings awaken the slumbering people, who pick the clumps up to listen to voices emanating from within. These voices recite poems of their history, nature, and other similar communities. The video was shot in both Okinawa and Jeju Island in South Korea; the two share many affinities, with Jeju also having been an independent kingdom in the past. Yamashiro remarks of the inspiration for the piece: “One day when I was collecting materials at their cultural protest [Okinawans protesting the construction of a new military base], I saw people lying on the ground, smiling as they sang and clapped ... it appeared as if their hands had sprung up from the earth. The people there used their bodies to express their will to protect the sea, the sky and the island.”

Chikako Yamashiro’s practice engages deeply with the socio-historical realities of her native Okinawa, often obliquely addressing the issues of cultural identity, geopolitics and the persistence of historical memory using lyrical, enigmatic narratives. The present-day prefecture of Okinawa is a strand of islands located at the edge of the East China Sea, and existed as the independent kingdom of Ryukyu until its formal annexation by the Japanese Meiji government in 1879. The islands witnessed one of the World War II’s deadliest battles, and today continues to play host to American military bases – a point of contention for Okinawans.

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Chikako Yamashiro (b. 1976, Okinawa, Japan) is a contemporary video artist. She holds a Master of Arts, majoring in Environmental Design, from the Graduate School of Formative Arts, Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, where she also currently teaches. Her recent exhibitions include solo presentations at White Rainbow, London (2018); RENEMIA, Okinawa (2017); Yumiko Chiba Associates viewingroom shinjuku, Tokyo (2016) and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012); as well as group shows at the Jeju Museum of Art (2018), Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco (2016) and Seoul Museum of Art (2015). She has exhibited on major international platforms such as the Aichi Triennale (2016); Artists’ Film Biennial, London (2016); 30th Image Forum Festival, Tokyo (2016); and the 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane (2015).