

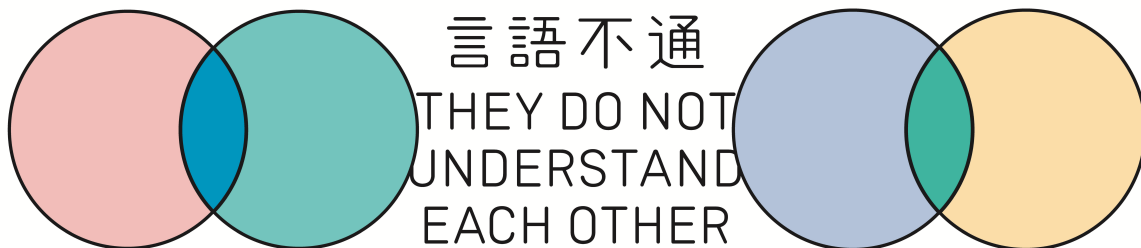
TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY SHOWCASES *THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER*

New exhibition co-presented by the National Museum of Art, Osaka and Singapore Art Museum

Hong Kong, 25 May 2020, Monday

當代藝術展覽 CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION

大館當代美術館 TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY
香港中環荷李活道 10 號大館賽馬會藝方
JC Contemporary, Tai Kwun, 10 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong



Tai Kwun Contemporary is proud to announce a new group exhibition *They Do Not Understand Each Other*, which runs from 25 May to 13 September 2020 at Tai Kwun's art galleries in JC Contemporary. Co-presented by the National Museum of Art, Osaka (NMAO) and Singapore Art Museum (SAM), *They Do Not Understand Each Other* considers what it means to engage with one another, and looks at the potential of art in facilitating understanding.

They Do Not Understand Each Other is curated by Yuka Uematsu, Curator at the National Museum of Art, Osaka; and Dr. June Yap, Director, Curatorial, Collections and Programmes at Singapore Art Museum.

The exhibition title is inspired by an artwork by Tsubasa Kato, *They Do Not Understand Each Other*. On a small island that lies between Korea and Japan, two figures are seen performing a simple task together while not comprehending a word uttered by the other. The success of the artist and his Korean collaborator in this act of cooperation appears to have been achieved, if not by virtue of their good humour and patience with each other, then by an understanding that exceeds the plane of language.

Yet this English title was not the first. Originally captioned 言葉が通じない (*kotoba ga tsūjinai*) in Japanese, the artist's intent was to mark a lack of communication, which was then translated into the English title "They Do Not Understand Each Other" — for a broader reflection upon an absence of dialogue, in the context of the geographical location that is the subject of the

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artwork. Its subsequent Chinese translation — 言語不通 (Cantonese: *yihnyúh bāt tūng*; Putonghua: *yányǔ bùtōng*) — is meant to build upon and extend its reference of exchange to the subject of culture (within which language is central), with this succession of translations also speaking to the commutability of culture and the possibility of its obverse — understanding.

If the premise of culture is representation, then the promise of cultural exchange — as one might reasonably suppose — is understanding. But what underlies this promise of understanding?

Tobias Berger, Head of Art at Tai Kwun, said, “This is a unique chance to see some of the most contemporary works of these two major Asian museums. Taking the idea of understanding and collaboration as a foundation, the exhibition also shows how much intangible artworks like photography, video and performance entered important institutions and are now seen as an essential part of our cultural heritage.”

Yuka Uematsu, Curator for NMAO, said, “On behalf of the National Museum of Art, Osaka, we are delighted to bring the exhibition to Hong Kong at Tai Kwun. Cultural exchange is not about perfect understanding, but rather opening up a dialogue via unique perspectives. Together with SAM and Tai Kwun, we welcome everyone in Hong Kong to come and experience this unparalleled showcase of artworks that represent the power of their respective mediums.”

Dr. June Yap, Director, Curatorial, Collections and Programmes for SAM, said, “The subject of understanding and exchange goes beyond the individual artworks, to a dialogue between artworks, and a convergence at a curatorial level on the subject of interrelation that resonated with both Yuka and myself. This is a connection that we also felt with Tai Kwun via Tobias Berger and his team, whom we appreciate for enabling this collaboration. The promise is thus fulfilled, not merely by what is said or expressed, but also in simply the relation that exists. A relation that exists between us, between things, even between ideas. On behalf of our curatorial partners NMAO, Tai Kwun and SAM, we hope this will be the experience and understanding that visitors will take with them from the exhibition.”

