

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Renowned scholar Dr. Vishakha Desai, Institute of Asian Art council members and local arts community to discuss art and Asian diasporas at Inaugural Symposium

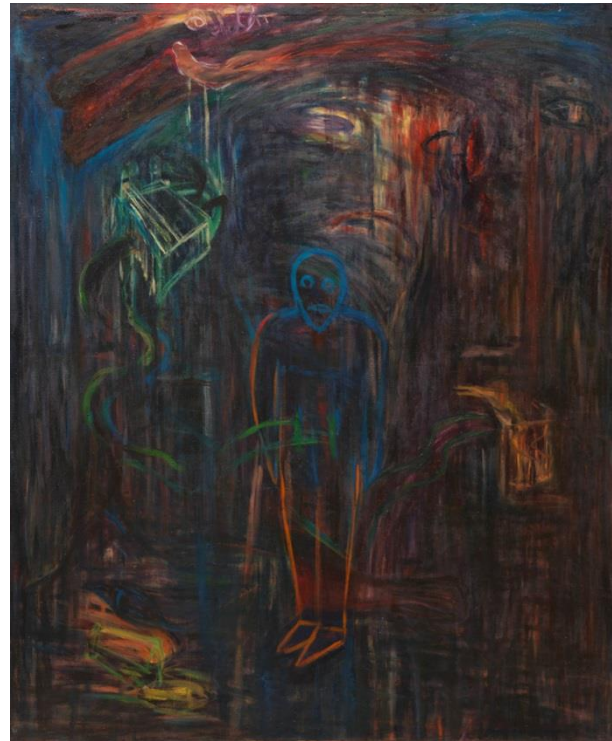


Photo credit: (left): Keynote speaker and Asian art scholar Dr. Vishakha Desai, Senior Advisor for Global Affairs, Columbia University and President Emerita of the Asia Society, New York (right) Josh Hon, *HK as is, as/is: asism*, 1987, oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Artist

Vancouver, BC, May 1, 2017 – The Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to announce **Deconstructing Diaspora: Institute of Asian Art Inaugural Symposium**, from **May 18 to 19, 2017**.

The Institute of Asian Art Inaugural Symposium will consider how contemporary art and its institutions participate in the construction and experience of Asian diasporas in Vancouver and elsewhere, beginning with a keynote address by world leading arts and culture scholar Dr. Vishakha Desai. Dr. Desai is President Emerita of the Asia Society, where she worked for twenty-two years in several capacities, initially as the Director of its Museum. A scholar of traditional Asian art, she is widely credited with presenting some of the first major contemporary Asian art exhibitions in this country and commissioning major performances by Asian and Asian American artists. A recipient of five honorary degrees, Dr. Desai was appointed by President Obama to the National Board of Museums and Library Services in 2012. She is a frequent speaker at international forums and is recognized for her leadership in presenting contemporary Asian art and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

As a platform for exchange from many national perspectives, local and visiting speakers will reflect on art and museums as a space where people come together at the intersections of the local, the national and the global. The symposium connects the Asian Art Council with recognized members of the local art community and audiences for a generative exchange of ideas.

Visiting Asian Art Council members include David Chau, collector, Shanghai; Dr. Vishakha Desai, scholar, New York; and Roobina Karode, Director/Chief Curator of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi. This council was established in 2015 to advise and guide the activities of the Institute of Asian Art—the Gallery’s comprehensive initiative to advance scholarship and public appreciation of art from Asia through exhibitions, public programs and collection acquisition.

DAY 1 – Keynote Address: Dr. Vishakha N. Desai

Global Culture in Contested Terrains: The Role of Artists and Institutions

When: Thursday, May 18 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: UBC Robson Square, Theatre C300

In the early 1990s, it was finally being understood that artists from the non-western world had a special place in the east-west exchange of ideas and values, because of the unique capacity of art to be both a *place* and to be *timeless*. Now, more than twenty-five years later, a sense of retrenchment—the building of walls and barriers, physically and virtually—is pervasive on many shores. In these contested times, how can artists (and art institutions) continue to push boundaries and flourish in societies that may want to push them aside? Using images of artworks by Asian and Asian-American contemporary artists over the last twenty-five years, Dr. Vishakha Desai will examine the role of artists and arts institutions in today’s constraining environment.

DAY

2 – Speaker Presentations

When: Friday, May 19, 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Vancouver Art Gallery, Room 4East

Curator Tarah Hogue begins the day with an exploration of movement and migration as an additional (rather than alternative) frame for thinking through Indigenous experience. Her talk will consider how diaspora can be considered as a state of being and orientation toward the future.

Artist Jin-me Yoon speculates on significant shifts in her art practice within the context of nationalism and transnationalism, the local and the global, and the self and the other, in order to ask how we can generate spaces for exchange.

In the afternoon, Council members give short presentations that speak to their experiences and observations of Asian diasporas in cities such as Shanghai, New Delhi and New York, as well as the significance of art institutions in providing cross-cultural encounters that recognize and reflect their diasporic communities.

To conclude, final insights and reflections will be offered by local artist Josh Hon and writer Sirish Rao, with closing remarks by Gallery Trustee Hank Bull.

PRESENTING ASIAN ART COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David Chau, collector, Shanghai

Roobina Karode, Director/Chief Curator, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi

Dr. Vishakha Desai, scholar, New York

LOCAL SPEAKERS:

Tarah Hogue, curator and writer, grunt gallery
Josh Hon, artist
Sirish Rao, writer, co-founder of the Indian Summer Festival
Jin-me Yoon, artist and Professor, School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University

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About the Institute of Asian Art

Building upon the Vancouver Art Gallery's longstanding commitment to fostering cultural connections throughout Asia, the Institute of Asian Art is a comprehensive initiative to advance scholarship and public appreciation of art from China, India, Japan and Korea through exhibitions, public programs and permanent collections dedicated to the visual arts of Asia.

About the Vancouver Art Gallery

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most respected and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's innovative ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on the historical and contemporary art of British Columbia and international centres, with special attention to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists and the art of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art founded in 2014. The Gallery's programs also explore the impacts of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.