

[To all press members]

July 8, 2024

Benesse Holdings, Inc.

CEO and President, Kobayashi Hitoshi

" Presentation of Works by Benesse Prize Artists in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum" "Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul" Open to the public

The "Benesse Prize" is awarded by "Benesse Corporation" in an effort to support artists with pioneering inquiry about our living era, society, and environment. Since the 11th award in 2016, Benesse has shifted its collaborative focus to Asia, with three participants in the Singapore Biennale having been awarded up until 2022. Their works have been selected and curated in collaboration with the Singapore Art Museum, the hosting institution of the Singapore Biennale.



This exhibition marks an exciting change to the facilities at **Benesse House Museum**. Works by awardees, Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand), Zul Mahmod (Singapore), Amanda Heng (Singapore), and Haegue Yang (South Korea/Germany), will reconfigure the museum's viewing space. Some of their new works have been produced with the cooperation of the people of Naoshima. In conjunction with this exhibition, the Painting Room of the Benesse House Museum will also be re-displaying some major works from the collection, including Jean-Michel Basquiat and Cy Twombly. Concurrently, a collaboration between artists Haegue Yang and Apichatpong Weerasethakul at **Matabe** will also be unveiled to the public. Titled *Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul* the entire house has been transformed by the works of the two artists, who worked together to conceptualize the time and place. In this house, the cycle of "Day" and "Night" is articulated by the alternating activation of different artworks.

Through these diverse exhibitions, we hope to inspire new perspectives on the appreciation of permanent indoor and outdoor works of art, and on the contemplation of "Benesse = well-being".

■ Presentation of works by Benesse Prize artists in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum

Benesse Prize was initiated in 1995 at the Venice Biennale on the occasion of the renaming of Fukutake Publishing Co., Ltd. to Benesse Corporation (present-day Benesse Holdings, Inc.). It aims to honor and support artists who pose inquiries related to our times, society, and the environment, and whose commissioned works inspire and lead us to think about “Benesse=well-being.”

From its 11th edition in 2016, the prize shifted its venue to an international art exhibition in Asia, and the past three editions until the 13th in 2022 have been awarded to artists participating in the Singapore Biennale. Shown at Benesse House Museum are the works of Benesse Prize awardees from the 11th to the 13th editions, in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum, host of the Singapore Biennale. Pannaphan Yodmanee, Zul Mahmod, Amanda Heng, and Haegue Yang present here works that have been reconstructed and installed to resonate with the space, as well as newly created works in cooperation with Naoshima residents. Today, as nearly three decades have passed since the creation of the Benesse Prize, we hope this opportunity will provide another place for people to reflect upon “Benesse=well-being” from increasingly diverse viewpoints.

[Outlines]

- Venue: Benesse House Museum (Architecture: Tadao Ando Architect & Associates)
- Address: Gotanji, Naoshima, Kagawa
- Organizer: Benesse House Museum (Benesse Holdings, Inc.), in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum
- Artists:
 - Amanda Heng (Singapore)
 - Zul Mahmod (Singapore)
 - Haegue Yang (South Korea/Germany)
 - Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand)
- Artistic Direction: Akiko Miki (International Artistic Director, Benesse Art Site Naoshima)
Co-curator: Selene Yap (Curator, Singapore Art Museum)
- Cooperation: Kukje Gallery, Seoul

[Information]

- Period: June 15, 2024 (Saturday) - January 5, 2025 (Sunday)
- Opening hours: 8:00 - 21:00 Last Admission: 20:00
- Closed: Open everyday
- Admission Fee: 1,300 yen (Free for children under 15 and guests staying at Benesse House)
- Parking: None

[Artworks]

Amanda Heng 《Always by my side》 2023

Taken over a thirty-year period, *Always by my side* is a specially reconstituted set of photographs drawn from Heng's *Another Woman* series of photographs. *Always by my side* considers the identity and position of women within family structures through an examination of Heng's relationship with her mother. The photographs, taken in the format of family portraiture, suggests the establishment and reclamation of ties between mother and daughter—a kinship that is often unacknowledged in traditional Chinese culture. In 2023, the photographs are witnesses to the life and mortality of both women. Taken as Heng enters her senior years while continuing to provide palliative care to her mother, the series contemplates the deep connection between mother and daughter in everyday moments.

Amanda Heng 《Best Time》 2023-2024

Following the everyday rituals undertaken by two women living in Naoshima and Amanda Heng herself, *Best Time* is conceived as a meditative essay on the simplicity of embodied gestures. Set against the living environment of these women, the video records the activities of each individual, focusing on their body and movement as they care for their homes, prepare for harvest, or walk as practice. The camera lingers on the quietude and mundaneness of gestures as they are repeated, capturing an intimate acquaintance between the women and a consciousness of time, and of being alive.

