

National Gallery Singapore to Co-Organise CIMAM Annual Conference on the Role of Museums in Civil Society

- *National Gallery Singapore to co-organise International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) 2017 Annual Conference from 10 – 12 November 2017*
- *This is an invaluable opportunity for cultural leaders in Asia to contribute towards global museological and curatorial discussions*

Singapore, 31 October 2017 – Close to 280 delegates from over 50 countries will attend the CIMAM 2017 Annual Conference hosted by National Gallery Singapore. Held from 10 to 12 November 2017, and for the first time in Southeast Asia, the Annual Conference in Singapore is expected to be one of the largest in attendance ever.

CIMAM is the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art and its Annual Conference is a gathering of thought leaders, museum directors, curators and museum professionals from all over the world. Taking place in a different city each year, members and delegates gather to discuss and share current museological and curatorial concerns.

Extending from last year's focus in Barcelona (*The Museum and Its Responsibilities*), and seeking to address the rising sentiments of populist nationalism we are witnessing around the world, the theme for this year is *The Roles and Responsibilities of Museums in Civil Society*. The aim is also to evaluate and examine afresh the roles of museums and their public functions, reflecting on how museums can continue to be effective forums in society where different communities can share and debate differences through non-violent means.

Speakers will address the three sub-themes which are focused on: *Art and the City: From Local to Transnational?* – what artists, museum professionals and citizens can do to activate the public's consciousness and how they contribute to identify problems; *Re-Learning Southeast Asia* – how can this region further inform our understanding of art institutions; *What do Museums Collect, and How?* – the roles and responsibilities of the museum in respect of collecting art: how do museums determine what is 'relevant'? What is the civic role of the collection? Delegates will be able to encounter different perspectives and debate through facilitated small-group conversations on topics extending from the conference theme and of urgent relevance to the field: museum governance, collections and censorship. These discussions will raise awareness of the diversity of contexts and perspectives of the conference attendees and possibly inform future positions, actions and vision of CIMAM.

Dr. Eugene Tan, Director of the National Gallery Singapore, CIMAM Board Member and Lead of the CIMAM 2017 conference committee said, "Premised on the concept of a public within society that perseveres for the common good and which has the ability to deliberate about it democratically, civil society is the arena for discussion and contestation of

differences through non-violent means. The theme of this year's conference is particularly timely in this global climate of upheavals and uncertainty. If building a more inclusive society that embraces diversity and change requires dialogue and understanding, how museums and art can bridge gaps and bring people and perspectives together must be acknowledged and better understood. CIMAM is the global forum where issues pertinent to institutions of art are explored and debated, with far-reaching effects. I look forward to the ideas and discussions we shall be having in Singapore.

I am excited that the conference is taking part in Southeast Asia for the first time. As a national institution that has as a mission to further the understanding and appreciation of the art of Southeast Asia, it is equally important that our regional colleagues are part of the discussions on the role of museums and art institutions today. I am certain our perspectives from Southeast Asia will enrich the conversations we shall be having at the conference.”

Reflecting the geographical context of this year's conference, the Annual Conference has a special focus on Southeast Asia. This will provide an opportunity for global counterparts to learn about the culture and perspectives of those in the Southeast Asia region. More than 30 directors and representatives from institutions as well as independents in Southeast Asia will attend the conference, The Gallery has also organised a Pre-Conference Tour to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (8-9 November) and a Post-Conference Tour to Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia (13-15 November) for delegates who wish to deepen their understanding and experience the richness and complexity of the art ecology of Southeast Asia.

Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE, President of CIMAM added: “When CIMAM was founded nearly half a century ago, it was situated in a very different world where museums and institutions largely came from the West. To be hosting CIMAM in Southeast Asia for the first time in its history, it reflects how the organisation has evolved to be truly international in its representation and vision. I believe that by the end of this conference, we would not have only exchanged perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of museums, but relaying these thoughts to our respective organisation and subsequently our programme and projects.”

