



Press Release

The first LGBTQ exhibition in an art museum in Asia will debut at MOCA Taipei

"Spectrosynthesis - Asian LGBTQ Issues and Art Now" brings around 50 LGBTQ works by 22 artists together

(Hong Kong, 20 June 2017) Co-hosted by Sunpride Foundation and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (MOCA), "Spectrosynthesis - Asian LGBTQ Issues and Art Now" (Spectrosynthesis) will be held at MOCA from 9 September to 5 November 2017. This groundbreaking show will be the first exhibition dedicated to LGBTQ themes to go on show at an art museum in Asia. Around 50 works created by 22 artists from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, Singapore, and also ethnic Chinese artists based in the United States and Canada will be presented. Works by a diverse range of modern and contemporary artists will be featured including, HO Chun Ming (b.1963, Taiwan), Jimmy ONG (b.1964, Singapore), SHIY De Jinn (1923-1981, Taiwan), Wu TSANG (b.1982, USA), TSENG Kwong Chi (1950-1990, Hong Kong), WANG Jun Jieh (b.1963, Taiwan), WANG Liang Yin (b.1979, Taiwan), Martin WONG (1946-1999, USA), Xiyadie (b.1963, Mainland China), YAN Xing (b.1986, Mainland China), Samson YOUNG (b.1979, Hong Kong), and more. Celebrated Singaporean artist Ming WONG (b. 1971) and Taiwanese artist YU Cheng-ta (b. 1983) will co-present a live performance during the opening on 8 September 2017 and a video documenting the performance will be shown later in the exhibition.

Titled "Spectrosynthesis", which combines two words "spectrum" and "photosynthesis" and explores "spectrum of light" as a central theme, the exhibition will shine a light on the LGBTQ community's rich and diverse history. The rainbow, as seen in a spectrum, is a symbol of the LGBTQ community, representing its diversification. Light is a fundamental source of energy for life on Earth, nurturing all living species fairly and equally, and offering them life, hope and a future. Such qualities are synonymous with the principle purpose of the exhibition's co-organizer Sunpride Foundation, which supports artistic practice and promotes equal rights for LGBTQ individuals through meticulous research and discourse on contemporary art.

As the very first thematic exhibition on LGBTQ issues at a government-run art museum in a Chinese society, "Spectrosynthesis" features works of art that span nearly half a century of creation. Brought together under the vision of independent curator Sean HU from Taiwan, the exhibition presents a slice of art history particularly looking at the life stories and related issues of the post-war Chinese LGBTQ community. The exhibits touch upon a profusion of subject matters such as identity, equality, mass media's propensity to hunt for novelty, social oppression, stigmatization, lust, as well as life and death. The works focus not only on the real predicaments that LGBTQ people may be caught in on a daily basis, but also provide a comment on the evolving social structure which is very likely to change in the foreseeable future.

Some of the highlight works in the show will include “Muted Situation #5: Muted Chorus”, presented by Hong Kong sound artist Samson YOUNG. This single-channel HD video work will present a stage performance of the entirety of a choral composition without projecting the musical notes, suppressing the conscious sound-producing constituent of the performance. As a result other sounds will be revealed, such as the inhale of the singers, the sound that their bodies produce, and the rattling of the music scores. A similar work of Samson YOUNG is currently on view at the Venice Biennale, co-presented by M+ and Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), representing Hong Kong. Taiwanese artist HO Chun-ming will present a selection of 13 sets of paintings (2 drawings per set) from his series “Man Hole”, resulted from a series of interviews he has been conducting since 2014. During the interviews, he invites the participants to draw on white background paper, telling their own stories, and the artist then draws his response to them on black background paper. The “Man Hole” series represents and reveals people’s memories, desires, secrets, losses and explorations. In addition, four pieces of works will be newly created for the show by Ming WONG, CHUANG Chih-Wei, CHEN Chien-Pei and Jun-Jieh WANG.