※Supported by National Arts Council Singapore



Zul Mahmud 《Quiet Resistance Manifesto》 2023

Zul Mahmud was awarded the Soichiro Fukutake Special Prize of the 11th Benesse Prize in 2016 for his sound installation featuring Singapore as its subject, where immigrants from various places across Southeast Asia have built their own 'towns' and different cultures are fusing together. Having continuously focused on the relationship between the environmental, political, and social situations of cities and sound, Mahmud exhibits his recent work that makes subtle and soft sounds as tweeters with bells suspended on rubber bands tremble. As viewers direct their attention toward the environment and feel slight vibrations through the body, they are led to awakening and self-reflection. The installation suggests possibilities of non-verbal approaches or manifestos, and also how difficult but important it is 'to listen' in cities where protest rallies are rigorously restricted while a myriad of noises are overflowing.

Haegue Yang 《Sol LeWitt Upside Down - Steel Structure, Scaled Down 10 Times》 2021

Haegue Yang is known for her sculptures in which commodities such as venetian blinds, fans, heaters, and bells are sublimated into art through her unique approach. *Sol LeWitt Upside Down - Steel Structure, Scaled Down 10 Times* (2021) is a distinctive play on *Modular Structures* by Sol LeWitt, an American minimalist and dominant figure of modern art history. The work is suspended upside down with its original material replaced by venetian blinds and its size reduced to a scale of 1/10, 70 centimeters in width. For Yang, after a decade of composing blind installations, the act of approaching LeWitt's modular compositions based on

the two simple methods, turning the work upside down and rescaling it, liberated her compositional practice. In contrast to the rigor and rigidness of LeWitt's original work, Yang's work is subject to the variable light and winds of the Setouchi region, as if inviting the viewer's attention to the surrounding natural environment.

Pannaphan Yodmanee 《Aftermath》 2016

Pannaphan Yodmanee explores in her art the relationship between Buddhist teachings and people's lives, and was awarded the Benesse Prize in 2016 for *Aftermath*, which is exhibited here. This large-scale installation examines alteration, development, evolution, and destruction through the relationship between the Buddhist perception of the universe and modern science. Using natural or modern materials and articles gathered from ruined temples, with traditional Thai designs and motifs, the artist attempts to interpret universal themes such as loss, suffering, and reincarnation through this work with her fertile imagination.

■ Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul

Ring of Fire – Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul is an installation at the Matabe house created by Haegue Yang (born in Seoul, 1971), and the film director/artist Apichatpong Weerasethakul (born in Bangkok, 1970). 'Solar' and 'Lunar' describe a distinctive aspect of each artist's presentation, reflecting that Yang's piece is active during the day while Weerasethakul's is triggered only at night. Yang's performative sculptures and Apichatpong's audio-visual installation activate the former residential house of Matabe by triggering the energy of rupture. Inspired by the "Ring of Fire", the volcanic belt encircling the Pacific Ocean, and the threatening beauty of natural phenomena, with its eruptions and tectonic vibrations, the artists channel the wildly charged and untameable energy of the region. Focusing on the sensation of light, shadow, rotation, vibration and the oscillation between revealing and obscuring, they collectively activate the entire domestic space, investing it with hidden power and mystery.

During the daytime, Yang's sculptures inhabit the inside and outside of the Matabe house. Titled *Sonic Eruption Upside Down*, two suspended sculptures, composed of red and silver metallic bells, form upside down volcanos, while *Mesmerizing Votive Pagoda Lantern*, derived from lanterns from the Sanuki region (present-day Kagawa), is hung right at the entrance. Entirely white and excessively ornamented with shamanic paper flowers, the piece possesses a lit inner core that emits an intensely red glow. All of these pieces are equipped with devices that synchronize their lighting and motorized rotation with real-time data from tectonic activity. Thus, in a reversal, the invisible movement from deep underground is revealed by Yang in the sensible lighting, rotation and vibrations of her sculptures. At sunset, Weerasethakul's cinescape joins the sculptures. While Yang's pieces are activated by real-time seismic data, the tempo and luminosity of Weerasethakul's work are drawn from earthquake data from the Ring of Fire collected between 1900 and 2024. The film footage is a collection of the artist's memories from years of travel and

exploration, fragmented and collaged with scenes of domestic architecture. The Matabe house functions like a womb, pulsing with tectonic plates of memories. As the night draws on, the images disintegrate into points and lines of light that hover in space, appearing and disappearing like ghosts.

