2018 was a year when long-held assumptions and paradigms involving the United States and Asia were severely tested - and in some cases upended - in particular with respect to Northeast Asia, global trade arrangements, and the U.S.-China relationship. At a time of real and potential “misses”—misunderstanding, miscalculation, misinformation—Asia Society’s network, expertise, and insights are more critical than ever.

Asia Society achieved many milestones in 2018: A new center in Japan; the 5th annual Asia Game Changer Awards; a seminal report on global competence in education; a documentary photography exhibition and climate change festival titled Coal + Ice that transfixed audiences in San Francisco; spectacular and acclaimed exhibitions presented in our galleries in Hong Kong, Houston, and New York; and transformative, impactful work by the Asia Society Policy Institute which enjoyed a near-meteoric rise to the top 50 U.S. think tanks.

The year was also distinguished by a remarkable array of people who graced our stages: CEOs and Prime Ministers; leaders in academia and the arts; award-winning journalists; film stars; and so many more. Where but on an Asia Society stage would one have found Bill Clinton and Indra Nooyi? The head of the World Bank in conversation with the President of Alibaba? Caroline Kennedy discussing the future of Asia with four standout young leaders from Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, and the United States? Al Gore, Wang Shi, Jerry Brown, and some of the best and brightest Chinese and American entrepreneurs? Where else might a Fortune 500 CEO, a Tibetan Buddhist scholar, and an American television anchor discuss the ways Buddhism is changing American lives? Where to find a half-dozen path-breaking conversations about Artificial Intelligence, its potential, and its dangers, for Asia and beyond? Where—one night—would you hear from fashion designer Peter Som, Indian chef and restauranteur Vikas Khanna, Iranian singer-songwriter Mohsen Namjoo, and Japanese DJ Satoshi Tomii?

The answer: only at Asia Society.

As our Asia Game Changer of the Year Indra Nooyi said of this “amazing” organization:

“I have no doubt that your candle will continue to light the world, and that the best days for Asia Society—and all of us who love and appreciate Asian cultures—lie ahead.”
The work of the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) proved vital and impactful during this turbulent year. The team continued to create and facilitate innovative solutions to the myriad and major policy challenges facing the Asia-Pacific. Under the leadership of President Kevin Rudd and Vice Presidents Wendy Cutler and Danny Russel, ASPI engaged in high-level Track II diplomacy; shared expert policy analysis; developed policy solutions and roadmaps; and influenced the public debate via media commentary, briefings. Among ASPI’s major initiatives in 2018:

• **Avoiding the Thucydides’ Trap: U.S.-China Relations.** During the current, historic downturn in the bilateral relationship, this high-level body of work promoted a constructive, realistic narrative for the U.S.-China relationship utilizing Track II diplomacy and senior policy-maker briefings. Significant public engagement and debate included a series of major addresses to next-generation policy and military leaders, the high-tech sector, Asia’s foreign policy establishment, and American business leaders as well as regular media commentary. This initiative has helped build understanding of China’s domestic policy and economy—in particular through an unparalleled deep dive into economic reforms via the regularly updated ASPI-Rhodium Group China Dashboard.

• **Strengthening Trade, Investment, and Innovation Across the Asia-Pacific.** This body of work has developed recommendations to further economically integrate the Asian region, encourage U.S. engagement, de-escalate trade tensions, and update trade rules to reflect challenges of state-led economies and new technologies. In the past year, ASPI published two reports in this space, including a review of the Asian trade landscape authored by a commission of former senior Asian trade officials; convened a high-level Track II dialogue and briefings of senior officials across the United States and Asia; and engaged in significant media commentary on the U.S.-China trade dispute, Asian responses to U.S. protectionist actions, and ongoing trade negotiations in the region.

