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FRONT COVER:
Armoured infantryman,
Qin dynasty (221 – 206 BCE)
Courtesy of Shaanxi Cultural Heritage
Promotion Center

BACK COVER:
Kneeling archer (detail),
Qin dynasty (221 – 206 BCE)
Courtesy of Shaanxi Cultural Heritage
Promotion Center

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editor's MUSEINGS.

July and August, the much-awaited height of summer in more temperate zones, are a time of intense activity as well in sunny Singapore. It is a period when we take stock of the months that have passed and a chance to catch up on our resolutions and goals for the present year. And very often, this means rekindling ties with the people – family, friends and neighbours – we love and see all too seldom as well as revisiting the places we used to frequent and now cherish in memory.

It's thus fitting that July ushers in the annual *Singapore HeritageFest*, which has become a yearly highlight of the heartland calendar and an islandwide celebration of all the things we love about home. Along with Racial Harmony Day on 21 July, followed by National Day on 9 August, these series of events serve to remind us that at the heart of it, Singapore is defined by our unique set of values, dreams and aspirations, which we all share regardless of race or religion.

It's also why this issue of *BeMuse* is dedicated to all things Singaporean, well almost. In conjunction with *Singapore HeritageFest*, we present a tribute to the iconic hangouts that many Singaporeans frequented and which many still fondly remember, from the surviving Haw Par Villa to the now vanished National Theatre. There's a quick preview of the upcoming Night Festival which promises to enchant young and old alike with an audiovisual spectacle rooted in the stories and histories of pioneers and travellers. Even our travel segment contains more than a few links between a remote isle and features we find familiar here in Singapore. And as a counterpoint, 'Tales from the Tomb' weaves a picture of life in ancient China as retold by the terracotta figures now on display at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

The creatures of our garden city as well as the creative contemporary art presentations of *Art Garden* at the Singapore Art Museum also have their say. And last but certainly not least, Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman of the National Heritage Board, offers a candid and close-to-the-heart account of the milestones and achievements that have made his 9-year chairmanship of the NHB all the more memorable.

So, until the next edition in October, all of us at *BeMUSE* would like to wish every Singaporean a Happy 46th National Day and invite all our readers to ponder on what you love about your Home and why you love it. It's a question well worth reflecting over, whether you are a Singaporean or citizen of any country in the world!

THANGAMMA KARTHIGESU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CONTEMPORARY ART FUN FOR CHILDREN

Art Garden at the Singapore Art Museum

INSIDE.

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25 Chapel Road

ROBERT ZHAO
THE BLIND

2008
ARCHIVAL PIEZOGRAPHIC PRINT
120 X 84 CM

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

COLLECTION OF THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Winner of the United Overseas Bank Painting of the Year Award in 2009 for *The Blind* as well as the inaugural Emerging Artist Award of the Singapore International Photography Festival in 2008, Robert Zhao has a fascination with animals that led him to create an "Institute of Critical Zoologists" and timely images of humanity's seemingly unconscious intrusion into nature.

The Blind is based on recent developments of composite materials that can curve light, potentially inventing "invisibility cloaks". The human subjects drape themselves with this futuristic invention, apparently for field research, to infiltrate the natural habitats of the animals. The artist also questions the notions of "truth" and "objectivity" through the stories he presents to the viewer, via the manipulated imagery of photography.









CHILDREN'S SEASON 2011: A FUNTASTIC PLAYLAND FOR KIDS



The June school holidays this year was a season of fun for the young, the young-at-heart and their families when the 4th Children's Season, jointly presented by the National Heritage Board (NHB) and the Museum Roundtable, returned bigger, bolder and better.

Children's Season 2011 featured two anchor events: *The PlayDome* at the National Museum of Singapore and *Art Garden at the Singapore Art Museum*. At the former, visitors learned about Singapore's heritage through activities inspired by the Museum's iconic Dome and items in its Singapore Living Galleries. At the latter, the Singapore Art Museum's grounds were transformed into an *Art Garden* that blossomed with interactive contemporary artworks specially created for children. These included *Walter*, the curious colossal bunny, and *Fruits*, a lively paper fruit market. Visitors were also entertained by animations from around the world.