Haegue Yang is an artist who shows a remarkable mastery of a multitude of unique visual languages, achieved through wide-ranging combinations of diverse techniques and materials. The cultural references of her materialities and methodologies range from drying racks to Venetian blinds, *hanji* paper to artificial straw. She is known for multisensory environments that activate perception beyond the visual, creating immersive experiences that treat issues such as labor, migration and displacement from the oblique vantage of the aesthetic. Apichatpong Weerasethakul investigates sleep, dreams, and the invisible, exploring novel kinds of experiences through the fusion of personal and collective memories. The collectively constituted environment by these two artists highlights the universe's constant movement, causing cracks, chasms and gaps, as well as intense yearnings and (im)possibilities of love. Their *Ring of Fire* might appear somber and heavy, yet it is full of explosive energy, found both in humanity as well as nature.

[Outlines]

- Venue: Matabe (Main House Renovation: Sambuichi Architects)
- Address: Honmura 844, Naoshima, Kagawa
- Organizer: Benesse Holdings, Inc.
- Artists:
 - Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Thailand)
 - Haegue Yang (South Korea/Germany)
- Artistic Direction: Akiko Miki
- Film Production by Kick the Machine Films
- Support: SCAI THE BATHHOUSE

[Information]

- Period: June 21, 2024 (Friday) – 2027
- Closed: Monday - Thursday

*Details such as opening hours, admission charges etc., will be posted on the [Benesse Art Site Naoshima website](#) as soon as they are decided.

[Artists]



Courtesy of the artist

Amanda Heng (b. 1951, Singapore) is an artist recognized for her works with various approaches such as performance and collaborations with others involving literature, painting, photography, and even her audience demonstrating her concerns for the social problems in Singapore, a country rapidly changing and carrying diverse cultural backgrounds. Involved with the launching of The Artists Village in 1988 and Women in the Arts in 1999, Heng is one of the pioneers in contemporary art in Singapore. In 2010, Heng was presented with the Cultural Medallion for Visual Arts, equivalent to Order of Culture in Japan, for her contribution to the art scene.



Courtesy of the artist

Zul Mahmud (b. 1975, Singapore) is a sound and media artist who adopts a multidisciplinary and multi-genre approach that includes drawings, prints, sculptures and the readymade. He has exhibited in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Germany, Italy, Russia and Norway. He represented Singapore at the Ogaki Biennale (Japan, 2006) and Venice Biennale (2007). In 2010, he won the Straits Times Life! Theatre Award for best sound design (Singapore) and in 2015.



Courtesy of the Artist and Bangkok CityCity Gallery
Photo by Harit Srikhao

Apichatpong Weerasethakul (b. 1970, Thailand) is recognized as a major international filmmaker and visual artist. His works are characterized by their use of non-linear storytelling, often dealing with themes of memory, loss, identity, desire, and history.

His film "Uncle Boonmee" won the Cannes Palme d'Or in 2010 and the Cannes Jury Prize in 2021 for "Memoria". His installations have received major attention at many international exhibitions including Documenta 13 in Kassel in 2012. In recent years, he has also taken on the challenge of creating experiential videos that make full use of AR/VR technology.



Courtesy of the artist
©HAM_Sonja Hyytiäinen, 2023.

Haegue Yang (b. 1971, South Korea) is Professor of Fine Arts at the Staedelschule in Frankfurt am Main. Yang's practice spans a wide range of media, from paper collage to performative sculpture and large-scale installations, often featuring everyday objects, in addition to labor intensive woven sculptures. Her multisensory environments made of venetian blinds suggest the uncontrollable and fleeting nature of time, place, figures and experiences that connect us in this non-sharable field of perception.



Courtesy of the artist

Pannaphan Yodmanee (b. 1988, Thailand) Focusing on the relation between Buddhist teachings and humanity, her work portrays such universal themes as fear, loss, suffering, devastation, and the karmic cycles of death and rebirth. Combining traditional Thai art objects and contemporary elements, along with drawings and sculptures, she creates artistic spaces reminiscent of a spiritual world beyond a specific religion.

■ About the "Benesse Prize"

The "Benesse Prize" was initiated in 1995 at the Venice Biennale, with the name change of the company from "Fukutake Publishing Co., Ltd." to "Benesse Corporation." It began as a way to recognize outstanding artists' creative activities and to support artists who embody the corporate philosophy of the Benesse Group, "Benesse = Well-Being." From the "11th Benesse Prize (2016)," the base was shifted to Asia, where it was resurrected as an official award of the Singapore Biennale in collaboration with the Singapore Art Museum.