• **Addressing the North Korea Security Challenge.** In an effort to de-escalate tensions and find viable paths forward on the Korean Peninsula, ASPI engaged in Track II diplomacy and briefings of senior U.S., South Korean, Japanese, and Chinese policymakers. Significant public engagement and debate included regular media commentary and major events throughout Asia Society’s global network and beyond with former nuclear negotiators, former North Korean officials, and current and former officials from the region.

• **Working toward a Northeast Asian Carbon Market.** This initiative has designed strategies for China, Japan, and South Korea’s economies to link carbon markets and reduce greenhouse gas emissions with greater flexibility and lower costs than current systems allow. ASPI published three policy reports and roadmaps toward the creation of a future-linked market, and convened multiple dialogues and capacity-building exercises across Asia and Europe on market connection.
• **Regional Architecture: Preserving the Long Peace in Asia:** Through a high-level dialogue of former senior policymakers across the Asia-Pacific, ASPI crafted recommendations to strengthen regional institutions and create mechanisms for managing tensions and security threats across the Asia Pacific. Along with media commentary and policymaker briefings, ASPI launched a policy report titled *Preserving the Long Peace in Asia*.

• **Advancing Myanmar's Transition:** This body of work, begun at Asia Society in 2009, seeks to strengthen relations between Myanmar, its neighbors, and the West, and to support Myanmar’s economic and political development. Through analysis and a report published in June 2018, as well as events, dialogues, and media commentary, ASPI continues to support the strengthening of Myanmar’s democratic institutions, and advocate for increased engagement with the United States and multilateral organizations.

• **Exploring the U.S.-ASEAN Partnership:** This working group series convened stakeholders from the U.S. Congress, Southeast Asian embassies, think tanks, and the private sector to discuss future opportunities in U.S.-ASEAN cooperation. The work culminated in a paper that explored current challenges facing the U.S.-ASEAN partnership and recommended next steps to U.S. and Southeast Asian policymakers.

• **Engaging NextGen Asia:** This initiative aims to provide a platform for U.S. audiences to hear from their peer group of emerging Asian leaders, and to build a broader trans-Pacific network of thought leaders in the fields of politics, business, journalism, and government. As part of this body of work, ASPI established the *AsiaX* speaker series, a D.C.-based quarterly salon series, and a new series of podcasts featuring emerging leaders from across Asia.

**ASPI Metrics of Success in 2018**

- Ranked **#49** among U.S.-based think tanks, out of nearly 2,000
- Ranked **#92** among all foreign policy think tanks worldwide*
- Published and disseminated **9 policy analysis and recommendations reports**
- Secured approximately **1,000 media mentions and appearances** in major, global outlets including the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Nikkei*, *Politico*, CNN, BBC, CNBC, FOX plus new digital media channels such as Axios. The cumulative audience reach of these media appearances is **well into the millions**
- Convened or delivered major speeches at **more than 200 events** across the globe
- Institutional and staff **social media followings total over 3.5 million** people and organizations globally. Additionally, ASPI’s discrete **social media following/impressions have grown by 50%** compared to the year prior.

*Source: University of Pennsylvania annual think tank rankings*
Across the Asia Society global network, Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign and Finance Ministers, and other global dignitaries appeared on our stages. Newly re-elected Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Korean President Moon Jae-in were among those who spoke in New York; newly-elected Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison addressed Asia Society Australia; Ban Ki-Moon and Jim Yong Kim, former leaders of the United Nations and the World Bank, respectively, addressed Asia Society Hong Kong, and former U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz delivered a speech at Asia Society Northern California. The Asia Society global network was home to seminal programs on North Korea, including a special series held by Asia Society Switzerland and ongoing programs at Asia Society Korea.

The global reach of these events—typically attended in person by anywhere from 100-250 people and watched by thousands—soared into the millions factoring in digital reach. Nowhere was this more evident than during U.N. General Assembly sessions featuring a half dozen Asian leaders. Kevin Rudd’s conversation with Malaysia’s Mahathir drew nearly 300,000 views on our YouTube channel; in the aggregate, UNGA programs reached more than 800,000 viewers and media attention—on platforms with hundreds of thousands of users—sent the overall number of engagements with Asia Society to the vicinity of ten million.

