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Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, appoints X Zhu-Nowell as Artistic Director and Liu Yingjiu as Director

The Museum's 2023 Exhibition Program launches in March and features new commissions by women artists from the Asian Diaspora



Left: X Zhu-Nowell; photo: Farah Al Qasimi. **Right:** Liu Yingjiu; photo: Wang Jiayi

Rockbund Art Museum (RAM), the leading contemporary art institution in Shanghai, is pleased to announce the appointment of **X Zhu-Nowell** as Artistic Director starting February, 2023. **Liu Yingjiu** assumed the role of Director in January 2023. These new appointments follow the departure of **Larys Frogier**, who will be leaving the institution after an extraordinary tenure as Director for over a decade.

Chinese-born, New York-based **X Zhu-Nowell** is a dynamic presence in the field of contemporary art and has received international acclaim for their daring support of artists and innovative curatorial projects, which foreground experimentation and intervention. Zhu-Nowell comes to the Rockbund Art Museum from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, where they have worked as a curator since 2014. RAM believes that Zhu-Nowell's intellectual rigor and imaginative approach to presenting art and artists makes them one of the most exciting curators working today, and RAM is delighted to bring their vibrant vision and leadership to the organization, especially at this time, as the museum continues to expand its focus both regionally and internationally.

On their new appointment, Zhu-Nowell remarked, "Now is a moment of renewal, reinvention and reopening at the Rockbund. At this critical moment in the museum's history, I am excited to take on the challenges and creative possibilities of being its Artistic Director. Since its establishment in 2010, RAM has not only been the beating heart of contemporary art in Shanghai, but also maintained a legacy of radical projects, always against a shifting backdrop of social and political climates, which the team and I are eager to preserve and continue. Together, we are ready to take on the ambitions and contradictions of our time through initiating new modes of research, exhibition making, and public engagement, which will expand how the museum amplifies the voices of artists with diverse creative perspectives."

Zhu-Nowell's 2023 exhibition [program](#) launches in March and features six exhibitions of women artists from the Asian diaspora: WangShui, Evelyn Taocheng Wang, Tosh Basco, Diane Severin Nguyen, Tan Jing, and Shubigi Rao. Each artist has been commissioned to create new works for their solo exhibition at the RAM, a landmark building on Shanghai's historic Bund, updated by British architect David Chipperfield in 2010. The six exhibitions will overlap throughout the year. Different artists' visions will weave in and out of each other, and the viewers' experience of the space will change with each encounter, encouraging return visits and more social interaction with the space. Zhu-Nowell comments: "This year I've invited six artists to breathe a new spirit into the RAM. I've learned so much from each of them and I believe their diaspora points of view reframe how we see "peripheral" perspectives. Through these projects, I hope to spark new understandings of terms commonly thrown around in art contexts, such as place, personhood, geography, nationality, and identity."

Liu Yingjiu joined Rockbund Art Museum in 2009 as its founding curator. Since 2011, he has been working as Deputy Director to implement the visions of the museum and has led the operational and development efforts of the institution. Working collaboratively with the local governmental organizations, he successfully turned the museum into a legally recognized non-profit entity. With a degree in museum studies and nearly twenty years' experience, he engages in questioning and reinventing the boundaries of museums in particular Chinese contexts.

Liu Yingjiu noted, “I look forward to working closely with the team, as well as with our board and advisory committee, to continuing our quest for a new, dynamic institution of contemporary art that actively engages with the myriad challenges in the art and society of our times, one that builds, renews and constantly strengthens its connection with people in the city and beyond. This is becoming especially urgent in the context of uncertainty during the radical changes both in China and in the world.”

Lynn Ou, founder of the RAM, noted, “The past decade has been a decisive period for the Rockbund Art Museum, when it stood out amid the rapid growth of private museums in China and has been recognized as one of the most creative and dynamic art institutions both by the art communities and by the public, in the local and global context. I am delighted that the museum and the team will continue their extraordinary work under the new leadership of X Zhu-Nowell and Liu Yingjiu. With their complementary backgrounds, strengths and experience, I’m confident that together they will bring the museum to an exciting new chapter following the success achieved so far.”

Larys Frogier, departing Director of RAM, states: “I am confident in the new directors, X and Yingjiu, and the RAM team, to continuously reinvent themselves for the benefit of the artists and the audiences, for the dissemination of research and creative projects where knowledge of the other and encounters between peoples are of particular importance.”

