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Press Release

CHAT presents fourth annual Discussion Forum: Staging Textiles: Shifting Contexts from Studio to Museum



Sudo Reiko, *Paper Roll*, 2002 (Detail), Photo courtesy: Sudo Reiko/Nuno Corporation, Tokyo, Photo: Sue McNab

(Hong Kong, 24 October 2019) CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile) is pleased to announce the fourth edition of the Discussion Forum as part of its Winter Programme 2019. Titled *Staging Textiles: Shifting Contexts from Studio to Museum*, this unique cross-disciplinary international conference will run from 7 to 8 December 2019, Fabrica Atrium at The Mills.

This year's forum concurs with CHAT's winter exhibition *Sudo Reiko: Making NUNO Textiles* and explores many of the questions faced during the making of the exhibition. Accounting for the different inflections of the word 'stage', both as a mode of presentation and as phases of production, the Discussion Forum brings together 17 international speakers and moderators from disciplines as varied as curation, academia, performance, contemporary art and fashion, to explore questions of the methodology and meaning of textiles in diverse contexts. Speakers include **Karin Altmann** (Vienna), **FFIXED STUDIOS** (Hong Kong and Shanghai), **Aboubakar Fofana** (Bamako), **Mella Jaarsma** (Yogyakarta), **Kang Ya-Chu** (Taipei), **Sri Kuhnt-Saptodewo** (Vienna), **Saito Seiichi** (Tokyo), **Sudo Reiko** (Tokyo), **Sharon S Takeda** (Los Angeles), **Kennie Ting** (Singapore), **Tominaga Wataru** (Tokyo), **Kawita Vatanajankur** (Bangkok), **Iaroslav Volovod** (Moscow), **Yokoyama Ikko** (Hong Kong), **Jackie Yoong** (Singapore) and the Co-Director of CHAT, **Takahashi Mizuki**.

In this two-day Discussion Forum, speakers will be expressing and celebrating the 'shifting contexts' of textile: from textiles' utilitarian origins to textile as concept within academia, exhibitions and collections, examining its transformation from objects to be worn, to museum artifacts, to art presented on the runway or to a discipline of study. Commencing the Discussion Forum on Day 1 is an Opening Conversation between **Sudo Reiko**, featured textile designer of the Winter Programme, and **Saito Seiichi**, the artistic director of the

exhibition, in which they unveil and share their experience working together to develop the ideas and contents of *Sudo Reiko: Making NUNO Textiles*. Day 2 will begin with a featured presentation by renowned indigo dyer and artist **Aboubakar Fofana** and artist and academic **Karin Altmann** in examining how textile processes and artistic dialogues can be the stage for cultural, social and ecological dialogues.

Featured speakers also include textile and fashion curators – **Sharon S Takeda**, the Senior Curator and Head of the Costume and Textiles Department at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), **Jackie Yoong**, curator of the recently highly successful *Guo Pei: Chinese Art and Couture* exhibition at Asian Civilisations Museum and **Iaroslav Volodov**, contemporary art curator, who co-curated *The Fabric of Felicity* at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. This session will be discussing how exhibition contexts of a textile reframes its interpretation

Joining them is also **Mella Jaarsma**, the artist and co-founder of Cemeti Institute for Art and Society. Last year she participated in Hong Kong's Osage Gallery exhibition, *The Sun Teaches Us That History Is Not Everything*. She will be discussing and analysing the way textiles become media to examine power, heritage and culture, alongside **Sri Kuhnt-Saptodewo**, an academic whose research focuses on interculturality and performing arts

Hailing from Hong Kong and Shanghai is the contemporary fashion design collective **FFIXED STUDIOS**. Their collections combine fine art and fashion and have been exhibited on the runways at Tokyo, Paris and Shanghai Fashion Weeks. Sharing the stage would be **Tominaga Wataru**, a Japanese fashion designer whose artistic and fantastical fashion experimentations have won him the prestigious Grand Jury Prize Première Vision at the 31st edition of the Hyères International Festival of Fashion and Photography in 2016. Together, they will examine how experimental frameworks intercept and reorient our expectations of fashion.

Thai artist **Kawita Vatanajyankur**, known for her visceral renditions of abstract notions and artistic practice utilising her body, and Taiwanese artist **Kang Ya-Chu**, CHAT's current Artist-in-Residence, whose work explores the issues of identity, the relationship between human and nature and the social environment, will share from their experience and practice. Together, they will be speaking about how they use textile subject matter, materials and their contexts in their practice.

The Cross Talk sessions on both days will be moderated by Asian Civilisations Museum and the Peranakan Museum Group Director **Kennie Ting** and M+ Lead Curator of Design and Architecture **Yokoyama Ikko** respectively, who will open the floor to questions from the audience.