No other organization of our size – and perhaps no organization of any size – can boast of the experience, expertise, and impact that the global Asia Society has brought to crucial issues, in this critical time in Asia.
When John D Rockefeller 3rd founded the Asia Society more than six decades ago, arts and culture was at the heart of his vision for the institution. In this realm, the Asia Society – and its audiences – have enjoyed a remarkable year.

Visitors to our three major gallery spaces in Hong Kong, Houston, and New York saw mesmerizing and engaging art from across Asia, and from across the centuries. In New York, Asia Society Museum’s two major exhibitions drew rave reviews and led dynamic seasons of programming featuring engaging speakers and performers that electrified new audiences.

**Unknown Tibet: The Tucci Expeditions and Buddhist Painting** featured 50 stunning Tibetan masterpiece paintings collected by Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci during eight expeditions to Tibet between 1926 and 1948, shown with archival photographs of his journeys. The exhibition was the centerpiece of a season-long series titled *Buddhism & Beyond*, exploring Buddhism, its practice, and its popularity in contemporary culture. Highlights included a conversation with contemporary Tibetan artist Gonkar Gyatso, a dialogue with multimedia artist Shen Wei, and a discussion between Aetna Chairman Mark T. Bertolini and *New York Times* journalist David Gelles about the power of meditation and mindfulness in the workplace.

In fall, the **Season of India** was inspired by *The Progressive Revolution: Modern Art for a New India*, featuring over 80 works by a dozen artists created in the years following the 1947 declaration of independence. Critics lavished praise on the exhibition—the first major show to focus on the Progressive Artists’ Group—calling it “remarkable”… “lovely”… “a must-see.” Working with *Asia Society India*, the museum seeded early interest in the show leading up to a series of events during opening week—including a festive gala celebration at the Pierre Hotel— which brought over 1,500 enthusiastic visitors, including leaders from Indian business, technology, government, and the arts.

Amitabh Kant, top economic advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said of the show:

“Absolutely phenomenal…mind boggling. The most unique, the most fascinating and the finest exhibition of the Progressive artists of India that one can ever see.”
Related programs included Reimagining Indian Dance: Moving Forward with dancers/choreographers Sheetal Gandhi, Hari Krishnan, Parul Shah and Kuldeep Singh as well as the Jaipur Literature Festival, held in New York and also at Asia Society Texas.

Beyond our themed seasons, performing arts presentations in New York featured Chinese artists and included Overlord, a music-focused interdisciplinary performance by pipa player Yu Bin as part of the Shanghai International Festival RAW as well as Music and Dance of Yogyakarta, featuring Javanese court dancers and musicians and held in conjunction with remarks by Hamengkubuwono X, the Sultan of Yogyakarta in Indonesia. For the third year, Asia Society hosted the Lahore Literary Festival in New York, featuring wide-ranging political, literary, and art discussions.

Acquiring and Commissioning New Works

2018 also brought the launch of Creative Common Ground: Catalyzing Artistic Encounters in Contemporary Art and Performance to commission, produce, and present new artistic works. These included Fragility: An Exploration of Polyrhythms by Susie Ibarra developed in partnership with the Pioneer Works’ Residency Program; and This ember state by Samita Sinha, held in one of the museum’s galleries and described by the Village Voice as “a series of intimate shows that burst with feral energy.”
Hong Kong and Houston

At Asia Society Hong Kong, retrospectives honored two utterly different artists: Robert Indiana and Pan Yu-Lin. In LOVE Long: Robert Indiana and Asia, memorable works by Indiana, a legendary American artist, were displayed along with pieces by eight artists and collectives from Asia. Meanwhile, Song of Spring: Pan Yu-Lin in Paris was the first major presentation in Hong Kong of the artist. Liminal Encounters offered Hong Kong visitors an outdoor art journey that explored the ways in which technology integrates the virtual world with real life, through artworks that make use of augmented reality. Featured artists included Kikuji Kawada, Bharti Kher, Lee Bul, Toshio Shibata and Sarah Sze, along with commissioned installations by Carla Chan, Peter Nelson and Trevor Yeung.

