

## **Counting Down to the Opening of Phantasmapolis—The 2021 Asian Art Biennial Phantasmapolis Announces Entry Notices, Highlights of New Works, Extended Projects and A Preview to the Opening Event**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Asian Art Biennial organized by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (NTMoFA) affiliated to the Ministry of Culture will open on October 30, 2021. Following the announcement the full list of artists and a promo video of the exhibition, the museum announces today (Oct. 8) an easter-egg short film that reveals “Entry Notices” to the public, inviting all passengers to join this artistic voyage and have a preview of highlights in this polis called Phantasmapolis.

### **Next Stop, the Phantasmapolis**

The 2021 Asian Art Biennial is curated by a multinational curatorial team headed by Taiwanese curator, Takamori Nobuo, together with Taiwanese curator Ho Yu-Kuan, Filipino curator Tessa Maria Guazon, Indian curator Anushka Rajendran, and Thai curator Thanavi Chotpradit.

The exhibition adopts the theme of “Phantasmapolis” with “Asian futurism” and “Asian sci-fi culture” as its thematic axes. A newly coined Greek work, “Phantasmapolis” comprises “phantasma” (apparition, phantom) and “polis” (city state), which is inspired by architect Wang Dahong’s English sci-fi novel, entitled *Phantasmagoria*, of which the title refers to a form of “horror theater” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that made use of projection technology.

The exhibition’s easter-egg short film “Entry Notices” is specially created by Taiwanese artist Li Yi-Fan, who is also featured in the Biennial. Li uses his signature visual style to develop this conceptual short film for the Biennial. The objective of the short film, in addition to introducing artists and featured artworks, is to visualize and convey the atmosphere of the exhibition. The short film imagines audiences entering a city state known as “Phantasmapolis”; and before they step into its borders, a face from the future will explain admission guidelines and invite all to explore together this unknown world.

### **417 Exhibits and 28 New Works to Explore a Fantastic World Informed by Future Imagination**

In this edition, the Biennial has invited 38 artists/art groups from 15 countries and features 417 artworks and archives. The types of artworks range from site-specific projects, multimedia installations, two-dimensional paintings, videos, photography, film screenings and talks, as well as archives and manuscripts, with 28 newly created works, which has exceeded past editions.

Among these new works, Taiwanese artist Lee Yung-Chih, who specializes in utilizing sarcasm, appropriation and material transformation, exhibits his new project, the *Expired Neon* series. With videos and prints on translucent material, the artist attempts to copy and represent neon signs that were popular in Asia in the 1980s. He replicates images from historical archives and creates new patterns of neon tubes to allow obsolete neon signs to “glow again” in this polis.

Malaysian artist Tan Zi Hao places his attention on common household insects known as household casebearers and gathers the oval-shaped cases produced by the insects. His new work *Monuments to the Dust We Became* comprises these miniscule natural objects that disrupt the architectural language of monuments while transforming the objects into a monument of the future.

A rather “singular” artist of the young generation in Japan, Isomura Dan collaborates with Unno Rintaro, who uses video as his creative medium, to create a new work, entitled *Agitators' Dreams or Floating Signages*, which is showcased in the NTMoFA’s “Bamboo Court.” In this installation, multiple figural sculptures with their faces or part of their bodies replaced by images of other species investigate the relationship between humans and other non-human species.

### **Three Major Extended Projects to Explore Transtemporal Connections Between Different Fields and Issues**

This edition of the Biennial invites for the first time three international curators and Taiwanese researchers from different forms of practices to connect with different disciplines and diverse moments in history by respectively teasing out architecture, archive, literature and video while extending the exhibition and developing the “*Archive and Research Project*,” the “*Video Art Project*” and the “*Forum and Reader Project*” to respond to the diversified possibilities of Asian Futurism.

The “*Archive and Research Project*” comprises four sections: “252710: The Distance from the Moon,” “Archive of the Pavilion of Republic of China at EXPO 1970, Osaka,” “Prospecting: *Archival documents from the Philippines*” and “Beyond Time and Sex: An Opsis of Queer Sci-Fi in Asia.” Collectively, the four sections demonstrate expressive forms that surpass contemporary artworks, collections, archive studies and architectural creations.

The number “252710” in “252710: The Distance from the Moon” comes from the height of Wang Dahong’s “SELENE—Monument to Man's Conquest of the Moon” (its full height is 252.71 feet) and symbolizes the farthest distance between Earth and Moon. With Taiwanese artist Liu Kuo-Sung’s ink painting featuring the space, drawings of “SELENE—Monument to Man's Conquest of the Moon” and news clips of Apollo 12 astronauts’ visit to the Republic of China, visitors to Phantasmopolis can reexperience the moment when humanity saw the Earth from the Moon for the first time during the period of the Space Race, elevating the horizon from planet Earth to the boundless universe.

“Archive of the Pavilion of Republic of China at EXPO 1970, Osaka” presents the pavilion space in related records, and showcases Taiwanese sculptor Yuyu Yang’s large-scale work, *Advent of the Phoenix* as well as important Taiwanese architect during the post-war era Cheng Mei’s comprehensive architectural drawings that were not selected for the Pavilion of Republic of China at the time. Together, these works will help the audience further understand the future imagination of “a modern Republic of China” from the Taiwanese artists in the 1970s.