CHAT's Discussion Forum this year guarantees a diverse and exciting line-up of interdisciplinary speakers. Their interrogations and celebrations of textiles concur fittingly with the seasonal exhibition *Sudo Reiko: Making NUNO Textiles*, both events promising a fulfilling start to the CHAT Winter Programme 2019.

Discussion Forum Details:

Date: 7 December 2019 – 8 December 2019 (Saturday to Sunday)
Opening Hours: 10:30am-5:00pm
Venue: Fabrica Atrium, 4/F, The Mills, 45 Pak Tin Par Street, Tsuen Wan,
Hong Kong

To facilitate transportation, a return shuttle bus will be provided for attendees of the Discussion Forum. Please refer to our website for details and updates:
<https://www.mill6chat.org/>.

For detailed Discussion Forum programme, please see Appendix 1.

About CHAT

CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile) is a part of the heritage conservation project of The Mills, the former cotton-spinning mills of Nan Fung Textiles in Tsuen Wan. Through its multifaceted curated programmes, which include exhibitions and co-learning programmes, CHAT aims to be an art centre that weaves creative experiences for all, inviting visitors to experience the spirit of the innovative legacy of Hong Kong's textile industry and engage in new dialogues and inspirational journeys that interweave contemporary art, design, heritage and community.

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APPENDIX 1: Discussion Forum
Staging Textiles: Shifting Contexts from Studio to Museum

Day 1: 7 December 2019 (Saturday)

Time: 11:00-5:00pm (Registration starts at 10:30am)
Venue: Fabrica Atrium, The Mills Fabrica, 4/F, The Mills
Admission: 180 seats, Free, RSVP required
Language: English

Time	Topic	Speakers and Moderator
10:30-11:00am	Registration	
11:00-11:10am	Welcoming Remarks by Co-Directors, CHAT	TAKAHASHI Mizuki and TEOH Chin Chin
11:10am-12:10pm	Opening Conversation	SUDO Reiko SAITO Seiichi Moderator: TAKAHASHI Mizuki
12:10-1:10pm	Session 1 How do textiles become media to examine power, heritage and culture?	Mella JAARSMA Sri KUHNT-SAPTODEWO
1:10-2:00pm	Lunch Break	
2:00-3:30pm	Session 2 How does the exhibition context of a textile reframe its interpretation?	Sharon S TAKEDA Iaroslav VOLOVOD Jackie YOONG
3:30-3:50pm	Tea Break	
3:50-4:50pm	Cross Talk 1	Moderator: Kennie TING

Day 2: 8 December 2019 (Sunday)

Time: 11:00-5:00pm (Registration starts at 10:30am)
Venue: Fabrica Atrium, The Mills Fabrica, 4/F, The Mills
Admission: 180 seats, Free, RSVP required
Language: English

Time	Topic	Speakers and Moderator
10:30-11:00am	Registration	
11:00-11:10am	Welcoming Remarks by Co-Directors, CHAT	TAKAHASHI Mizuki and TEOH Chin Chin
11:10am-12:40pm	Feature Presentation How can textile processes and artistic dialogues be used to create a space for cultural, social and ecological responsibility?	Karin ALTMANN Aboubakar FOFANA
12:40-1:30pm	Lunch Break	
1:30-2:30pm	Session 3 How may experimental frameworks intercept and reorient our expectations of fashion?	TOMINAGA Wataru FFIXED STUDIOS (Kain PICKEN & Fiona LAU)
2:30-2:45pm	Tea Break	
2:45-3:45pm	Session 4 How do artists use textile subject matter, materials and their contexts to express their concerns?	Kawita VATANAJYANKUR KANG Ya-Chu
3:45-4:45pm	Cross Talk 2	Moderator: YOKOYAMA Ikko

Speakers' Profile

Karin Altmann

Karin Altmann is an Austrian artist, academic, art mediator and a senior lecturer at the Department of Textile Arts, University of Applied Arts Vienna, where she teaches on three main areas: dyeing with natural dyes, textile printing and textile production. Altmann's practice is transcultural, often working with partners from Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Japan and Ghana; her projects are also often inclusive of children, people with disabilities, refugees and women under psychological or social pressure. As both an academic and artist, she is interested in textiles as manifested in art, culture, society, and as a dynamic medium that reveals and constructs networks of material culture.

FFIXXED STUDIOS (Kain Picken and Fiona Lau)

FFIXXED STUDIOS is a contemporary, ready-to-wear label for men and women. Inspired by reimagining the everyday, the label focuses on exploring and reflecting work-life balance through artful fabrication and bold design. Founded in 2012 by Fiona Lau and Kain Picken, FFIXXED STUDIOS combines the pair's backgrounds in fine art and fashion to create pieces born from a philosophy of reinterpretation, movement and openness. Their collections have appeared at Tokyo, Paris and Shanghai Fashion Weeks and are available at international retailers.

