

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hawai'i Contemporary Appoints International Curator and Writer Sara Raza as Associate Director

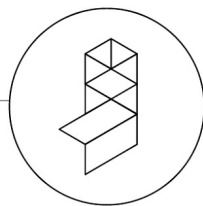
(HONOLULU, Sept. 16, 2020) — Isabella Ellaheh Hughes, board chair and co-founder of Hawai'i Contemporary (formerly the Honolulu Biennial Foundation), today announced the appointment of international curator and writer Sara Raza as associate director. In this newly created position, Raza will work closely with acting executive director, Katherine Don, and the executive board to develop the organization, guiding its transition from a biennial to triennial format in the lead up to Hawai'i's largest international arts event, the Hawai'i Triennial in 2022, which will be curatorially directed by Dr. Melissa Chiu, the director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.

Raza has a commitment to robust, year-round public programs, peer-led community engagements and presenting the inaugural Hawai'i Contemporary Art Summit in February 2021, a precursor to the Triennial, connecting Hawai'i to the Continental US, the Asia Pacific region, and beyond.

“We are delighted to welcome Sara Raza to Hawai'i Contemporary,” stated Hughes. “With her broad-ranging global leadership experience in the art world, scholarship and critical thinking, her appointment strengthens our mission of being an inclusive artist- and community-driven organization that continues to be locally resonant and globally relevant.

“Sara’s formidable and dynamic skillset, coupled with her reputation as a recognized thought leader in the field of contemporary art, will highly complement the direction that our young organization is embarking upon. Her ideas and fresh thinking are invaluable for cultivating collaboration with existing and new local, regional and international partners, which is crucial in steering the organization toward an equitable and sustainable future.”

Raza stated: “Hawai'i Contemporary is a unique contemporary arts organization that champions the indigenous creative voice and diversity at an unprecedented scale. I am proud to work with a board and team that represents the values that I adhere to as a global curator and leader who is actively invested in moving beyond an EuroAmerican-centric way of thinking. I am looking forward to immersing myself within the cultural topography and inclusive arts ecosystem of Hawai'i, where the community resides at the core of everything, and the artist's voice remains both a central and vital component.”



Biographical Notes

Currently based in New York, Sara Raza is a curator, writer, editor, and educator who works between the US, Middle East and Asia. She runs her own global art and visual cultures curatorial studio in New York, is the longstanding desk editor for West and Central Asia of ArtAsiaPacific magazine and is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts in New York for the MA Curatorial Practice Program. Formerly the Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator for the Middle East and North Africa, Raza led the third and final phase of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and curated the exhibition *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa*, which debuted at the New York museum in 2016 and traveled onto the Galleria d’Arte Moderna Milan in 2018.

Over the last 15 years Raza curated numerous international projects for biennials, festivals, and museums including *Clapping with Stones: Art and Acts of Resistance* for the Rubin Museum of Art, New York (2019–20); *Fateh Al Moudarres: Colour, Extensity and Sense* for Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum, Doha, Qatar; and *Punk Orientalism* at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada (2019). Further exhibitions include *Rhizoma* at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), Ergin Cavusoglu’s solo exhibition at The Pavilion Downtown Dubai (2011), the Central Asian Salon for the 6th Tashkent Biennial and others.

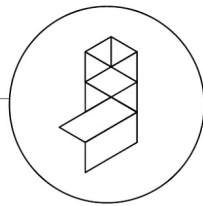
Formerly, she was the head of education and chief curator of the 3rd Public Art Festival for YARAT Contemporary Art Space, Baku, Azerbaijan; founding head of Curatorial and Education Programs at Alaan Artspace, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and curator of Public Programs at Tate Modern, London. Raza holds a master’s degree in art history and theory (20th Century) and BA in English literature and history of art both from Goldsmiths College, University of London, and pursued studies toward her Ph.D. at the Royal College of Art, London. In 2016, she was awarded the 11th ArtTable New Leadership Award.

About Hawai‘i Contemporary

Inspired by the unique histories of Hawai‘i, a gathering place for diverse peoples and ideas, Hawai‘i Contemporary connects communities from across our islands and regions united by the Pacific Ocean and beyond. As a collaborative art partner, we cultivate cultural alliances to showcase the Hawai‘i Triennial every three years and to celebrate contemporary art and ideas. The multi-site public exhibition is complemented by year-round public and education programs contributing to the local arts ecosystem and affirming our commitment to creating an accessible gateway for contemporary art in Hawai‘i nei.

Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization in 2014, the Honolulu Biennial Foundation debuted the inaugural Honolulu Biennial in 2017 as a dedicated contemporary art platform in Hawai‘i. The successful biennials presented in 2017 and 2019 gained international recognition and respectively welcomed over 100,000 guests from Hawai‘i and the Pacific region, as well as visitors from around the world. In 2020, the organization announced the transformation of its signature event into a triennial format and was renamed Hawai‘i Contemporary. Looking to the future, Hawai‘i Contemporary continues to build upon this foundation to create inspirational and sustainable exchanges, connecting Hawai‘i and the Pacific with contemporary art.

For more information, please contact: press@hawaiicontemporary.org.



NOTE TO THE EDITOR

This press release contains words in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language), one of two official languages of the State of Hawai'i. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i utilizes two diacritical marks: a kahakō (macron) and an 'okina (glottal stop). Please note that an 'okina — and not an apostrophe — is used in the word Hawai'i.

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