At the Malay Heritage Centre, participants went on a heritage hunt for the Sultan's royal regalia around Kampong Glam, while young visitors to the Asian Civilisations Museum took part in role-playing activities involving Chinese warrior Hua Mulan. Other highlights included culinary workshops for children at the Peranakan Museum, miniature toy-making workshops at the MINT Museum of Toys, aviation and rabbit-themed activities at the Singapore Philatelic Museum, as well as children's programmes at HealthZone, The Changi Museum and The Intan.

Children's Season broke new ground this year as the festival ventured outdoors with the first ever Children's Season Hub @ Orchard Road – a one-stop resource point for Children Season's activities and play space in the heart of the city. In addition, the Preservation of Monuments Board offered a weekend of outdoor activities in My Monumental Playground, which acquainted the young with the history behind the National Monuments located at the Esplanade Park.

Above left: Guest of Honour Mr Lui Tuck Yew (2nd from right), then Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, officiating the launch of Children's Season 2011 and Mighty Men, a new children's heritage book, with NHB CEO Mr Michael Koh (3rd from left), Director of the National Museum of Singapore Ms Lee Chor Lin (2nd from left), Ms Thangamma Karthigesu (far left), Director of NHB's Education and Outreach Division, and Mr Alvin Tan (far right), Director, Heritage Institutions and Industry Development, NHB.

Above right: Elated children at Wayang Play Stage by Anita Nevens. Held at the National Museum of Singapore, this interactive installation let children create wayang face masks, try on real wayang costumes and perform stories on a fabric-inspired modern dramatic set.

Singapore Biennale 2011 closes to record turnout

After two months of warm hospitality and friendly exchanges over contemporary art, the Singapore Biennale 2011 closed its doors on 15 May 2011. Organised by the Singapore Art Museum and supported by the National Arts Council, this 3rd edition, led by Artistic Director Matthew Ngui along with curators Russell Storer and Trevor Smith, attracted a record 912,897 visitors, surpassing its set target of 650,000. This included more than 196,000 visitors who entered the four Biennale venues to engage with the artworks, a significant increase of indoor visitors from the previous Biennale. Over the nine-week period, the large-scale exhibition offered a visual feast of diverse contemporary art practices from 30 countries. Presenting the highest proportion of commissioned pieces, Singapore Biennale 2011 treated visitors to a number of brand new site-specific works by both leading and rising artists in the region and from around the world.

Discovering the Nanyang style through the art of Liu Kang

On 2 April 2011, more than 250 participants attended *Liu Kang: Tropi*cal Vanguard, a forum organised by The National Art Gallery, Singapore (TNAG) to commemorate the 100th birth centenary of the noted Nanyang artist. The gathering of artists and scholars engaged in lively discussions about the life and art of Liu Kang (1911 - 2004), an important Singapore artist famous for his Balinese-themed figurative paintings and who made significant contributions to the arts scene in Singapore and the region. The line-up of speakers included Professor Lin Xiang Xiong, President of the Global Chinese Arts & Culture Society; Dr Chua Soo Pong, Founding Director of the Chinese Opera Institute; and academics from the Graduate School of Chinese National Academy of Arts, China. This diversity of voices provided an opportunity to explore both local as well as international perspectives of the artist, who was born in Fujian, China, and worked in Shanghai during the 1930s. Members of the public can learn more about the artist in a Liu Kang exhibition scheduled for July 2011. Featuring 100 of his artworks, the exhibition is organised by TNAG at the premises of the Singapore Art Museum.

