

## The NTMoFA announces the appointment of Yao Jui-Chung as the curator of the 2020 Taiwan Biennial

Organized by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (NTMoFA), the Taiwan Biennial is going to celebrate its 7th edition this year. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that caused museum temporary closure and exhibition postponement around the globe, the Taiwan Biennial will be on view on 17 October 2020 as scheduled, continuing to enrich global contemporary art from the Taiwanese perspective. Following its practice of the 2019 Asian Art Biennial that appointed artists as the curators, the NTMoFA invites Taiwanese artist Yao Jui-Chung to curate the Taiwan Biennial this year. By virtue of Yao's lifelong devotion to the issues about places, history and subjectivity, the NTMoFA expects to transmute curatorial practice into a creative action or method, whereby the curator can engage in a closer dialogue with the participating artists, experiment on a distinct exhibition mode, and create an unrivaled artistic experience.

Treating "Sub-zoology" as its theme and the "Buddhist path of reincarnation into animals" as its entry point, along with its reference to the ten types of sentient beings in the *Diamond Sutra*, the 2020 Taiwan Biennial seeks to cogitate upon the long-term human plunderage and dominance over natural creatures as well as to reflect on how humans can co-exist with other sentient beings in the post-pandemic era from the angle of the mutation of viruses and their transmission between humans and animals, insofar as to echo and extend the ecological and environmental issues in the Anthropocene that have come under the spotlight at many international biennials. Comprising seven sub-themes (incl. "Sacrifice and Salvation," "Hidden History of Bio-Trade," "Portraits of Anonymous War Heroes," "Laboratory/Operating Room/Specimen Room," "Festival/Green Field/Building Coverage Ratio," "Beast Mimic/Convict," "Pet/Zoo/National Park"), this biennial not only manifests transdisciplinary experimentation in various forms (e.g., visual arts, performance art, sound art, etc.), but also sparks fertile imagination and extensive discussion with the horizons as pluralistic as broad. The NTMoFA plans to expand the scale and scope of the biennial to an unprecedented level by inviting a total of 49 artists/artist groups who present their new works at the biennial for the first time. The first nine participating artists/artist groups include Wu Chi-Yu, Lo Sheng-Wen, Ghost Mountain Ghost Shovel, Cheng Hsien-Yu, Chen Yu-Kai, Sun Pei-Mao, and Peng Yi-Hang, as well as a couple of foreign artists including Au Sow Yee and Sheryl Cheung who have an indissoluble bond with Taiwan, which clearly highlights the biennial's transdisciplinary spirit of having dialogues with international artists from the local perspective. The biennial will be followed by "Flash Mob Performance" and "Collateral Events" that foreground the cooperation between the NTMoFA and the alternative art spaces.

Collating massive historical archives of places and representing them via photographs, videos, installations and paintings, Yao focuses his artistic practice primarily on the issues concerning the national identity and subjectivity of Taiwan against its specific historical background and the trend of globalization. He has invested long-term effort in taking pictures of ruins around Taiwan since 1990. In 2010, he embarked upon the survey project on disused public property in Taiwan, which not only unmasked the society of the spectacle arising from the assorted ideological black holes on this island, but

also heightened the governmental awareness of this problem. His artistic practice, be it creation, criticism, publication or curating, has held a place in the development and agenda-setting of Taiwanese contemporary art. Scheduled to take place this October, “Sub-zoology: 2020 Taiwan Biennial” will be accompanied by fascinating side events apart from the brilliant exhibits in diverse forms. Further details will soon be released on the NTMoFA’s official website.