Aboubakar Fofana

Aboubakar Fofana was born in Mali and moved to France at an early age. As a child in West Africa, he was told of stories of green leaves that made blue colours. Years later, already an established calligrapher, artist and graphic designer living in France, he recalled such stories and embarked on a dedicated journey to understand indigo and his West African heritage. Working with a living medium such as indigo, his work harnesses cycles of birth, life and decay, as well as the seasonal rhythms of nature. His indigo vats are alive, thus his challenge is to understand and work with the living organisms that live within so that they may produce a stunning array of blue tones. In addition to the traditions of fermented indigo dyeing, Fofana is also invested in the preservation of other West African textile techniques and indigenous materials.

Mella Jaarsma

Mella Jaarsma has become known for her complex costume installations and her focus on forms of cultural and racial diversity embedded within clothing, the body and food. She was born in the Netherlands in 1960 and studied visual art at Minerva Academy in Groningen (1978-1984), after which she left the Netherlands to study at the Art Institute of Jakarta (1984) and at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta (1985-1986). She has lived and worked in Indonesia ever since. In 1988, she co-founded Cemeti Art House, now called Cemeti Institute for Art and Society with Nindityo Adipurnomo, one of the first spaces for contemporary art in Indonesia, which to this day remains an important platform for young artists and art workers in the country and region.

Kang Ya-Chu

Kang Ya-Chu, is CHAT's 2019 Artist-in-Residence. Born and based in Taipei, she has been exploring in her art practices the issues of identity, the relationship between human and nature and the social environment through an extensive range of medium including mixed media sculpture, site-specific installation, land art, video, drawing, photograph, textile research and collaboration. During her time as CHAT's Artist-in-Residence, she continues her research within the context of Hong Kong, involving the narratives of former textile workers in the city.

Kang has also realised an iteration of *Dirt Carpet* for Hong Kong, an on-going performance intervention inspired by her own research on weaving mechanics and punch cards, incorporating locally found industrial materials such as charcoal, dust and red soil. Having travelled worldwide for residencies, from India and Istanbul to Portugal and the UK, Kang's works often build upon global weaving histories and reflect themes of boundary and binary opposites through the medium of textile. Her creative process embraces accidents and mutations, working with transient and natural materials to consider themes of sustainable development.

Sri Kuhnt-Saptodewo

Sri 'Jani' Kuhnt-Saptodewo is an academic born in Jakarta who has written numerous books based on her research findings and interest on themes of interculturality and performing arts. Kuhnt-Saptodewo earned a MA in German Literature in 1983 and later graduated in Culture Anthropology from the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich with a PhD in 1993. Since then, she has worked and taught at various institutions, including the prestigious Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna, where she served as the Head of Collection between 2005 and 2018. In addition to research and writing, Kuhnt-Saptodewo works on films and curatorial projects, resulting in successful exhibitions such as *Balinese Art in Transition* (2012) and *World in Motion* (2017) at the Weltmuseum Wien.

Saito Seiichi

Born in Kanagawa in 1975, Saito Seiichi began his career in New York in 2000 after graduating from Columbia University with a Master of Science in Advanced Architectural Design (MSAAD). Since then, he has been active in creative work at the Arnell Group, and returned to Japan upon being selected for the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial event. He produces works in the commercial art field which are three-dimensional and interactive while rooted in logical thought, which he cultivated through his time in architecture.

Saito has won numerous international awards since 2009. He currently serves as Director of Rhizomatiks Architecture, Tokyo, while also lecturing part-time at the Department of Graphic Design at Kyoto Seika University. He was on the 2013 D&AD Digital Design Jury, the 2014 Cannes Lions Branded Content and Entertainment Jury and Good Design Award 2015-2017 Jury. He was appointed the Milan Expo Japan pavilion theatre space director, Media Art Director at Roppongi Art Night 2015, Vice Chairman of Good Design Award 2018 and Creative Adviser of Dubai Expo 2020 Japan pavilion.

Sudo Reiko

Sudo Reiko is the Design Director of Nuno Corporation of Tokyo, an innovative textile company in Tokyo, Japan. Nuno is internationally known for interweaving traditional techniques and aesthetics with new technologies. Experimenting with various materials from silk to metal, Sudo has been concerned with the recycling and upcycling of textiles and the environmental effect of textile production.

She has participated in numerous group shows worldwide and has been the focus of exhibitions in Japan, Iceland, the UK and the US, and her works are represented in the permanent collections of many institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; and the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art Craft Gallery.

