

Nov. 13, 2019

【Press Release】

Benesse Holdings, Inc.

Representative Director and President CEO

Tamotsu Adachi

The 12th Benesse Prize will be awarded at the Singapore Biennale 2019

Benesse Holdings, Inc. (Benesse; Head Office, Okayama-shi, Okayama. Presentative Director and President CEO Tamotsu Adachi) in collaboration with Singapore Art Museum (SAM) will present the 12th Benesse Prize at the Singapore Biennale 2019. The prize will be awarded to an outstanding artist or artist collective chosen from the artists participating in the Biennale. The prize recognizes an artist whose work embodies an experimental and critical spirit, beyond conventional practice, and who demonstrates the potential of developing an artistic reflection around the theme of “Benesse” (Well-Being).

The shortlist of artists selected for the 12th Benesse Prize will be announced at the media conference of the Singapore Biennale November 20th, 2019. The finalist will be announced in its award ceremony planned be held during the Singapore Art Week on January 11th, 2020.

About the Benesse Prize

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



Pannaphan Yodmanee, Thailand, (The Winner of the 11th Benesse Prize)

Artwork: “Aftermath”

Selection and International Jury for the 12th Benesse Prize

All participating artists at the Singapore Biennale 2019 are eligible for the Benesse Prize. For the first cut, a shortlist of five artists or art collectives will be selected. The final selection will take place at Benesse Art Site Naoshima, where the winner will be selected from the shortlist. The international jury for the first selection has been jointly appointed by Benesse Holdings Inc. and Singapore Art Museum.

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|  | <p>Ade Darmawan Artist and Member of Ruangrupa (Indonesia)</p> |
|  | <p>Eugene Tan Director of Singapore Art Museum and National Gallery Singapore (Singapore)</p> |
|  | <p>Gong Yan Director of Power Station of Art (China)</p> |
|  | <p>Valentine Willie Director of Ilham Gallery (Malaysia)</p> |
|  | <p>Akiko Miki International Artistic Director of Benesse Art Site Naoshima (Japan)</p> |

Message from Soichiro Fukutake

(Honorary Advisor, Benesse Holdings, Inc. / Chairman of the Board, Fukutake Foundation)

Benesse Holdings and Fukutake Foundation have been working on Benesse Art Site Naoshima for over 30 years.

“Benesse Art Site Naoshima” is an activity that regenerates and revitalizes the islands of the Seto Inland Sea that have been damaged by rapid modernization and depopulation. During this activity, I decided to support people's “Well-Being” by pursuing “true richness and happiness”. Our corporate philosophy of “Well-being” is the literal meaning of the "Benesse" in the company name of Benesse Holdings, Inc. Now, many people from all over the world visit Benesse Art Site Naoshima, and with the notable revitalization of the community, the residents of the island have regained their pride and their smiles. For this second Benesse Prize at the Singapore Biennale, I would like to harmonize the Asian spirit of “living with nature” and contemporary art with a strong message, and thus introduce new values to the world.

Message from Hideaki Fukutake

(Director, Benesse Holdings, Inc./Vice Chairman of the Board, Fukutake Foundation)

As I have been involved in the activities of Benesse Art Site Naoshima, which has been in operation for over 30 years, I have realized that continuing to create artworks within the community promotes new culture and learning. Currently, efforts are underway around the world to solve complex social and environmental issues. Because of this, I strongly feel that the role of “art”, which tackles unanswered issues while considering them over long periods of time, is becoming crucial.

This is the 12th Benesse Prize. While inheriting the philosophy and culture that has been built in continuation of Benesse Prize, I would like to actively promote the chemistry between art and the community. I hope the Benesse Prize and Benesse Art Site Naoshima will bring about positive change that adapts with time to society.

Appendix:

Past Benesse Prize Winners

1st Benesse Prize (1995): Cai Guo-Qiang (China)

2nd Benesse Prize (1997): Alexandros Psychoulis (Greece)

3rd Benesse Prize (1999): Olafur Eliasson (Iceland, Denmark)

4th Benesse Prize (2001): Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller (Canada)

5th Benesse Prize (2003): Rirkrit Tiravanija (Thailand)

6th Benesse Prize (2005): Tacita Dean (UK)

7th Benesse Prize (2007): Adel Abdessemed (Algeria, France)

8th Benesse Prize (2009): Hans-Peter Feldmann (Germany)

9th Benesse Prize (2011): Adrian Villar Rojas (Argentina)

10th Benesse Prize (2013): Anri Sala (Albania, France)

11th Benesse Prize (2016): Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand), Soichiro Fukutake Prize: Zulkifle Mahmud (Singapore)

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

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

About Benesse Art Site Naoshima

Benesse Art Site Naoshima is the collective name for all art-related activities conducted by Benesse Holdings, Inc. and Fukutake Foundation on the islands of Naoshima and Teshima in Kagawa Prefecture and on Inujima island in Okayama Prefecture. Our fundamental aim is to create significant spaces by bringing contemporary art and architecture in resonance with the pristine nature of the Seto Inland Sea, a landscape with a rich cultural and historical fabric. Through contacts with art and nature, sceneries and inhabitants of the Seto Inland Sea region, we seek to inspire visitors to reflect on the meaning of Benesse's motto, Well-Being. In all our ongoing activities, we are committed to foster a relationship of mutual growth between art and the region, aiming to make a positive contribution to the local communities.

To learn more, visit <http://www.benesse-artsite.jp/en/>

About Benesse Holdings, Inc.

Guided by the corporate philosophy, "Benesse = Well-Being", the Benesse Group conducts business in the fields of education, language/global leadership training, lifestyles, and senior/nursing care, helping every customer to nurture their desire to learn and to solve problems throughout their lives. Group companies include Benesse Corporation which runs Shinkenzeni: correspondence courses for children from preschool to high-school ages, Shinken Simulated Exams and student pocketbooks; Benesse Style Care Co., Ltd., Japan's leading operator of senior and nursing homes; and Berlitz, the world's largest language school. Benesse Holdings, Inc. has been working on community development utilizing art for more than 30 years at Benesse Art Site Naoshima, together with Fukutake Foundation. Benesse Art Site Naoshima and the Benesse Prize are activities consistent with the Benesse Group's sustainability vision and they will contribute to create a sustainable future.

To learn more, visit <https://www.benesse-hd.co.jp/en/>

Singapore Biennale 2019

The Singapore Biennale was established in 2006 and is the country's pre-eminent platform for international dialogue in contemporary art. It presents and reflects the vigour of artistic practices in Singapore and the region within a global context, and fosters productive collaborations and deep engagement with artists, arts organisations, and the international arts community. The Singapore Biennale cultivates public engagement with contemporary arts through exhibitions, and its accompanying public engagement and education programmes that include artist and curator talks and tours, school visits and workshops, and community days. It compliments achievements in other areas of arts and culture, collectively enhancing Singapore's international profile as a vibrant city in which to live, work and play.

To learn more, visit <http://www.singaporebiennale.org>

About the Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art-thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges. SAM occupies two buildings: the old St Joseph's Institution on Bras Basah Road, built in 1855 and now a National Monument; and SAM at 8Q, a conservation building across the road on Queen Street that was the old Catholic High School. The museum building along Bras Basah Road is currently closed in preparation for a major building revamp, with museum programming continuing at partner venues.

SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013 and 2016, as well as the current edition in 2019. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on November 13, 2013 operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

To learn more, visit <https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/>

[For more information regarding to publishing or press]

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