Asia Society Honors Visionaries in Contemporary Asian Art

Symposium and 12th Annual Dinner explores and celebrates the transformative role of Asian art in the Bay Area and the world

May 12, 2015 (San Francisco, CA)—Asia Society’s Northern California Center (ASNC) is bringing together a leading group of visionaries in the arts for a symposium and dinner to explore and celebrate the transformative role that contemporary Asian art is having in the Bay Area, the United States, and in the world. With its unique geographical position, the symposium and dinner will also examine the Bay Area’s historical role as a critical entry point for contemporary Asian art in the United States.

With the growing popularity and importance of contemporary Asian art among collectors and the public in the Bay Area and the United States, institutions such as the Asia Society, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art are rising to the challenge of meeting this demand and unveiling new, innovative ways to showcase contemporary works of art from Asia. ASNC will highlight these efforts at the symposium and dinner and will celebrate the rapidly growing influence of Asian art in the Bay Area.

The symposium, which will be held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco starting at 1pm on May 12, will feature Peggy Loar, Vice President of Global Arts & Culture and Director of the Asia Society Museum in New York; Neal Benezra, Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Britta Erickson, Artistic Director of Ink Studio in Beijing; Jay Xu, Director of the Asian Art Museum; and Michelle Yun, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Asia Society Museum in New York.

The symposium will also feature Cheryl Haines, the Founding Executive Director of FOR-SITE Foundation and the curator of @Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz; and Li Huayi, a Chinese American artist celebrated for his creative fusion of Western abstraction and traditional Chinese landscape painting and whose work has been exhibited globally. Both Haines and Li will be honored for their achievements at the 12th Annual Dinner, held at the Ritz-Carlton in San Francisco that same evening starting at 6pm, along with Akiko Yamazaki, Chair of the Asian Art Museum and a leading collector of Asian art.

According to Jack Wadsworth, Co-Chair of ASNC’s Advisory Board, “Through Cheryl’s groundbreaking @Large exhibition on Alcatraz, Huayi’s cross-cultural artistic innovation, and Akiko’s role in cultivating the public’s appreciation for Asian art, the three of them have been influential in bringing into focus the power of art in building interconnections between Asia, the Bay Area, and the world. We are thrilled to bring together these three innovators with other institutional leaders in the art world to further develop interest in contemporary Asian art in the Bay Area”

“As interest in contemporary Asian art grows globally,” says Peggy Loar of the Asia Society, “the Asia Society, along with art institutions such as the SFMOMA, the Asian Art Museum, and others throughout Asia are intent on exploring new ways to partner in order to bring greater understanding to the public given the complexity and diversity of art created by Asian and Asian American artists today. In this way we hope to help facilitate the dialogue and outcomes that will help unite cultures across the Pacific Rim and elsewhere.”
The 12th Anniversary Annual Dinner, ASNC’s largest fundraising event of the year, will be attended by more than 350 leaders in the worlds of arts and culture, business, academia, and the diplomatic corps from the Bay Area and beyond. Previous years’ honorees have included The Honorable Madeleine Albright; The Honorable George Shultz; U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein; U.S. Secretary of Energy Dr. Stephen Chu; George Lucas of Lucasfilm; Jack Ma, CEO of Alibaba.com; Steven Chen, co-founder of YouTube; Dick Kramlich of New Enterprise Associates; author Sid Rittenberg; environmental advocate Amory Lovins; and California Governor Jerry Brown. Proceeds from the Annual Dinner support ASNC’s public programming and private events throughout the year.

SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS AND GALA HONOREES

- Neal Benezra — Director, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- Britta Erickson — Artistic Director, Ink Studio, Beijing; independent scholar and curator of contemporary Chinese art
- Cheryl Haines — 2015 Asia Society Annual Dinner Honoree; Curator, @Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz; Founding Executive Director, FOR-SITE Foundation
- Li Huayi — 2015 Asia Society Annual Dinner Honoree; San Francisco-based Chinese American artist celebrated for his synthesis of Chinese ink landscape tradition and Western abstraction
- Peggy Loar — Interim Vice President, Global Arts & Culture and Director, Asia Society Museum
- Jay Xu — Director, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
- Akiko Yamazaki — Chairman of the Board, Asian Art Museum
- Michelle Yun— Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Asia Society Museum

ABOUT THE ASIA SOCIETY

Asia Society is the leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Across the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, the Society provides insight, generates ideas, and promotes collaboration to address present challenges and create a shared future. Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit institution with headquarters in New York and centers in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Mumbai, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, Sydney, and Washington, DC.

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