Deputy PM visits SAM

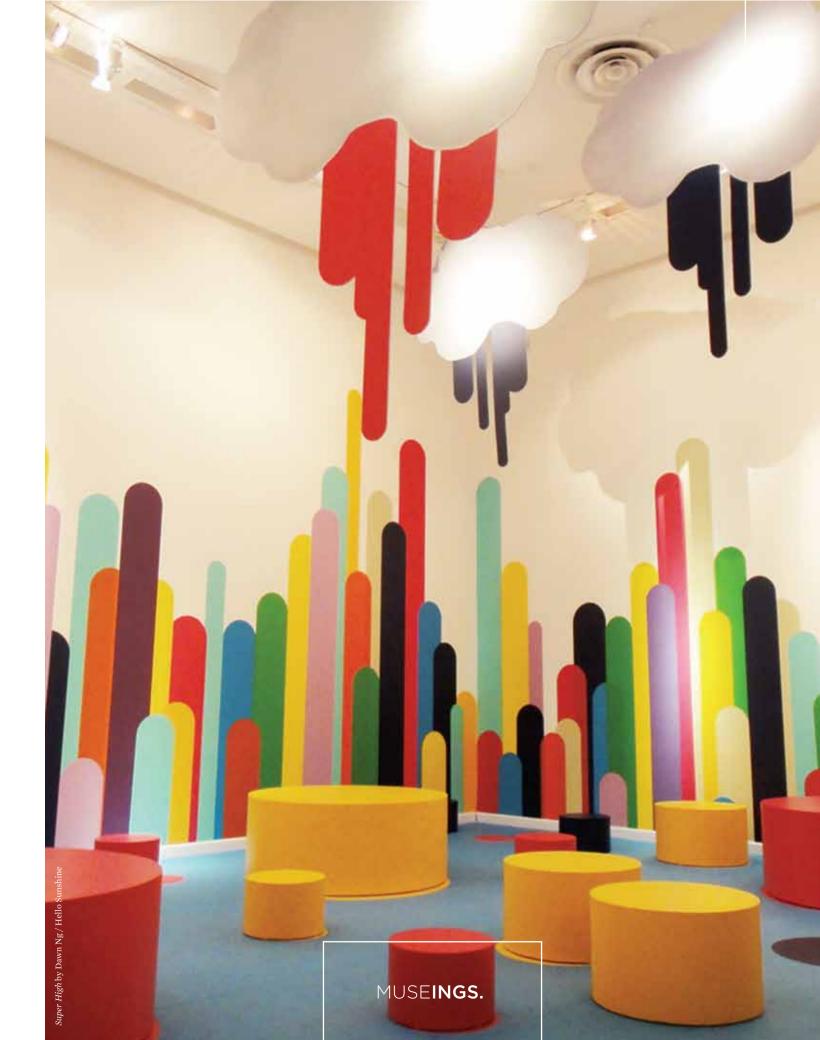
Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam and staff from the Ministry of Finance visited the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) on 22 March 2011. During this visit, the delegation toured SAM's cornerstone exhibition, *Negotiating Home History and Nation: Two Decades of Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia 1991 – 2011*, which featured a selection of core artworks from the National Collection as well as the *Singapore Biennale 2011* at SAM at 8Q.

PUBLIC JOINS PMB ON TOURS OF SINGAPORE'S NEWEST NATIONAL MONUMENT

Hot on the heels of the gazetting of Singapore's newest National Monument on 8 April 2011, the Preservation of Monuments Board (PMB) organised a recent series of guided tours for the public at the Tanjong Pagar Railway Station. Held from 21-29 May, more than 800 members of the public signed up for a record 57 walking tours of the much-loved landmark by Keppel Road.

Tour participants were treated to in-depth accounts of the architectural highlights and design features of the facility, which Straits Settlements Governor Cecil Clement declared "a terminus of world importance" at its opening on 2 May 1932. Led by staff of PMB as well as volunteer guides, the tours also unveiled the identity of the sculptor behind the four heroic figures that front the station and pointed out non-Western elements of this Art Deco building that make it a uniquely Federated Malay States Railway Station.





MUSE**life**.



ART GARDEN AT THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

CONTEMPORARY ART FUN FOR CHILDREN

BY SIM WAN HUI

Building on the success of its inaugural edition in 2010, the well-loved Art Garden at the Singapore Art Museum returned this June with a total of ten creative works. The only exhibition in Singapore that showcases engaging art works suitable for children, this edition of Art Garden features more works than last year and runs for a longer duration of almost three months from 3 June to 30 August 2011 at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM). SAM has also used this opportunity to commission four young Singapore artists to create works for our next generation of art audiences.

