



Mana Contemporary Presents: Mana Professional: A Career-Development Platform for Artists



Mana Professional: Panel Discussion and Q&A Session at Mana Contemporary, May 24, 2017. (Left to Right: Ysabel Pinyol, Yayoi Shionoiri, Yng-Ru Chen, and Sara Raza). Photo: Penn Eastburn.

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JERSEY CITY, NJ, August 25, 2017—Mana Contemporary will launch Mana Professional, a brand new platform designed to support the career needs of emerging and mid-career local artists, along with Mana's growing community of multidisciplinary artists. In collaboration with Sara Raza, the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative Curator, the program supports, complements, and enhances the development of professional studio practice through practical workshops, mentoring, and creative networking. Led by industry experts and influencers, Mana Professional will launch in New Jersey and will travel to Mana Contemporary in Chicago and Miami in 2018.

The program's key objectives concentrate on building creative partnerships, art and law, public relations, development, fundraising, project management, and financial planning. These essential areas are supplemented by one-to-one mentoring, along with talks as well as panels on social and political issues that impact artists today.

In addition to Raza, Mana Professional's faculty of experts will include Artsy's Senior Counsel Yayoi Shionoiri, specialist on art law (including advising on start-up operations and intellectual property matters); JiaJia Fei, digital strategist and Director of Digital at the Jewish Museum; and Elissa Black, the Managing

Director of Van Alen Institute who previously led complex cultural initiatives, including the BMW Lab Project and the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. Other experts include former Asia Society and MoMA PS1 Director of Press, Yng-Ru Chen; award-winning fundraiser Leah Heister, the Senior Director of CCS Fundraising; and Mathew Heggem, a renowned dancer and the CEO of SUM Innovation.

Eugene Lemay, the artistic director of Mana Contemporary said about the platform, "As a practicing artist and founder of Mana Contemporary, I see the Mana Professional program as an integral part of our service and duty to artists. Equipping artists with a practical toolbox of professional skills and mentoring will allow them to grapple more confidently with the demands of a fluctuating industry."

Raza added, "Mana Professional was conceived as a response to the threat of cuts to public arts funding and to help support a community of diverse artists prepare themselves for some of the complex challenges that lay ahead. The program offers workable methods that can be immediately applied to enhance a professional studio practice during a fast-changing political and social climate."

The program was developed with an interest in building on Mana's reputation as an artist-centric platform with both a local and global mindset. For more information, visit www.manacontemporary.com/manapro.

SARA RAZA

Sara Raza is the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative Curator for the Middle East and North Africa where she recently organized the exhibition *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa*. Formerly, she was the Curator of Maraya Art Centre in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, and served as the Head of Education and Public Programs at Yarat Contemporary Art Space, Baku, Azerbaijan, and Curator of Public Programs at Tate Modern, London. Raza is the longstanding West and Central Asia editor of *ArtAsiaPacific* magazine and is currently editing a book on her research entitled *Punk Orientalism*. She blogs regularly at www.sararaza.com.

ABOUT MANA CONTEMPORARY

Founded in 2011, Mana Contemporary is dedicated to providing a platform for contemporary art and artists through exhibitions, studio programs, and public programs. Mana's community network began in New Jersey and has since expanded to include Mana Chicago (2013) and Mana Miami (2015). Mana Contemporary continues to create new partnership opportunities that explore the intersection of contemporary art, design, new technologies, and music, including collaborations with the Florence Art Academy and the International Center for Photography. For more information, visit www.manacontemporary.com.

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