FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Distinguished Speakers from Hawai‘i and Asia-Pacific Join Globally Recognized Keynotes for Art Summit 2021

Internationally renowned artists Ai Weiwei and Theaster Gates, along with scholar Homi K. Bhabha, headline online event presented by Hawai‘i Contemporary

(HONOLULU, Dec. 4, 2020) — Global artist Ai Weiwei, a leading cultural figure of his generation; artist Theaster Gates, a social innovator and placemaker; and scholar Homi K. Bhabha, a leading postcolonial theorist, will headline the Hawai‘i Contemporary Art Summit 2021, premiering online February 10–13, 2021. Making their Hawai‘i debuts, the three keynotes will be in conversation with Dr. Melissa Chiu, director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., and curatorial director for the Hawai‘i Triennial 2022, entitled Pacific Century – E Ho‘omau no Moananui‘a‘kea.

Presented by Hawai‘i Contemporary (formerly Honolulu Biennial Foundation), the inaugural Art Summit is a series of insightful and compelling talks, performances, film screenings and workshops, featuring renowned artists, curators, and thinkers from Hawai‘i, the Pacific, and beyond. The Art Summit will situate Hawai‘i at the center of high-caliber, global discourse around contemporary art and ideas with local and international audiences.

“We’re thrilled to launch this inaugural Art Summit with three world-renowned thought leaders, who will set the tone for rigorous discussion in and around the Pacific,” said Katherine Don, executive director of Hawai‘i Contemporary. “With its mix of global, local, and indigenous voices, the Art Summit aims to engage audiences and illuminate new insights in international art practices and contemporary thinking.”

The convening of artists and thinkers for Art Summit 2021 presents audiences with an opportunity for cultural exchange and understanding of a myriad of viewpoints. Discussions will focus on topics with immediate relevance, including climate awareness, social change, and indigenous knowledge.

“Artists have always functioned as barometers in times of great change,” Chiu said. “As we navigate through a complex moment in human history, artists and thinkers continue to provide us with fresh perspectives for interpreting our shifting realities. The forthcoming Art Summit is an ideal forum for diverse audiences to imagine Hawai‘i as a critical conduit through which overlapping social and political discourses can be explored.”

hawaiicontemporary.org
The Hawai‘i Contemporary Art Summit 2021 is proudly presented in partnership with Bishop Museum, Hawai‘i State Art Museum, Honolulu Museum of Art, and Iolani Palace, and will be produced in collaboration with NMG Network. The event is generously sponsored, in part, by DAWSON, Hawai‘i State Art Museum, Jonathan Kindred, National Endowment of the Arts, The Sidney E. Frank Foundation, and Taiji and Naoko Terasaki Family Foundation. The multi-day event will premiere online and will be available for on-demand viewing.

Selected List of Speakers/Participants • Art Summit 2021

Ai Weiwei, artist
Homi K. Bhabha, cultural critic
Drew Kahu‘aina Broderick, associate curator, Hawai‘i Triennial 2022
Melissa Chiu, curatorial director, Hawai‘i Triennial 2022
Eating in Public (Gaye Chan), artist
‘Elepaio Press (Mark Hamasaki and Richard Hamasaki), artists
Léuli Eshraghi, artist + curator
Theaster Gates, artist
Karrabing Film Collective (Elizabeth A. Povinelli, founding member), media group
Nā Maka o ka ‘Āina (Joan Lander), artist
Navid Najafi, musical artist
Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, activist + artist
Pili‘amo‘o (Mark Hamasaki and Kapulani Landgraf), artists
Kawika Pegram, climate activist
Mika Tajima, artist
Miwako Tezuka, associate curator, Hawai‘i Triennial 2022

About Ai Weiwei
Ai Weiwei is renowned for making strong aesthetic statements that resonate with timely phenomena across today’s geopolitical world. From architecture to installations, social media to documentaries, Ai uses a wide range of mediums as expressions of new ways for his audiences to examine society and its values. Recent exhibitions include: Ai Weiwei: Resetting Memories at MARCO in Monterrey, Ai Weiwei: Bare Life at the Mildred Lane Kemper Museum in St. Louis, Ai Weiwei at the K20/K21 in Dusseldorf, and Good Fences Make Good Neighbors with the Public Art Fund in New York City. Ai was born in Beijing in 1957 and currently resides and works in Berlin. Ai is the recipient of the 2015 Ambassador of Conscience Award from Amnesty International and the 2012 Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent from the Human Rights Foundation.
About Theaster Gates
Theaster Gates lives and works in Chicago. Gates creates works that engage with space theory and land development, sculpture and performance. Drawing on his interest and training in urban planning and preservation, Gates redeems spaces that have been left behind. Known for his recirculation of art-world capital, Gates creates work that focuses on the possibility of the “life within things.” His work contends with the notion of Black space as a formal exercise — one defined by collective desire, artistic agency, and the tactics of a pragmatist.

