



Pannaphan Yodmanee wins 11th Benesse Prize Zulkifle Mahmud awarded Soichiro Fukutake Prize

Singapore, Naoshima, 12 January 2017

Benesse Holdings, Inc. (Benesse) and Singapore Art Museum (SAM) are pleased to announce that the 11th Benesse Prize, selected from participating artists of the Singapore Biennale 2016, was awarded to Ms. **Pannaphan Yodmanee** from Thailand. Ms. Yodmanee will be commissioned to create a work to be exhibited at Benesse Art Site Naoshima, Japan, in addition to receiving a cash prize of JPY 3,000,000 (including a visit to Benesse Art Site Naoshima) from Benesse. Mr. **Zulkifle Mahmud** from Singapore was also announced as the recipient of the Soichiro Fukutake Prize – a special award presented on the occasion of the inaugural Asian edition of the Benesse Prize.

The jury who was responsible for the shortlist selection praised the quality and diversity of the artistic discourses presented at Singapore Biennale 2016, a testimony to the vibrancy and depth of field of artistic production throughout the Asian continent. Commenting on Ms. Yodmanee's nomination, Ms. Akiko Miki, as chair of the jury said: "Her painterly, sculptural and architectural work creates a unique, breathtaking landscape by mixing microscopic and macroscopic visions with Buddhist cosmology, traditional and modern techniques, and natural and artificial materials. We look forward to seeing how her critical sensibility could provide profound insights about human civilization, natural conditions, and spirituality in our contemporary age in the insular context of the Seto Inland Sea."

Mr. Soichiro Fukutake, Founder and President, Benesse Art Site Naoshima commented on his decision to award Mr. Mahmud with a special prize: "I was deeply impressed by this particular work, skillfully incorporating voices and sounds collected from Asian migrant communities in contemporary Singapore. It is contemplative, triggering sensorial and poetic reflections on various social territories and the human environment, as well as on our lives." The prize entitles Mr. Mahmud to a visit to Naoshima and the neighbouring islands.

The Benesse Prize, awarded since 1995 at the Venice Biennale, celebrates artists whose practices embody an experimental and critical spirit, and for their potential to develop a reflection around the theme of "Benesse" (Well-Being). After ten momentous iterations in Venice, the Prize moved to Asia in 2016, with the aim of strengthening ties with the continent in which Benesse is rooted and acknowledging the changes in the circumstances and environment defining contemporary art production today. The 11th Benesse Prize is presented in collaboration with SAM, the organizer of Singapore Biennale 2016 and was open to all artists participating in the Biennale. The artists shortlisted for the 11th Benesse Prize were: Martha Atienza (Philippines); Bui Cong Khanh (Vietnam); Ade Darmawan (Indonesia); Qiu Zhijie (China); and Pannaphan Yodmanee (Thailand).

The members of the 11th Benesse Prize jury are: Luckana Kunavichayanont, Director, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre; Dr. Susie Lingham, Creative Director, Singapore Biennale 2016; Akiko Miki, International Artistic Director, Benesse Art Site Naoshima and Co-Director, Yokohama Triennale 2017; Fumio Nanjo, Director, Mori Art Museum; and Suhanya Raffel, Executive Director, M+.

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About the Benesse Prize

The Benesse Prize was established in 1995 on the occasion of the TransCulture exhibition, organized by Japan Foundation and the Fukutake Science and Culture Foundation (since 2012, Fukutake Foundation) with the sponsorship of Benesse Corporation and under the patronage of the 46th Venice Biennale. The Benesse Prize at the Venice Biennale was inspired by the idea of creating a link between Venice and Naoshima, two very different places that are united by a similar environment, being both surrounded by water and aiming to promote visual arts connecting local and global contexts.

Two decades after its inaugural edition, the Prize now moves to Asia, with the aim of strengthening ties with the continent in which Benesse is rooted, and acknowledging the drastic changes in the circumstances and environment defining contemporary art production today.

Past Benesse Prize Winners (awarded at the 46th to 55th editions of the Venice Biennale)

1st Benesse Prize (1995):	Cai Guo-Qiang (China)
2nd Benesse Prize (1997):	Alexandros Psychoulis (Greece)*
3rd Benesse Prize (1999):	Olafur Eliasson (Iceland / Denmark)
4th Benesse Prize (2001):	Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller (Canada)
5th Benesse Prize (2003):	Rirkrit Tiravanija (Thailand)
6th Benesse Prize (2005):	Tacita Dean (UK)
7th Benesse Prize (2007):	Adel Abdessemed (France, Algeria)
8th Benesse Prize (2009):	Hans-Peter Feldmann (Germany)
9th Benesse Prize (2011):	Adrian Villar Rojas (Argentine)
10th Benesse Prize (2013):	Anri Sala (Albania, France)

**selected by the Venice Biennale official jury*

About Benesse Art Site Naoshima

Benesse Art Site Naoshima is the collective name for all art-related activities conducted by Benesse Holdings, Inc. and Fukutake Foundation on the islands of Naoshima and Teshima in Kagawa Prefecture and on Inujima island in Okayama Prefecture. Our fundamental aim is to create significant spaces by bringing contemporary art and architecture in resonance with the pristine nature of the Seto Inland Sea, a landscape with a rich cultural and historical fabric. Through contacts with art and nature, sceneries and inhabitants of the Seto Inland Sea region, we seek to inspire visitors to reflect on the meaning of Benesse's motto - Well-Being. In all our ongoing activities, we are committed to foster a relationship of mutual growth between art and the region, aiming to make a positive contribution to the local communities.