The line-up of speakers brings together a strong roster of curators, artists, researchers, and museum directors, all leaders in the field with international expertise and perspectives and many of whom have worked with or in Asia. There are three keynote speakers:

- **Nikos Papastergiadis** (Director, Research Unit in Public Cultures, and Professor, School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia)
- **Patrick D. Flores** (Professor of Art Studies, University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines);
- **Donna De Salvo** (Deputy Director for International Initiatives and Senior Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA)

and nine case study “Perspective” speakers:

- **Ute Meta Bauer** (Founding Director, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, Singapore)
- **Andrea Cusumano** (Deputy Mayor for Culture, Palermo, Italy)

- **Chen Chieh-Jen** (Artist, Taipei, Taiwan)
- **Ade Darmawan** (Artist, Curator and Director, ruangrupa, Jakarta, Indonesia)
- **Gridthiya Gaweewong** (Artistic Director, Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, Thailand)
- **Post-Museum (Jennifer Teo & Woon Tien Wei)**, (Artists, Singapore)
- **Adriano Pedrosa** (Artistic Director, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo, Brazil)
- **Tiffany Chung** (Artist, Vietnam/USA)
- **Suhanya Raffel** (Executive Director, M+, Hong Kong).

The Gallery has worked with the arts and culture community to welcome the delegates. They will visit key art and culture institutions, as well as heritage districts in Singapore, to help them gain a better understanding of the artistic, historical and socio-political context of Singapore. Each day of the conference, the delegates will visit key art and cultural institutions such as National Gallery Singapore, DECK, Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA) Singapore, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Gillman Barracks, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore. This edition goes further to design three arts and heritage tours for the delegates to choose from – where the delegates will have an opportunity to visit heritage districts of Singapore, as well as visual arts institutions such as The Arts House; Asian Civilisations Museum; Grey Projects; National Museum, Singapore; Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film; and The Substation.

Constituted by members of CIMAM's Board, the conference committee for the 2017 Annual Conference is led by Eugene Tan (Director, National Gallery Singapore) and consists of Corinne Diserens (independent curator); Mami Kataoka (Chief Curator, Mori Art Museum); Sarah Glennie (Director, Irish Museum of Modern Art); Saskia Bos (independent curator), Suzanne Cotter (Director, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art).

CIMAM 2017 Annual Conference in Singapore is magnanimously supported by The Keppel Group, Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd, and Terra Foundation for American Art. Additional travel support has been provided by Lee Foundation, Yoma Strategic Holdings Ltd and First Myanmar Investment Co., Ltd.

For more information, please visit: www.cimam.org.

Please join the conversation using the hashtags #NationalGallerySingapore #CIMAM2017 across all platforms.

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National Gallery Singapore is a visual arts institution which oversees the largest public collection of modern art in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Situated in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments—City Hall and former Supreme Court—that have been beautifully restored and transformed into this exciting venue.

Reflecting Singapore's unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery features Singapore and Southeast Asian art from Singapore's National Collection in its long-term and special exhibitions. The Gallery also works with international museums to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for the visual arts.

In 2016, the Gallery won the awards for “Best Attraction Experience”, “Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism” and “Best Customer Service (Attractions)” at the prestigious Singapore Tourism Awards for its role in adding to the vibrancy of Singapore's tourism landscape.

CIMAM

CIMAM - International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art - is a global network of over half a thousand contemporary art museum professionals. Its vision is a world where the contribution of museums, collections and archives of modern and contemporary art to the cultural, social and economic well-being of society is recognized and respected. CIMAM's Annual Conference is the most important forum for information exchange within modern and contemporary art practice. Its guiding principle is the discussion of questions relating to the running and development of contemporary art museums and collections worldwide followed by visits to the foremost contemporary art institutions, collections and projects in the region. CIMAM is based in Barcelona and its office at Fabra i Coats is supported by The City Council of Barcelona.

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