Meanwhile in Houston, visitors to Asia Society Texas found artist Ayomi Yoshida, building on her family background in woodblock printing, with large-scale installations incorporating prints to achieve dramatic transformations of space. New Cartographies delved into the unique ways in which contemporary artists such as Tiffany Chung, Allan deSouza, Li Songsong, and Sohei Nishino have incorporated maps into their work, looking at topics such as urbanization, migration, environmental change, and colonial legacies.
SIGNATURE MOMENTS

There are times at Asia Society when our work across our disciplines and global locations comes together in spectacular and impactful fashion.

Asia 21 – The Summit

For the first time our Asia 21 Young Leaders Network held its annual summit in Manila, hosted by the Asia Society Philippines team and co-chairs Doris Ho and Fernando Zobel de Ayala.

The remarkable group of 2018 Asia 21 fellows includes: the founder of the Afghanistan Women’s Chamber of Commerce; the Deputy Finance Minister of Mongolia; the founder of the digital literacy group Code For Nepal; the leading LGBT activist in Vietnam; the journalist and host of “Mind Over Matter Bhutan”; Air BnB’s top public policy official in Korea; and an Indian tech entrepreneur who has created a hi-tech glove that “reads” text for the blind, among other amazing Asia 21 classmates. Such diversity of geography, background and expertise are hallmarks of the Asia 21 network.

The summit program included Class of 2018 member Timothy Watts (MP from Australia), who interviewed Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo; Paulo Benigno “Bam” Aquino, who gave a talk about young leaders in the Philippines – from his perspective as both a Philippine Senator and a member of the Asia 21 Class of 2006. A conversation about countering violent extremism featured Philippine Army Lt Col Joar Herrera, Asia 21 Class of 2009, a leader in the effort to oust ISIS in Marawi; oral historian Anam Zakaria (Class of 2018), whose work to counter the narratives of extremism in Pakistan has won wide acclaim; and Maniza Wafeq (Class of 2018), who last year founded the Afghanistan Women’s Chamber of Commerce, and who argued that the empowerment of women in her country was as powerful as tool as any in the fight against extremism. A session on the opportunities, challenges, and dangers of Artificial Intelligence was led by Duncan Clark and two 2018 class members: Kalibrr Founder and CEO Paul Rivera, and Ernestine Fu, a venture capitalist with Alsop Louie Partners.

Asia 21 – Impact

The Asia 21 “Action Lab”, created in 2016 as an in-network incubator for new enterprises, met in advance of the Manila summit. Built on the resources and goodwill of the Asia 21 network, the Action Lab is seeded by a grant from an Asia 21 alumnus. Up to 20 alumni gather for a 4-day annual retreat that involves group workshops focused on solving the specific growth challenges of each organization. 14 social impact organizations are now counted as ‘graduates’, spanning eight countries in Central, South and Southeast Asia.
The Asia Game Changers

On a dazzling and inspiring night, Asia Society celebrated the fifth annual Asia Game Changer Awards, honoring Indra Nooyi, the barrier-shattering chairman and former CEO of PepsiCo, as 2018 Game Changer of the Year. The India-born Nooyi, who served as PepsiCo’s chief executive from 2006 until this fall, was recognized for her transformative stewardship of the iconic American company. Said former U.S. President Bill Clinton, presenting Nooyi with the honor: “Yes, she’s my friend, and I’d be here under any circumstances. But she’s also the real deal.” For her part, Nooyi said, “I ran a company that championed women, sustainability, health, and wellness. A company that lifted people up and built bridges. A company that did well by doing good. These were the values from my first days in India to my last days at Pepsi. They’re also the values of the Asia Society.”