From the 13th (2022) Benesse Prize Award Ceremony
Haegue Yang (left), Katsuhiko Masumoto, Manager of Public Relations & IR Department, Benesse Holdings Inc. (right)

■ Past Benesse Prize Winners at Singapore Biennale

- 11th Benesse Prize (2016): Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand),
Soichiro Fukutake Prize: Zul Mahmod (Singapore)
- 12th Benesse Prize (2019): Amanda Heng (Singapore)
- 13th Benesse Prize (2022): Haegue Yang (South Korea/Germany)

■ About Benesse Art Site Naoshima

The Benesse Art Site Naoshima is a collective term for the art activities carried out by Benesse Holdings, Inc. and Fukutake Foundation in the three islands of Naoshima, Teshima, and Inujima. We aim to create a unique place by setting contemporary art and architecture amidst the natural beauty of the Seto Inland Sea, rich with cultural and historical significance. Through interaction with art, nature, the landscape of Setouchi, and the local people, we hope to provide opportunities for visitors to contemplate the meaning of "Benesse=well-being," the corporate philosophy of Benesse Holdings, Inc. We continue to grow together with the local area, contributing to the society.

■ About the Singapore Biennale

Established in 2006, the Singapore Biennale aims to provide a platform for contemporary art and new opportunities for co-creation. Besides exhibiting works during the biennale, it also organizes talk sessions, tours by artists and curators, school visits, workshops, and other educational programs, thereby creating opportunities for the public to engage with contemporary art. Through these activities, it injects vitality into Singapore's arts and culture scene, enhancing its presence as a vibrant international city for living, working, and leisure.

■ About the Singapore Art Museum

Opened in 1996, the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is nestled in the historically famous port area of Tanjong Pagar, and offers contemporary art from a Southeast Asian perspective to artists and art enthusiasts. SAM's collection is among the most important for Southeast Asian contemporary art. Its goal is to make art and artists accessible to the general public and future generations through exhibitions and programs. It is committed to this goal, with a focus on a sustainable human future. SAM has been involved in the organization of the Singapore Biennale as a venue since 2011 and has become its organizer since 2013.

<*Reference Images> Please give proper credit when using the images.

■ Exterior view of the Benesse House Museum

1.



Benesse House Museum

■ Artworks (In Benesse House Museum)

2.



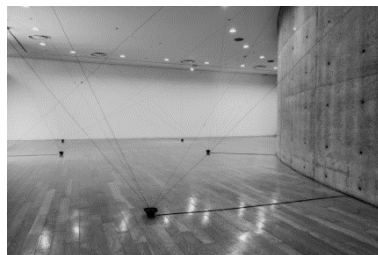
Amanda Heng 《Always by my side》 2023 Photo: Takumi Kondo

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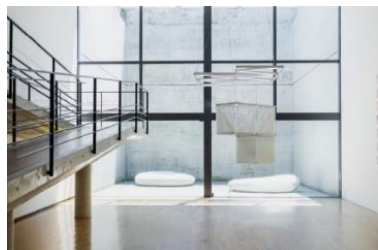
Amanda Heng 《Best Time》 2023-2024

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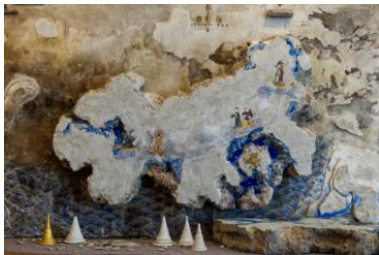
Zul Mahmod 《Quiet Resistance Manifesto》 2024 Courtesy of the artist Photo: Takumi Kondo

5.



Haegue Yang 《Sol LeWitt Upside Down - Steel Structure, Scaled Down 10 Times》
2021 Courtesy of the artist and Kukje Gallery Photo: Takumi Kondo

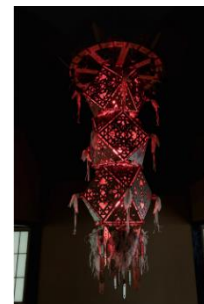
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Pannaphan Yodmanee 《Aftermath》 2016 Photo: Takumi Kondo

■ Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul

7.



Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul, Solar (Day) Photo: Takumi Kondo

8.



Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul, Solar (Day) Outdoor Exhibits
Photo: Takumi Kondo

9.



Ring of Fire - Solar Yang & Lunar Weerasethakul, Lunar (Night)

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