Contemporary art works appeal to children as they often address issues that are topical and open-ended. The interactive nature of contemporary art also makes *Art Garden* an inviting and engaging exhibition for the young to explore and see the world in new and different ways. It encourages motor, social and emotional development and provides the space for young visitors to express themselves creatively.



(Facing page): Walter by Dawn Ng. (This page, from top): Go by Twardzik-Ching Chor Leng. Mummy Dearest by Justin Lee.

MUMMY DEAREST

BY JUSTIN LEE

Award-winning artist Justin Lee has created *Mummy Dearest*, a child's playroom with familiar childhood activities such as dressing up dolls and decorating a cake. Visitors are invited to participate in this interactive installation inspired by paper dolls and comprising soft sculptural elements hand-painted by the artist in acrylic.

In Lee's fantasy candy-coloured world, giant dolls appear alongside an enormous three-tiered cake. It is Mummy's day off, and children make their own decisions about what to wear and how they may decorate a cake as a treat for their mothers.

GO

BY TWARDZIK-CHING CHOR LENG

An ancient game, Go (or *weiqi* as it is known to the Chinese) is appropriated by the artist as a giant board comprising 19 acrylic columns. 'Go', the word, also represents motion and activity.

Drawing upon these two ideas, 'game' and 'action', Twardzik-Ching has created

an interactive installation for participants to create their own game or picture using her coloured wooden chips.

According to Twardzik-Ching, who was a finalist for the prestigious President's Young Talent Award 2009, "In our competitive society where every activity is seen as an opportunity to win, this piece is its anti-thesis. Due to its scale, the gaming reference will be skewed. Participants will have a more creative, fun and physical experience as they cooperate with others to interact with the sculpture... Participants will have to gather the chips, climb the staircase to the platform and then deposit coloured chips into vertical rows. They can think of the sculpture as a giant loom that creates images as they deposit and build with different coloured chips."

"After finishing their work, they can return to the floor to view their work and photograph themselves with it and then add their image on the display board. The space which at first attracts with colour and the lure of a competitive game is in fact a creative structure designed to encourage and awaken the impulse to make."

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 $(Above): \textit{Fruits} \ \ \text{by Wit Pimkanchanapong}. \ \ (Right): \textit{Lightning Action} \ \ \text{by Bertrand Planes}. \ \ (Below \ \ right): \textit{Tree of Love} \ \ \text{by Ben Puah}.$

SUPERHIGH BY DAWN NG / HELLO SUNSHINE & WALTER BY DAWN NG

Another tactile installation is *Superhigh*, created by Dawn Ng in collaboration with Hello Sunshine, a Paris-based art collective. To Ng, rainbows symbolise hope and happiness in popular culture. According to the artist, child psychologists have found that apart from the sun, the rainbow is one of the most common things children draw when they are happy. Ng's cheerful and vibrant installation, reminiscent of rainbows melting on a sunny day, encapsulates this visceral expression of happiness.

Ng's fascination with symbols in popular culture has also led her to create *Walter*. Termed by Ng as a "guerrilla style pop-up installation", *Walter* is a curious colossal bunny who shows up in common spaces across Singapore. To the artist, rabbits are popularly used in stories to present unique or different points of view. The incongruence of *Walter's* presence in a common space surprises and stirs those who chance upon this installation to re-evaluate an over familiar and often, overlooked space. By inserting a surreal and naive object within the "invisible ordinary," *Walter* inspires children and awakens the child in us to discover the extraordinary in the everyday.

LIGHTNING ACTION

BY BERTRAND PLANES

Departing from the hands-on and tactile, Bertrand Planes uses current game technology and a special video mapping process to create *Lightning Action*, an installation of 42 boxes of toys. The toys were bought in a Singapore mall, based on the store's advice on their popularity with children as well as their colourful packaging and shape. The toy boxes have been placed within a video projector scope and arranged in an aesthetical point of view, akin to a "minimalist" construction of cubes.