After an extraordinary 11-year career at the museum, Frogier will leave the Rockbund Art Museum to focus on his own artistic research and practice. He will continue to be close to the museum as a member of its Advisory Committee.

About X Zhu-Nowell

X Zhu-Nowell is a curator, writer, and institutional leader who lives and works between New York and Shanghai. X Zhu-Nowell has been a curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York since 2014, where they have led important acquisition activities, exhibition projects, research initiatives, and institution-building processes within the museum. Most notably, they founded Asian Art Circle at the Guggenheim, an acquisition group dedicated to facilitating the museum's ongoing efforts to diversify and strengthen its programming and collection through a concerted focus on the contributions of emerging and established artists from Asia and the diaspora. Their rotunda exhibition *Wu Tsang: Anthem* was awarded as the best exhibition of 2021 by both the *New York Times* and *Artforum*. In December 2022, they co-organized the Guggenheim's 6th Asian Art Council meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, with artist Kandis Williams on curatorial and white cube attempts to address dispossession and hybridity.

X Zhu-Nowell is invested in curatorial activities of varying scales, durations, and forms, responding to specific contexts and conditions. They have recently collaborated with artists including Candice Lin, Nick Cave, Jacolby Satterwhite, Tourmaline, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Sin Wai Kin, Irena Haiduk, Adrián Villar Rojas, NZTT Sewing Co-Op, Hugh Hayden, Saodat Ismailova, Every Ocean Hughes, Farah Al Qasimi, Goutam Ghosh, Li Shuang, Jonathas de Andrade, Heman Chong among others. Prior to joining the Guggenheim Museum in 2014, they were part of the curatorial team for the 14th Istanbul Biennial *SALTWATER: A Theory of Thought Forms*. X Zhu-Nowell has lectured and published widely on exhibition histories and institutional practices (or the lack thereof), focusing on artist interventions in Asia and the diaspora. They hold a master’s degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

About Liu Yingjiu

Liu Yingjiu joined the Rockbund Art Museum in 2009 as one of its founding members and as its curator. He organized the highly acclaimed opening series of exhibitions at the museum in 2010, including *Cai Guo-Qiang: Peasant Da Vincis* and *2010·Zeng Fanzhi*. Since 2011, as Deputy Director, he has worked under Larys Frogier to implement the visions of the museum, guided the administration, operational and development practices to meet the challenges of the time. He represented the museum in funding, collaboration and governmental projects, and successfully led the transformation of the museum to a legally recognized non-profit entity. During his time at the RAM, he has overseen the renovation of the museum's heritage building in 2010, 2011 and 2021. With a degree in museum studies and nearly 20 years' experience in the field, he engages in questioning and reinventing the boundaries of museums in particular Chinese contexts. Since 2022, he has served on the board of trustees of the Shanghai Art Museum Association.

About Rockbund Art Museum



Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai

Inaugurated in 2010, the Rockbund Art Museum (RAM) is a contemporary art museum located on the Bund in Shanghai. The museum is housed in a historic Art Deco building from 1932 that was originally one of the first modern museums established in China. In considering what it means to be an Asian contemporary art museum in the 21st century,

RAM aims to explore the importance of “archipelago thinking”: connecting to artistic culture across Asia and beyond to gain richer perspectives on today’s challenges, practices, and networks within contemporary artistic practices. We wish to build constructive, creative relationships between multiple localities in Asia and different cultures globally, to create a hub for working with a broad range of artists, researchers, and scholars, and to dive into subtle and dense layers of new experiences with our audience.

With a strong reputation for an innovative curatorial approach, RAM experiments with different models of what an art project can be, from research to alternative learning programs, from exhibition-making to unexpected performative formats. By supporting bold contemporary art practices, we aim to recognize local histories while responding to global art challenges and social change.

RAM regards the role of exchange as an essential process for cultural growth, by building up a network of multi-regional, international, and cross-disciplinary partnerships. Through this process, we aim to cultivate diverse and deep-rooted connection to our audiences and communities, and also to different social and cultural organizations. With strong support from our board, patrons, and Advisory Committee, we strive to observe, learn, and pursue opportunities to develop original art projects that explore and engage with the multi-faceted elements of contemporary life.

International Press

For more information and interviews with X Zhu-Nowell and Liu Yingjiu, please contact: Sarah Greenberg, Evergreen Arts: sgreenberg@evergreen-arts.com or +44 (0)7866543242.

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