

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Curator Announced for the Honolulu Biennial's Third Edition

Dr. Melissa Chiu to curate the Honolulu Biennial 2021, a multi-venue exhibition across the city of Honolulu



Photo by Greg Powers.
Courtesy of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

HONOLULU (October 15, 2019)—The Honolulu Biennial Foundation announces that the Honolulu Biennial 2021 will be curated by Dr. Melissa Chiu. The Honolulu Biennial, one of the largest major exhibition series in the world to focus on contemporary art practices of the Pacific, will take place February–April 2021. Its third edition will continue the Biennial's mission to contribute to local and global dialogs by connecting perspectives, knowledge and creative expressions that are of the Pacific.

First held in 2017, the Honolulu Biennial expanded for its second edition in 2019 to include works and performances from 47 artists and collectives across 12 iconic venues throughout Honolulu, including the Bishop Museum, Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawai'i State Art Museum, John Young Museum of Art at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Foster Botanical Garden, Ali'iōlani Hale and McCoy Pavilion. HB19 was attended by nearly 115,000 visitors and generated an estimated \$81.96 million for the state's economy.

In announcing the selection, Katherine Ann Leilani Tuidor, Honolulu Biennial Foundation Executive Director and Co-founder, said: "We are excited to collaborate with Dr. Chiu on the

third edition of the Honolulu Biennial. She brings significant insight, scholarship and passion. Dr. Chiu is key figure in building the global dialogue around contemporary art of the Asia-Pacific region, and we look forward to the conversations and connections she will advance for the Honolulu Biennial in 2021.”

Jonathan Kindred, the Honolulu Biennial Foundation’s Board of Directors Chairman, noted: “We are extremely pleased to have Melissa join our team to lead the programming and presentation of HB21. Her depth and breadth of curatorial expertise will help us further elevate our mission of presenting Pacific artists in a truly global context.”

Dr. Melissa Chiu commented, “I am thrilled to participate in the Honolulu Biennial, one of the most recent additions to the circuit of international biennials. As a relative newcomer, the Honolulu Biennial allows us to look at all of the curatorial possibilities that such an exhibition presents. I’m looking forward to exploring this as a curatorial model.”

About the Curator

Dr. Melissa Chiu is the Honolulu Biennial 2021 Curator. She is Director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the national museum of modern and contemporary art, a Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. Since her appointment in 2014, Chiu has presented landmark exhibitions by Shirin Neshat, Robert Irwin, Yayoi Kusama and Charline von Heyl.

Chiu was previously Museum Director and Senior Vice President, Global Art Programs (2001-2014) at Asia Society in New York responsible for overseeing the programming for museums in New York, Houston and Hong Kong. Specializing in contemporary art from the Asia-Pacific region, Chiu has organized nearly 30 exhibitions by Zhang Huan, Yoshitomo Nara, Sarah Sze, Michael Joo, Dinh Q. Lê, Ah Xian and Cai Guo-Qiang and co-curated *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now* (2006-8) and *Art and China’s Revolution* (2008).

Prior to this, Chiu was the founding Director of Gallery 4A (1996-2001), now known as 4A Centre of Contemporary Asian Art, and a curator at the University of Western Sydney (1993-1996) focused on building a collection of emerging Australian artists.

Chiu has been a board member of the Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Alliance of Museums, the Museum Association of New York and the Vietnam Foundation for the Arts. She was also on the founding Advisory committee for the USC American Academy in China and has participated in the advisory committees for the Gwangju and Shanghai Biennales.

In 2001, Chiu, along with others, formed the Asia Contemporary Art Consortium to promote awareness and appreciation of contemporary art from Asia in the United States. In 2002, the Chiu initiated and organized the Asia Contemporary Art Week which each year showcases new artists from Asia in a citywide weeklong event in New York, New York.

A native of Australia, Chiu earned her bachelor's degree in art history and criticism from the University of Western Sydney in 1992 and her master's degree in arts administration in 1994 from the University of New South Wales. She later completed a Ph.D. at the University of Western Sydney focusing on contemporary Chinese art in the diaspora titled *Transexperience and Chinese Experimental Art, 1990-2000*, one of the first PhD's on the subject. Later, it was revised, expanded and published as *Breakout: Chinese Art Outside China* (2006).

Chiu has authored and edited several books and catalogues on contemporary art, including *Contemporary Art in Asia: A Critical Reader* (MIT Press, 2010), and has lectured at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, the Museum of Modern Art and other universities and museums.

About the Director

Katherine Ann Leilani Tuidar is the Honolulu Biennial Foundation Executive Director and a Co-founder. Tuidar moved back to Honolulu from Paris in 2014 to build the Biennial, which launched in 2017, featuring 33 artists from Hawai'i and the countries and continents united by the Pacific. After the initial success of the first Biennial, Tuidar led her team in launching the second Honolulu Biennial in 2019, which featured 47 artists and collectives and welcomed over 114,000 visitors. Tuidar is interested in fostering art centers – both physical and philosophical – that incite curiosity about alternative aesthetics and concepts in contemporary art, and that provide pathways to understanding the beautiful complexity of the Pacific.

Prior to co-founding the Biennial, Tuidar was an international recruiter for the CARANA Corporation focused on projects in economic growth, natural resource management, tourism and art. An innovative tourism specialist, Tuidar founded Anti-Tour, a socially conscious travel company in Dominican Republic, and authored Dominican Republic, a travel guide published by Other Places, 2012. From 2007-2010, she served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic where she helped manage a \$1 million public health budget and organized over 20 health conferences.

An advocate for making the arts accessible for all, Tuidar has built dozens of partnerships across institutions to help fund the arts. In January 2018, Tuidar won first place at International Start-Up Weekend in Seattle for a prototype to make visual arts more accessible for the blind. In recognition of raising nearly \$6 million to support Hawaii's creative community via Honolulu Biennial, Tuidar was honored with Pacific Business News' 40 Under 40 Award in June 2019. Tuidar received her BA from University of Pennsylvania in Health and Societies (Public Health) and an MBA in Arts and Cultural Management from Paris School of Business/ Institut d'études supérieures des arts.

About the Honolulu Biennial Foundation

Honolulu Biennial Foundation (HBF) was founded in 2014 to support the local arts infrastructure with global outreach by presenting the Honolulu Biennial, a visual arts festival for Hawai'i. First launched in 2017, the Honolulu Biennial is the second major exhibition series in the world to focus on contemporary art practices of the Pacific, and its location – historically and



currently – entreats a curatorial approach that emphasizes genealogical ties within, and issues specific to, the region.

Throughout the year, HBF serves the local community by presenting educational outreach programs, smaller scale exhibitions and professional development opportunities for the local arts community. To learn more, visit www.honolulubiennial.org.

Further Information

To keep up to date on all the latest from the Honolulu Biennial Foundation follow @honolulubiennial on Instagram and like us on Facebook. Sign up for our newsletter at honolulubiennial.org.

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