They Do Not Understand Each Other presents 2 new commissions and 23 artworks from the collections of NMAO and SAM. These two institutions have built national collections of art with their regional foci — Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, respectively — and have been collecting contemporary art widely. Through encounters between the two collections and the newly commissioned works, this exhibition considers the negotiations and expectations of culture.

The diverse range of artworks include videos, mixed-media works, paintings, sculptures, textile, stories, performances, kinetic installations, and photography, with artists hailing from Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Puerto Rico, and beyond, each bringing a unique perspective on representation and cultural exchange. Here, the artists appear as mediators, even as they perform for and from within the frame of cultural presentation and exchange. In observing culture and the nature of culture, these artworks reinforce the agency of art and its power to represent.

Artists on show:

- Saori AKUTAGAWA (MADOKORO) (Japan)
- Jennifer ALLORA & Guillermo CALZADILLA (Puerto Rico)
- Agnes ARELLANO (Philippines)
- chi too (Malaysia)
- Heman CHONG (Singapore)
- CHUA Chye Teck (Singapore)
- HO Tzu Nyen (Singapore)
- Sojung JUN (South Korea)
- Tsubasa KATO (Japan)
- Charles LIM (Singapore)
- Kumi MACHIDA (Japan)
- Jun NGUYEN-HATSUSHIBA (Japan/Vietnam)
- Wit PIMKANCHANAPONG (Thailand)
- Kohei SEKIGAWA (Japan)
- Kazuo SHIRAGA (Japan)
- Akira TAKAYAMA (Japan)
- THAN Sok (Cambodia)
- Ming WONG (Singapore)

Visitor information

They Do Not Understand Each Other runs from 25 May to 13 September 2020 at Tai Kwun's art galleries, at JC Contemporary. Admission is free. A 360° virtual gallery will soon be on view on Tai Kwun's website for local and international audiences to experience the exhibition online.

Along with *They Do Not Understand Each Other*, visitors are welcome to *My Body Holds Its Shape*, an intriguing contemporary art exhibition that walks through limits and restraints, and is curated by Xue Tan.

The entire site of Tai Kwun is open to the public daily from 10am to 11pm, while JC Contemporary is open from 11am to 8pm daily (except Monday from 2pm to 8pm). Visitors are encouraged to book their free Tai Kwun Pass online via https://www.taikwun.hk/en/visit/taikwun_pass prior to visiting for guaranteed admission. Walk-ins are also welcome, subject to site capacity conditions. Please note that appropriate sanitary measures are in place with regards to the ongoing coronavirus situation.

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Editor's notes:

Please [click here](#) to download the exhibition guidebook and hi-res images with captions.

About [Tai Kwun — Centre for Heritage and Arts](#)

Opened in May 2018, Tai Kwun — Centre for Heritage and Arts is the fruition of a joint partnership between The Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Government of the HKSAR to conserve and revitalise the buildings of the Central Police Station (CPS) compound. The site is managed and operated by The Jockey Club CPS Limited.

The CPS compound comprises three declared monuments (the former Central Police Station, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison), with a total of 16 heritage buildings and some outdoors spaces, on a 13,600 square-metre site in the heart of Central. An international-grade non-commercial art gallery and an auditorium have been added to contribute to the adaptive reuse of the site.

Tai Kwun is the colloquial name used by police officers and the public alike to refer to the former police headquarters and the surrounding CPS compound. The name has been adopted by The Jockey Club CPS Limited as a reminder of the historical importance of the site.

In 2019, Tai Kwun received the Award of Excellence in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation in recognition of its achievement in conservation and revitalisation. This is the Awards' highest honour.

About [National Museum of Art, Osaka](#)

A unique object based on an image of bamboo greets the visitor to NMAO, a completely underground art museum. The NMAO collection of about 8,000 works by Japanese and overseas artists predominantly from 1945 onwards is Japan's largest collection of contemporary art. The collection is displayed in fascinating thematic exhibitions that change several times a year, providing an introduction to the important artists and works essential for an understanding of contemporary art.

About [Singapore Art Museum](#)

Singapore Art Museum 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 School. The museum buildings are currently closed for a major building redevelopment, with museum programming continuing at partner venues until the buildings re-open.

SAM is the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the

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Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. To find out more, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg.

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