Asia Society recognized eight other individuals and groups: Wang Shi, the Chinese real estate developer and advocate for environmental sustainability; Mira Rai, child soldier turned champion distance runner from Nepal; Munjed Al Muderis, a doctor who fled Iraq and became a pioneering surgeon in Australia; the founders of Koolulam, a musical initiative building bridges through song in Israel; the award-winning Afghan Girls Robotics Team; the heroic first responders who saved lives during Japan’s Fukushima nuclear disaster; the incomparably brave and determined White Helmets of Syria; and, in their first-ever appearance on American soil, survivors of Thailand’s Tham Luang caves whose rescue captivated the world. Adul Sam-on, one of the 12 Thai boys, was joined on stage by Ekkapol Chantawong, the boys’ soccer coach, and Narongsak Osatanakorn, the local governor who coordinated the international group of rescuers with efficiency and grace. “I hope this experience inspires people to start living for others,” Osatanakorn said. “That would be a game changer for the world.” The event raised more than $13 million for Asia Society’s global initiatives.

The awards dinner—and an earlier public conversation with the awardees—was seen around the world. Our Facebook Live stream of the gala garnered more than 30,000 views; the public event was seen more than 35,000 times via our YouTube channel. External press and social media attention was also strong—over a dozen media placements in outlets with a minimum audience of 500,000 along with posts on platforms such as Weibo—pushing the reach of the Game Changer brand well into the millions.

The “Other” Asia Game Changers

Our Game Changer brand continues to broaden its reach in other ways. The 2018 Asia Arts Game Changer Awards in Hong Kong, held in conjunction with Art Basel Hong Kong, was a great success by any measure. The dinner and auction raised over $900,000 for Asia Society’s global arts and culture initiatives. The event celebrated four game changers in the arts from Asia: Subodh Gupta, Shirazeh Houshiary, Ju Ming, and Park Seo-Bo. The lively auction of beautiful artworks inspired a group of Asia Society Trustees and friends of the Museum to come together and purchase one of the
auction items, teamLab’s video work *Gold Waves*, and graciously donate the work to the Asia Society Museum permanent collection in honor of the late *Washington SyCip*, a wonderful and longtime member of the Asia Society family.

In its second iteration, the *Asia Arts Game Changer Awards in India* honored *Benitha Perciyal* and *Sun Xun* with the Asia Arts Future Award and *Bose Krishnamachari* and *Riyas Komu* of the Kochi Biennale Foundation and *Arpita Singh* with the Asia Arts Vanguard Award. The festive celebration included the first-ever presentation in India of a digital work by teamLab, last year’s “Asia Arts Future” Awardee.

**U.S.-China Entertainment Summit in Los Angeles**

Now in its ninth year, the *U.S.-China Entertainment Summit* in Los Angeles, organized by *Asia Society Southern California*, was marked by the glitter of stardom. (Michelle Yeoh, Billy Bob Thornton, Lisa Lu and Xu Zheng) mingled with the synergies of the U.S. and China film industries, and the power of diversity in film. Warner Brothers CEO Kevin Tsujihara – the first Asian American to lead a Hollywood studio and the son of immigrants who were interned by the U.S. government – spoke of the “sea change across the entertainment industry,” and the recognition of the power of diversity on screen.

**Coal + Ice: Inspiring Climate Action Through Art and Ideas**

For three weeks in San Francisco, the spectacular *Coal + Ice* documentary photography exhibition and climate festival transfixed audiences in San Francisco and amplified the conversation about climate change. Featuring the work of over 40 photographers and video artists from around the world, *Coal + Ice* visually narrates the consequences triggered by the continued use of fossil fuels, from the dirty coal mines deep within the Earth to the vanishing glaciers of the Greater Himalaya. The U.S. premiere of *Coal + Ice* coincided with Governor Jerry Brown’s Global Climate Action Summit, and included a three-week festival of dance, music, spoken word, food, family activities, films, educational programming, and creative dialogue held in the enormous waterfront warehouse at Fort Mason.