The exhibition builds on from similar thematic exhibitions that are beginning to become more commonplace in the West. In 2017, Tate Modern and Tate Britain, two prestigious British museums, both organized large-scale thematic exhibitions of several LGBTQ artists to honour and highlight their artistic achievements without discrimination due to their sexual orientation, well-reflecting the British society’s long-term efforts and accomplishments in promoting human rights. However, such exhibitions and research projects have been conspicuously absent from the Chinese art scene, and this is the first presentation of an exhibition of this kind in a government-run museum in Asia. Taiwan is widely recognized as the most progressive and supportive centre of LGBTQ rights in the region and is highly likely to become the first Asian territory to legalize same-sex marriage. “Spectrosynthesis” is therefore a timely presentation of LGBTQ art at MOCA Taipei and provides not only a parallel movement in response to the concurrent European counterparts, but also marks a historical event in itself with paramount social significance in Asia.

“Spectrosynthesis is the first exhibition I have curated related to LGBTQ issues. During the last three years while preparing for the exhibition, I have witnessed a growth in discussions and debates on LGBTQ issues in Asia. The recent constitutional decision in favour of same-sex marriage in Taiwan is of particular significance. Spectrosynthesis will present a wide range of works which relate to the topic of LGBTQ in various ways. The exhibition hopes to stimulate thoughts and challenge values and perspectives on human equality. All parties involved in the exhibition take love as their starting point and I hope this will be the beginning of an open dialogue on the topic.” said Sean HU, curator of the exhibition.

“We are thrilled to co-host this exhibition with MOCA Taipei, a museum which embraces the spirit of innovation and challenging new issues. Sunpride Foundation has been supporting the LGBTQ rights movement in many different ways, and we feel deeply that the movement needs both legal sanction and, more importantly, social inclusion. It is our hope that ‘Spectrosynthesis’ will have a positive impact on the general public, not just in Taiwan but across Asia, as further step towards fostering a more equitable and harmonious society.” said Patrick SUN, the Executive Director of Sunpride Foundation.

“Contemporary art should be more than just pleasing to the eye. It should also respond to topical issues as a means to communicate cultural values and open up dialogues with the public. Through art, the citizen can broaden their vision and better understand the world,” said PAN Sheau Shei, Director of MOCA Taipei.

About the Curator: Sean HU

Born in Taiwan, Sean HU graduated from The Broadcasting & Television Section of Mass Communication Department, Fu Jen Catholic University. Before receiving an M.A. in Art Administration at the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, in 1998. HU worked as a curator for Fubon Art Foundation and the Director General of the Association of Visual Arts in Taiwan. At present HU is adjunct lecturer at the National Taiwan University of Arts, a board member for the Jut Foundation for Arts & Architecture, Adviser of the Association of Visual Arts in Taiwan, Taipei City Government Policy Consultant, VT Art salon Co-Founder, as well as Doubles Square Curator and the CEO of Hu's Art Company. HU was chosen for "VOGUE PEOPLE 101" in 2009, elected Asian curator representative for "Shanghai Art Fair" in 2008, and was the visual arts field representative to "Taiwan and French art professionals short-term exchange and visiting project" in 2005. Additionally, HU's curated exhibitions have been critically acclaimed, winning such awards as "The 9th Taipei Urban Landscape Award" in 2010, "The 9th Art & Business Awards" in 2007, and the First Prize of "The 1st Public Art Awards" in 2003.

About Sunpride Foundation

Sunpride Foundation was launched in 2014 with the mission to embrace and promote the rich creative history of LGBTQ community. The foundation aims to foster a stronger, healthier and more equitable world for LGBTQ people and their allies; and to encourage and inspire a generation of young artists to take action and create positive changes to the LGBTQ experience by exhibiting and preserving art that speaks to the society at large.

About MOCA Taipei

Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Taipei was inaugurated on 26 May 2001, it is the only museum of contemporary art in Taiwan. The red brick building was built in 1921 and was a former Japanese elementary school. The museum's mission is to promote diverse artistic creation and exhibitions, to encourage the public's new perspective and thinking and to continue injecting creativity and energy into the city. Through presenting exhibitions of both international and local Taiwanese artists, MOCA commits to inspire and encourage heterogeneous voices, opening more possibilities to collectively create an unlimited future for Taiwanese arts and culture.

The museum was managed and operated by Contemporary Art Foundation, a civil organization founded by entrepreneurs and commissioned by the government for the first seven years. Taipei Cultural Foundation of Taiwan Government took over the management and operation of the museum in 2008, making further efforts to engage national and international attention on contemporary art, and create a platform for diverse culture and interdisciplinary creativity.

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