Curated by Filipino curator Tessa Maria Guazon, “**Prospecting: Archival documents from the Philippines**” uses the studies of archives from the Philippines as a form of invitation to welcome visitors to explore this archive and explore historical traces of the past, present and future in various historical background and material while reflecting on their current position in history.

In “Beyond Time and Sex: An Opsis of Queer Sci-Fi in Asia,” Taiwanese researcher I Chun (Nicole) WANG presents projects revolving around technological media from Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. From these fictional spaces and times, the project refracts the context and spectrum of sex and gender issues in these places.

The “**Video Art Project**” is curated by Indian curator Anushka Rajendran, who adopts the theme of “Looking back to the future” to imagine different future landscapes that are prevented and threatened by mainstream powers, along with clues to a “future” that has already surfaced in the present world. The project brings together 15 key video artists from 13 countries in Asia and North America. With a series of stylistically divergent works, the project serves as a crucial window to glimpse into video works featuring Asia-related topics.

Curated by Thai curator Thanavi Chotpradit, the “**Forum and Reader Project**” comprises “Songs from the Moon Rabbit—Forum of 2021 Asian Art Biennial” that will take place on October 30 and 31, as well as the publication of a bilingual essay collection, entitled *The Midnight Sun and the Owl—Reader of 2021 Asian Art Biennial*, supported by Winsing Art Foundation to engage visitors in unfolding unlimited imagination of the future through reading.

### **A Special “Future Party” for Futurians**

The opening ceremony of the Biennial will take place on October 30, at six o’clock in the afternoon, and will invite Taiwanese avant-garde artist from the Generation Y, Betty Apple, to give a special opening performance. Betty Apple is known for her uniquely enchanting artistic style crafted with sound art and physical performance. The 2021 Asian Art Biennial welcomes all audience to visit and celebrate this unknown polis that is closest to the future with this party for futurians.

The NTMoFA Director Liang Yung-Fei states that “the Biennial adopts the theme of Asian Futurism this year and departs from past editions. This time, the Biennial looks towards the

future and extends into ample and diverse projects to present ideas and interpretations of the future from different fields and disciplines. The preparation of the exhibition now enters its final stage and audiences are invited to continuously follow the latest updates of the polis and jointly welcome the grand biennial event of Asian contemporary art.”

Phantasmapolis: 2021 Asian Art Biennial will run from October 30, 2021 to March 6, 2022. The first exhibition event, “Songs from the Moon Rabbit—Forum of 2021 Asian Art Biennial,” is now open for online registration. For more information about the 2021 Asian Art Biennial programs, please follow closely the NTMoFA website and the Facebook fan page of the Asian Art Biennial.

### **Songs from the Moon Rabbit—Forum of 2021 Asian Art Biennial**

- Dates: 2021.10.30 (Sat.) to 2021.10.31 (Sun.)
- Venue: Auditorium, NTMoFA
- Registration: <https://reurl.cc/r15oQ1>

### **To Watch “Entry Notices” to Phantasmapolis Online**

- The NTMoFA YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYkswH4uhHI>
- The Asian Art Biennial Facebook Page: <https://fb.watch/8CsvD-JLC1/>

### **Phantasmapolis: 2021 Asian Art Biennial**

- Dates: 2021.10.30 to 2022.03.06
- Exhibition Coordinators: Lin Hsiao-Yu, Liao Chia-Cheng Tel: (04)23723552 #304、701
- Media Contact: Yan Bi-Mei Tel: (04)23723552 #123
- The Asian Art Biennial Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/aabntmofa>

### **National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts**

- The NTMoFA Website: <https://www.ntmofa.gov.tw/>
- The NTMoFA Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ntmofa>

### **Opening Hours:**

**To cope with the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the museum opening hours have been adjusted to Tuesdays to Sundays, from 09:00 to 17:00 (closed on Mondays).**

Since August 24 (Tues.), 2021 onward, visitors with reservations will be prioritized for admission (the maximum for group reservation is 80 people). A system of entry times with limited number of visitors is implemented. Each entry time for visitors with reservations is 2 hours. Flexible admission of visitors without reservations will depend on the number of visitors in the museum.

**Attachment 1**

**Phantasmapolis: The 2021 Asian Art Biennial  
Details of the Extended Projects**

**Prospecting: Archival documents from the Philippines**

Curator: Tessa Maria Guazon

Beyond Time and Sex: An Opsis of Queer Sci-Fi in Asia

Researcher: I Chun (Nicole) WANG

Artists: Shu Lea Cheang, Ku Kuang-Yi, Ciwas Tahos (Lin An-Chi), Very Theatre x ActNow Theatre, Wu Tzu-Ning

\*This project is supported by The Cultural Taiwan Foundation and in collaboration with SEA plateaus

**Video Project**

**Phantasmapolis: Looking back to the future**

Curator: Anushka Rajendran

Artists:

Abdul Halik Azeez / Sri Lanka

Vibha Galhotra / India

Ayham Jabr / Syria

LI Kuei Pi / Taiwan

Mariah Lookman / Pakistan, UK

Umber Majeed / USA

Tuan Andrew Nguyen / Vietnam

Afrah Shafiq / India

Karan Shrestha / Nepal

Sikarnt Skoolisariyaporn / Thailand

Angela SU / Hong Kong

Natasha Tontey / Indonesia

Hanae Utamura / Japan

Paul WONG / Canada

ZHANG XU Zhan / Taiwan