Planes and his curator, Corentin Hamel, explained that in *Lightning Action*, "the boxes, with the toys inside, have all been painted white. The surface of the different packaging is then projected on the now-white boxes, creating an illusion of the original packaging. The projection is looped, showing this recreation of 'white moments', where the projection is neutral and show the boxes for what they are 'in reality': White. On the other hand, the 'white moments' also deprive the toys of their true surface, following a fairy tale scenario where gold can be turned into lead... In a way, *Lightning Action* simulates wrapped up Christmas presents (the 'white moment'), and the







Paramodelic-Graffiti by Paramodel.

opening of the gifts. As an adult, one remembers more the excitement of the secret than the result of opening".

PARAMODELIC-GRAFFITI

BY PARAMODEL

The works of Japanese artist-duo Yasuhiko Hayashi and Yusuke Nakano of Paramodel often reflect their name which is inspired by the words "paradise" and "model". Paramodelic-Graffiti fuses work and play, and illustrates the artists' practice that is both meticulous and whimsical. Modular toy train tracks fill the gallery, weaving their way over walls, floors and ceiling, and out of the gallery. Populating the Paramodel city are toy cranes, trucks and bulldozers that seem to go about their construction business while farm animals graze untroubled nearby. Fantastical but not picture-perfect, Paramodelic-Graffiti can be seen as a creative process of making spontaneous patterns through uniform components as well as an exploration of the permeating urban geography and city topography.

TREE OF LOVE BY BEN PUAH & FRUITS BY WIT PIMKANCHANAPONG
Ben Puah and Wit Pimkanchanapong have creat-

ed an interactive environment that draws visitors into their creative process of art-making. Tree of Love is what Puah terms as a "narrative sculpture". To create this work, the artist conducted ten workshops prior to the exhibition involving 300 school children, members of the public and residents of the Singapore Association of Mental Health, who created papier-mâché sculptures of their imaginary pets. Many of these sculptures have been mounted on five tree-like installations. To Puah, these trees are akin to the roots and foundation that support a community enriched by a myriad of values and views. The combination of two dimensional drawings and writings on the trees left by visitors and the three-dimensional elements made by the workshop participants and designed by the artist offers a varied view of expressions and perspectives as visitors stroll and circle around the *Tree of Love*.

In the same gallery space, *Fruits* by Thai artist Wit Pimkanchanapong comprises a colourful fruit market displaying paper models of six fruits that are common in Southeast Asia. Visitors are invited to create paper fruits from templates designed by the artist. In the process of deciphering the patterns and folding the papercuts, participants become aware of the names of the fruits

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2011



(Above): Film still from Flats (2010), directed by Scrawl Studios. (Below): Dancing Solar Flowers by Alexandre Dang.

in various languages through the templates. In addition, participants find themselves in a communal setting that encourages shared interaction and discussion. When completed, the paper fruit made by a visitor can be exchanged for a fresh real fruit. The bartered paper fruit then becomes part of the artist's growing fruit market display.

ELEPHANT SITTING AND ELEPHANT AT REST

BY ELEPHANT PARADE SINGAPORE 2011

The final two artworks highlight environmental issues. *Elephant Parade*, the world's largest openair art exhibition solely dedicated to saving the endangered Asian elephant, will make its debut in Asia from 11 November 2011 to 11 January 2012. Over 100 life-size art elephant sculptures, painted and decorated by local and international celebrities and artists, will storm the streets of Singapore. After the exhibition, the sculptures will be auctioned and part of the proceeds will be donated to The Asian Elephant Foundation and Wildlife Reserves Singapore Conservation Fund. At *Art Garden*, young visitors are invited to decorate two baby elephant sculptures with flower stickers designed by Justin Lee.

DANCING SOLAR FLOWERS

BY ALEXANDRE DANG

Dancing Solar Flowers, a colourful and lively kinetic installation, is one of French artist Alexandre Dang's most popular works. Known for artistic presentations that encourage environmentally friendly living, Dang is the founder of Solar Solidarity International, a non-profit international association that aims to raise awareness of the potential of renewable energy sources and support solar electrification of schools in developing countries.