*Orville Schell*, Arthur Ross Director of the *Asia Society Center on U.S.-China Relations* and his team worked for more than a year to produce the event, which included among its participants...
and speakers: California Governor Jerry Brown, former Vice President Al Gore, Chinese entrepreneur and environmental champion (and 2018 Asia Game Changer) Wang Shi, New York Times columnist Tom Friedman, chef and author Alice Waters, and many more. The events drew thousands of visitors and widespread media coverage, in the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, Inkstone and other media.

The Osborn Elliott Prize: Honoring Courageous Journalists

Since 2003, Asia Society has awarded the prestigious Osborn Elliott Prize for Excellence in Journalism on Asia to recognize enterprising reporting in the region. This year, the prize went to Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo of Reuters for coverage of violence against the Rohingya. It was the first time in the prize's 15-year history that the winners were jailed for their work. Though their imprisonment-prompted an international outcry, they have yet to be released.

Asia Society Japan Center

2018 also brought a new – and long-anticipated – member of Asia Society’s global family: Asia Society Japan. In March, we signed an MOU to partner with the International House of Japan, an effort led by new Trustees James Kondo and Thierry Porte, and marked by an event where Trustee Charles Rockefeller, grandson of Asia Society founder John D. Rockefeller 3rd, spoke about the family’s legacy in Asia. A formal launch followed in October, with Caroline Kennedy, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan and an Asia Society trustee, moderating a discussion that included four Asia 21 Young Leaders on the next generation of public service. Asia Society Lulu and Anthony Wang President and CEO Josette Sheeran engaged in a “fireside chat” with Shinjirō Koizumi, a member of Japan's House of Representatives and, since August 2017, chief deputy secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Launch events also included discussions with Asia Society Policy Institute President Kevin Rudd and Vice Presidents Wendy Cutler and Danny Russel. Joining our team just ahead of the launch was newly-minted Asia Society Japan Executive Director Sawako Hidaka.
The Center for Global Education at Asia Society continued to expand the reach and impact of global competence education around the world through a range of groundbreaking work in 2018.

In January, the Center released a publication with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Teaching for Global Competence in a Rapidly Changing World, which sets forward a new framework for global competence education aligned with the first worldwide assessment of global competence in OECD's 2018 PISA test. The publication was launched at major education events reaching an estimated 90 ministers of education and skills, including the Education World Forum and the International Summit on the Teaching Profession, and was the most-downloaded publication on AsiaSociety.org this year.

Following this release, the Center for Global Education and EdPlus at Arizona State University (ASU) launched a series of online professional development courses to help educators teach for global competence and meet the growing demand to address the skills gap around the world. Since launching the courses, over 700 educators from more than 85 countries have enrolled. Ninety-one percent of those educators plan to apply what they learned, and 84 percent said they would recommend the program to others. The launch of the courses also helped drive traffic to AsiaSociety.org, bringing in an additional 165,000 pageviews over five months.

The Center for Global Education also launched a co-branded report during the 2018 United Nations General Assembly sessions, at an event held at Asia Society New York. Investing in Knowledge Sharing to Advance SDG 4 was co-authored with a coalition of organizations – Results for Development, Teach For All, the Boston Consulting Group, and the World Innovation Summit for Education – to catalyze more and better investment in global knowledge sharing in education.

The importance of education for global competence was highlighted recently in a joint report from the Global Business Coalition for Education and Deloitte called Preparing tomorrow’s workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The report outlines recommendations for the business community to address the youth skills gap and develop the workforce of the future.

Other highlights of the year include the annual Summer Institute of the International Studies Schools Network, and the annual National Chinese Language Conference, held this year in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The next Global Cities Education Network symposium will be held in Melbourne, Australia, from March 12–15, 2019.
APPRECIATION

Asia Society appreciates the support of our members and friends. You make what we do possible.