

Life is Only One: Yoshitomo Nara

Fact Sheet

About the Exhibition

Date: March 6 – July 26, 2015

Venue: Chantal Miller Gallery, Asia Society Hong Kong Center
9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Jockey Club presents *Life is Only One: Yoshitomo Nara* – the first major solo exhibition of the renowned Japanese artist in Hong Kong. The exhibition title comes from one of Nara's paintings, *Life is Only One!* A provocative declaration: "*Life is Only One!*" But what does it mean? The painting depicts a small girl standing on a pile of human skulls, juxtaposing the symbol of death with her innocent face. It makes us think about life's big questions and reminds us that life may sometimes be hard, but it is ephemeral. Nara invites Hong Kong visitors to give in to their imagination and engage in a dialogue with his work and his world. The 20-week exhibition presents a rich collection of paintings, sketches, photographs, sculptures and mixed media installations drawn from his extensive oeuvre of the past two decades, this exhibition is an evocative journey into Nara's open-ended interpretation of life.

Artist: Yoshitomo Nara

Yoshitomo Nara was born in 1959 and raised in Hirosaki, a small town in Aomori Prefecture in northern Japan. He acquired his Master's Degree at Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music in 1987 and moved on to Germany to study at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (State Academy of Arts) in 1988. Under A.R. Penck, Nara attained the title "Meisterschüler" (master pupil) and proceeded to work in Cologne from 1994 to 2000. In 1998, Nara taught at the University of California, Los Angeles for three months as a guest professor. The artist returned to Japan in 2000, initially working in Tokyo before moving to Tohigi in 2005.

Working in multiple art forms, including painting, drawing, sculpture in ceramic, bronze and fiber-reinforced plastic, and large-scale installations, Nara uses depictions of children and animals to convey his interpretation of life.

Curators

Guest Curator: Fumio Nanjo

Fumio Nanjo has been the director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo since 2006 and serves on various public and private boards and committees, including the Association International des Critiques d'Art (AICA), for which he is vice president, and the Comité International des Muses d'Art Moderne et Contemporain (IMAM), on which he is a board member. He is also involved in the selection committees of several art awards and artist-in-residence programs.

A renowned veteran with over 20 years of experience as an art curator, Nanjo has held significant roles at numerous biennales worldwide including: commissioner of the Japan Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (1997); commissioner of the Taipei Biennale (1998); jury member of the Turner Prize at Tate Gallery, London (1998); co-curator of the 3rd Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane (1999); member of the selection committee of the Sydney Biennale (2000); specialist for

the Japan Pavilion at EXPO 2000 in Hanover; artistic co-director of the Yokohama Triennale (2001); jury member of the Golden Lion Prize, Venice Biennale (2005); and artistic director of the Singapore Biennale (2006).

In-house Curator: Dominique Chan

Dominique Chan is head of Gallery & Exhibition for the Asia Society Hong Kong Center and responsible for the public art installations and exhibitions in the Chantal Miller Gallery. Chan has brought a diverse range of acclaimed exhibitions to Hong Kong, including *Transforming Minds: Buddhism in Art* (2012), *Light before Dawn: Unofficial Chinese Art 1974-1985* (2013), *Guggenheim’s No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia* (2013), *Light and Shadows: Caravaggio – The Italian Baroque Master* (2013-2014), *It Begins with Metamorphosis: Xu Bing* (2014) and *Temple, Scrolls, and Divine Messengers: Archaeology of the Land of Israel in Roman Times* (2014-2015).

Chan was the recipient of a Hong Kong Arts Development Council 2013/14 Hong Kong International Scholarship to join the Clore Leadership Program in the United Kingdom, during which he was seconded to Tate Modern in London.

Educational Programs

A series of educational programs has been crafted especially for this exhibition. Through lectures from Yoshitomo Nara and a range of scholars familiar with his works, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of one of the world’s most celebrated contemporary artists. Asia Society Hong Kong Center aims to encourage a wider appreciation of arts, culture and creative expression among the community through these educational programs.