In 2010, Gates created the Rebuild Foundation, a nonprofit platform for art, cultural development, and neighborhood transformation that supports artists and strengthens communities through free arts programming and innovative cultural amenities on Chicago’s South Side.

Gates has exhibited and performed at Tate Liverpool, UK (2020); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2020); Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2019); Palais de Tokyo Paris, France (2019); Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (2018); Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2018); National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA (2017); Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada (2016); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2013); Punta della Dogana, Venice, Italy (2013) and dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany (2012). He was the winner of the Artes Mundi 6 prize and a recipient of the Légion d’Honneur in 2017. In 2018, he was awarded the Nasher Prize for Sculpture, and the Urban Land Institute, J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development. Gates received the 2020 Crystal Award for his leadership in creating sustainable communities.

Gates is a professor at the University of Chicago in the Department of Visual Arts and the Harris School of Public Policy, and is Distinguished Visiting Artist and Director of Artist Initiatives at the Lunder Institute for American Art at Colby College.

About Homi K. Bhabha
Homi K. Bhabha is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities in the English and Comparative Literature Departments at Harvard University. He was founding director of the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University from 2011–2019 and director of the Harvard Humanities Center from 2005–2011. From 2008-2019, he held the inaugural position of Senior Adviser on the Humanities to the President and Provost at Harvard University and from 2005-2008 served as Senior Adviser in the Humanities at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. He is a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy.

Bhabha is the author of numerous works exploring postcolonial theory, cultural change and power, contemporary art, and cosmopolitanism. His works include Nation and Narration and The Location of Culture, which was reprinted as a Routledge Classic in 2004. His next book will be published by the University of Chicago Press. Bhabha has written on contemporary art for Artforum and has written a range of essays on William Kentridge, Anish Kapoor, Taryn Simon, and Mathew Barney, amongst others. He is a member of the Academic Committee for the Shanghai Power Station of Art, advisor
on the Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives (CMAP) project at the Museum of Modern Art New York, and Curator in Residence of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Bhabha served on jury for the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 and the 2018 Sharjah Biennial. In 2019, he was honored by the Institute of Contemporary Art in London for his influential work in studies of colonialism, postcolonialism, and globalization.

With the support of the Volkswagen and Mellon Foundations, Bhabha is leading a research project on the Global Humanities. In 1997, he was profiled by Newsweek as one of “100 Americans for the Next Century.” He holds honorary degrees from Université Paris 8, University College London, and the Free University Berlin. In 2012, he was awarded the Government of India’s Padma Bhushan Presidential Award in the field of literature and education and received the Humboldt Research Prize in 2015. In 2018, Bhabha received an honorary doctorate at Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa.

About Hawai‘i Contemporary
Inspired by the unique histories of Hawai‘i, a gathering place for diverse peoples and ideas, Hawai‘i Contemporary connects communities from across our islands and regions united by the Pacific Ocean and beyond. As a collaborative art partner, we cultivate cultural alliances to showcase the Hawai‘i Triennial every three years and to celebrate contemporary art and ideas. The multi-site public exhibition is complemented by year-round public and education programs contributing to the local arts ecosystem and affirming our commitment to creating an accessible gateway for contemporary art in Hawai‘i nei.

Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization in 2014, the Honolulu Biennial Foundation debuted the inaugural Honolulu Biennial in 2017 as a dedicated contemporary art platform in Hawai‘i. The successful biennials presented in 2017 and 2019 gained international recognition and respectively welcomed over 100,000 guests from Hawai‘i and the Pacific region, as well as visitors from around the world. In 2020, the organization announced the transformation of its signature event into a triennial format and was renamed Hawai‘i Contemporary. Looking toward the future, Hawai‘i Contemporary continues to build upon this foundation to create inspirational and sustainable exchanges, connecting Hawai‘i and the Pacific with contemporary art.

For more information, please contact: press@hawaiicontemporary.org

NOTE TO THE EDITOR
This press release contains words in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language), one of two official languages of the State of Hawai‘i. ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i utilizes two diacritical marks: a kahakō (macron) and an ʻokina (glottal stop). Please note that an ʻokina — and not an apostrophe — is used in the word Hawai‘i.

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