Sharon S Takeda

Sharon S Takeda is Senior Curator and Head of the Costume and Textiles Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Her major exhibitions include *Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear, 1715-2015*; *Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700-1915*;

Miracles and Mischief: Noh and Kyōgen Theater in Japan; and When Art Became Fashion: Kosode in Edo-Period Japan. The Costume Society of America has honored Takeda with two Richard Martin Awards for Excellence in the Exhibition of Costume and two Millia Davenport Publication Awards for exhibition catalogues. Additional publications include Japanese Fishermen's Coats from Awaji Island for the UCLA Fowler Museum and Edo: Art in Japan 1615-1868 for the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. She serves on the Directing Council of the Centre International d'Etude des Textiles Anciens (CIETA).

Kennie Ting

Kennie Ting is the Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Peranakan Museum, and concurrently Group Director, Museums at the National Heritage Board (NHB) Singapore, overseeing national museums and festivals managed by the NHB. As Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum, he has overseen the shift in the museum's curatorial approach from a geographical focus to a thematic, cross-cultural focus, and from an ethnographic focus to a focus on decorative arts. He has helmed recent exhibitions on the Arts of Myanmar, Korea, Angkor and Java, on the material culture of cosmopolitan Asian Port Cities, and on contemporary Chinese Couture. He is interested in the history of travel and the heritage of Asian port cities and is the author of the books, *The Romance of the Grand Tour – 100 Years of Travel in South East Asia* and *Singapore 1819 – A Living Legacy*.

Tominaga Wataru

Tominaga Wataru is a fashion designer and artist currently based in Tokyo and has lived in Helsinki, Paris and London. In 2015, upon graduation from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, he became the recipient of the prestigious Grand Jury Prize Première Vision at the 31st edition of the Hyères International Festival of Fashion and Photography. Tominaga's characteristic works involve the application of vinyl over twisted and pleated fabrics printed with maximalist designs, which unfolds on the body into surfaces crackling with vibrant colours. Through contrastive textures and prints, Tominaga confounds the binarisms of everyday social constructs; and through the fluid geometries of his unisex outfits, Tominaga merges traditional silhouettes with the contemporary, familiar with foreign.

Kawita Vatanajyankur

Kawita Vatanajyankur is an artist from Bangkok who has garnered international recognition through an artistic practice that utilises her own body, often to mimic and perform tasks otherwise carried out by tools; in the process, Vatanajyankur renders visceral the notions of manual labour and consumption, particularly as they relate to the female body within the context of her home, Thailand. Her work has been curated into prestigious shows such as *Thailand Eye* (2015) at the Saatchi Gallery, London and *Islands in the Stream* (2017) during the 57th Venice Biennale; her works are also found in various collections worldwide. She is currently being represented by Nova Contemporary, Bangkok and Antidote Organisation, Australia.

Iaroslav Volovod

Iaroslav Volovod was born in Murmansk and is now based in Moscow, where he serves as a curator at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. He graduated from the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University and received a master's degree in curatorial studies from a joint program shared between Bard College, New York, and St. Petersburg State University. He has received training from the Central Institute of Hindi, New Delhi, and Heidelberg University, Germany. Volovod was named Curator of the Year at the Innovation Prize awards, one of Russia's most prestigious contemporary art awards, for his work on *The Fabric of Felicity* (co-curated with Valentin Diaconov and Katya Lazareva), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art (2018).

Yokoyama Ikko

Yokoyama Ikko is lead curator of design and architecture at M+, Hong Kong's new museum for visual culture at West Kowloon Cultural District. Before joining M+, she was based in Stockholm and served as head of exhibitions at Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. As an independent curator and writer, Yokoyama worked on international exhibitions and projects, including *Found MUJI Sweden*, Stockholm (2016); *Japanese Design Revisited* for Helsinki Design Week (2015); and *THE FAB MIND: Hints of the Future in a Shifting World at 21_21 DESIGN SIGHT*, Tokyo (2014–2015); and regularly contributed to the periodicals *Form*, *Casa BRUTUS*, *AXIS*, *Pen*, *Esquire*, *Elle Décor* and *Studio Voice*. She has authored and co-edited a book about the legendary Swedish ceramic artist Lisa Larson, *Lisa LARSON* (Pie Books, 2011). In 2008, she co-founded Editions in Craft, a production platform that encourages collaborations among artists, designers, and craftspeople and worked on the projects mainly in South Africa and Sweden.

Jackie Yoong

Jackie Yoong is a curator of Asian Fashion and Textiles and Peranakan Art at the Asian Civilisations Museum and Peranakan Museum, Singapore. She was in the curatorial teams of the traveling exhibitions on Peranakan art to the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris (2010) and the National Museum of Korea, Seoul (2013). In Singapore, she worked on the exhibitions *Great Peranakans* (2015), *Sarong Kebaya* (2011) and *Nyonya Needlework* (2016). In 2019, she curated the special exhibition *Guo Pei: Chinese Art and Couture* and is curating the upcoming permanent gallery on Asian fashion and textiles. Yoong graduated with a MA in History of Art from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, on the SOAS-Alphawood scholarship.