Program	When	Description
Public Lectures	March 6, 2015 (Fri) “Life is Only One – Yoshitomo Nara in conversation with Fumio Nanjo”	Presented as a conversation, this lecture will invite Yoshitomo Nara to reflect on his creative career and the genesis of his first solo exhibition in Hong Kong.
	March 7, 2015 (Sat) “Not Manga – Yoshitomo Nara”	Yoshitomo Nara will lead a multi-dimensional audio-visual survey of his inspirations and passions, personally clarifying some of the misconceptions about him and his work.
	May 2015 (tbc) – Lecture by Dr. Miwako Tezuka	Conducted by Dr. Miwako Tezuka, director of the Japan Society Gallery and co-curator and co-author of <i>Yoshitomo Nara: Nobody’s Fool</i> .

Educational Programs (cont'd)

Program	When	Description
Tours and Workshops for Secondary School Students	40 Sessions throughout the exhibition period. Reserved for Schools or NGOs only.	Workshops to engage students a deeper understanding and appreciation of Yoshitomo Nara’s art. Students are encouraged to express their opinions and have an open discussion on the artworks. Artwork is created to present a theme in response to the workshop.
“Life is Only One – Imagination of Life” Art Competition & Exhibition	Submission Period: March 23 – July 26 Award Ceremony & Exhibition opening: August 8 Exhibition: August 9 – 16	All visitors are invited to give in to their imaginations and engage in a dialogue with the artist’s work and his world through the open art competition and exhibition. The competition is divided into three divisions: children division, youth division, and open division. The winning entries and selected works shall be exhibited in Chantal Miller Gallery in August.
“Sunday with Nara” Drop-in Studio	Every last Sunday of the month at Asia Society Hong Kong Center Landscape Terrace Week 1, March 29 Week 2, April 26 Week 3, May 31 Week 4, June 28 Week 5, July 26 12 – 6pm	The drop-in studio will feature different themes and art medium derived from the exhibition, and provide a platform for visitors to create their own art work after visiting the exhibition. Art materials will be supplied, and educators will be present at the studio to provide assistance. Finished works can enter the “Life is Only One – Imagination of Life” art competition.
Family Tours	[English] April 11; May 9; June 13 [Cantonese] April 25; May 23; June 27 1 – 2pm	Activities to engage families and foster a deeper understanding of contemporary art through the works of Yoshitomo Nara.
Picture Book Workshops	June 21, July 19 2 – 4pm	Beginning with a guided-tour led by an educator, the visitors will have a deeper understanding and appreciation of Yoshitomo Nara’s art. A handmade sketch book and a drawing will be created to record their feeling in daily life and present a theme in response to the workshop.

Educational Programs (cont'd)

<p>Illustration Master Class</p>	<p>Eight sessions between April and August. Details will be announced soon.</p>	<p>Hong Kong students will learn about the expressive power of illustration from Hong Kong artists. Each artist-led workshop will include live demonstrations of specific illustration techniques under the overarching theme of "Life is Only One." The host artist will also share his/her creative process and provide insights into the challenges of being an artist today. Each workshop will be documented and edited into an online workshop for viewing on the Asia Society Hong Kong website.</p> <p><i>Details will be announced soon.</i></p>
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Fast Facts

Organizer: Asia Society Hong Kong Center ("ASHK")
 Exclusive Sponsor: The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust
 Outreach Partner: Hang Lung Properties

Exhibition period: March 6 to July 26, 2015
 Venue: Chantal Miller Gallery, Asia Society Hong Kong Center
 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, Hong Kong

Admission: Free

Opening hours: (Tuesday to Thursday) 11am – 6pm
 (Friday to Sunday) 11am – 8pm
 (Last Thursday of the month) 11am – 8pm
 (Monday) Closed
** Last admission – 30 minutes before closing*
*** Extended opening hours during Art Basel Hong Kong (March 16 – 19) 11am – 8pm*

Hotline: (852) 2103 9511

Exhibition website: <http://nara.asiasociety.org.hk>
 Exhibition facebook: [www.facebook.com/Life is Only One: Yoshitomo Nara](http://www.facebook.com/Life%20is%20Only%20One%20Yoshitomo%20Nara)

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