To learn more, visit www.benesse-artsite.jp/en/

About Benesse Holdings, Inc.

Guided by the corporate philosophy, "Benesse = Well-Being", the Benesse Group conducts business in the fields of education, language/global leadership training, lifestyles, and senior/nursing care, helping every customer to nurture their desire to learn and to solve problems throughout their lives. Group companies include Benesse Corporation which runs *Shinkenzeni*: correspondence courses for children from preschool to high-school ages, Shinken Simulated Exams and student pocketbooks ; Benesse Style Care Co., Ltd., Japan's leading operator of senior and nursing homes; and *Berlitz*, the world's largest language school.

To learn more, visit www.benesse-hd.co.jp/en/

About the Singapore Biennale

The Singapore Biennale was established in 2006 as the country's pre-eminent platform for international dialogue in contemporary art. It places Singapore's artists within a global context, and fosters productive collaborations with the international arts community. In this way, the Biennale provides new opportunities for local visual artists, arts organisations and businesses. It further cultivates deeper public engagement with contemporary visual arts through a four-month exhibition, and its accompanying public engagement and education programmes that include artist and curator talks and tours, as well as school visits and workshops. It complements achievements in other areas of arts and culture, collectively enhancing Singapore's international profile as a vibrant city in which to live, work and play. The 2006 and 2008 editions of the Biennale were organised by the National Arts Council. As with the 2011 and 2013 editions, Singapore Biennale 2016 is organised by the Singapore Art Museum, and supported by the National Arts Council.

To learn more, visit www.singaporebiennale.org

About the Singapore Art Museum

The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges.

SAM occupies two buildings: the old St Joseph's Institution on Bras Basah Road, built in 1855 and now a National Monument; and SAM at 8Q, a conservation building across the road on Queen Street that was the old Catholic High.

In 2011, SAM was the venue organiser of the Singapore Biennale, becoming the main organiser in 2013 and 2016. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

To learn more, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

About the National Arts Council, Singapore

The National Arts Council champions the arts in Singapore. By nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement, we want to develop a distinctive global city for the arts. With a nod to tradition and an eye to the future, we cultivate accomplished artists and vibrant companies. Our support for the arts is comprehensive – from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing. The Council welcomes greater private and corporate giving to and through the arts so that together we can make the arts an integral part of everyone's lives.

For more information on the Council's mission and plans, please visit www.nac.gov.sg

Annex 1: Pannaphan Yodmanee – winner of 11th Benesse Prize



Pannaphan Yodmanee (b. 1988, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand) examines the relevance of Buddhist philosophy to our lives. Utilising a combination of raw, natural materials with found objects of contemporary origin, her works imbue the painted designs and motifs endemic to traditional Thai art with the universal and persistent themes of loss, suffering, devastation, and the karmic cycles of death and rebirth. Her accolades include top prizes in the Thai Traditional Painting Awards (2013), as well as the Young Thai Artist Awards (2006–2007). In 2015, her works were showcased at the Thailand Eye exhibition presented at the Saatchi Gallery, London and later at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. She lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand.



Aftermath, 2016

Mixed media: found objects, artist-made icons, concrete and paint.
Site-specific installation
300 x 1600 cm
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Biennale 2016
commission

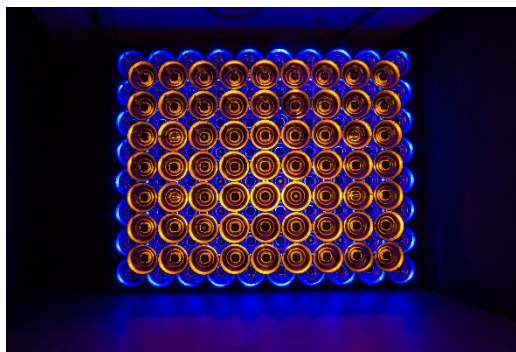
Artist statement:

« The crisis in this world is the truth of natural phenomena, the uncontrollable changes that have caused fear, pressure and sorrow, leading humankind to rely on religion. My understanding of Buddhist cosmology and comparing it with science has enriched my imagination, with regards to the crisis of time, loss, devastation and finally the end. In my work, I express these ideas with natural and new materials, drawing on both contemporary and Thai traditional art. »

Annex 2: Zulkifile Mahmod – winner of Soichiro Fukutake Prize



Zulkifile Mahmod (b. 1975, Singapore) is a sound and media artist who adopts a multidisciplinary and multi-genre approach that includes drawings, prints, sculptures and the readymade. He has exhibited in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Germany, Italy, Russia and Norway. He represented Singapore at the Ogaki Biennale (Japan, 2006) and Venice Biennale (2007). In 2010, he won the Straits Times Life! Theatre Award for best sound design (Singapore) and in 2015, his work was featured in 'Singapore: Inside Out', a travelling showcase of Singapore art which was presented in Beijing, London, New York and Singapore. He lives and works in Singapore.



SONICreflection, 2016
Wok lids, tweeters, pencil microphones, computer with software, amplifiers, sound card and aluminium
380 x 673 x 134 cm
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Biennale 2016
commission

Artist statement:

« *SONICreflection is a sound installation that explores and investigates sonic territories and sonic tensions in Singapore. As a melting pot, the city has attracted a lot of migration. Many Southeast Asian migrant communities have set up their little 'towns' in Singapore: Little Thailand, Little Myanmar, Little Vietnam, Little Philippines, and so forth. Each towns is distinctive in terms of culture, food and sonic characteristics, which also create the sonic territories of each space.* »