ANIMATED SHORT FILMS

Art Garden will also screen a selection of 17 animated short films from ten countries. Suitable for all ages, this line-up introduces different styles of animation and features Academy Award-winning works such as Lost and Found by Philip Hunt and The Lost Thing by Andrew Ruhemann and Shaun Tan. The series also includes Singapore works by Ervinna Cahyadi, Srinivas Bhakta and Scrawl Studios.

Sim Wan Hui is Deputy Director for Programmes and Exhibition, SAM.



KEBAYA

EUROPE (TAILORED IN INDONESIA), CA. 1900-1910

COTTON AND MACHINE-MADE NET AND BRODERIE ANGLAISE

GIFT OF MR & MRS LEE KIP LEE COLLECTION OF THE PERANAKAN MUSEUM THE PERANAKAN MUSEUM



In 1910, the Chinese in the Dutch East Indies (as Indonesia was known then) were allowed to become Dutch subjects. Peranakan Chinese women in the Dutch East Indies began to emulate European fashions as an outward manifestation of this new status. This included both Western dress and the Indo-European style sarong kebaya, which had evolved over centuries. By the 1900s, this had taken the form of waist-length, translucent, open garments made of fine cottons and trimmed with lace, matched with batik sarong (tube skirts) featuring 'modern', The Peranakan Chinese did not slavishly copy Indo-European fashion - rather, they infused their sense of aesthetics into the sarong kebaya, creating a distinctly Peranakan style by the 1920s. This kebaya, netting and a trim of broderie anglaise, is a good example. Following Chinese belief that good things come in pairs, the motifs are depicted in even numbers.

This kebaya was probably made for a Peranakan Chinese lady from Java. By the 1910s, these fashions were introduced to the Straits Settlements by families with strong links to the Indies. Shops selling batiks and lace kebaya also began advertising in the newspapers by the 1910s, and were clustered around Arab Street and in the old commercial districts around High Street in Singapore. This kebaya is part of a generous donation of 399 kebaya to the Peranakan Museum in 2011 by Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee. It was first displayed at Baba Bling: The Peranakan Chinese of Singapore, the Peranakan Museum's travelling exhibition to the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris last year; and is one of the highlights of the museum's current special exhibition, Sarong Kebaya: Peranakan Fashion and its International Sources, which runs till February 2012.

here's no place like home. We may wander afar and explore the four corners of the earth, but it's the sights of familiar landmarks and the sensation of once-bustling scenes that linger in our mind. From the Great Worlds of yesteryear, cherished theatres and tanks of colourful fish to outlandish theme parks that can still scare the wits out of unsuspecting visitors, the places we love about our home return this July as Singapore HeritageFest 2011 (SHF) opens a window to the hangouts that have charmed their way into our hearts and history.

From the festival's launch at Ang Mo Kio to a line-up of Satellite Hubs in various corners of the island, *SHF 2011* continues the popular trend of taking history to the heartlands with exhibitions, performances and expeditions for all ages. This year, *SHF* will offer a roaring blast to the past at Novena Square on 29-31 July with the transformation of a family mall to a plaza of drama and discovery. Through three-dimensional recreations, vivid images and compelling stories, the parks, theatres and other places that live in our memories will make their way into a weekend of music and magic.

What are the some of the places that refuse to be forgotten and continue to stir fond recollections in those who found pleasure, peace and perhaps even love in these icons of popular memory? For many older Singaporeans, the National Theatre, which opened in 1963 at River Valley Road by the foot of Fort Canning, was the site of numerous memorable performances and ceremonies. The scene of many a National Day rally, university convocations and beauty pageants, the open-air stage has also hosted international acts such as Sadler's Wells Theatre, the Bolshoi Ballet, Louis Armstrong and the Bee Gees.

Demolished in 1986, the National Theatre remains a much-missed icon of independent Singapore's formative years, not least because its construction was in part funded by contributions from members of the public. The building was also architecturally significant, with an eye-catching 5-pointed façade and fountain in the forecourt that respectively stood for the five stars and crescent moon of the Singapore flag.

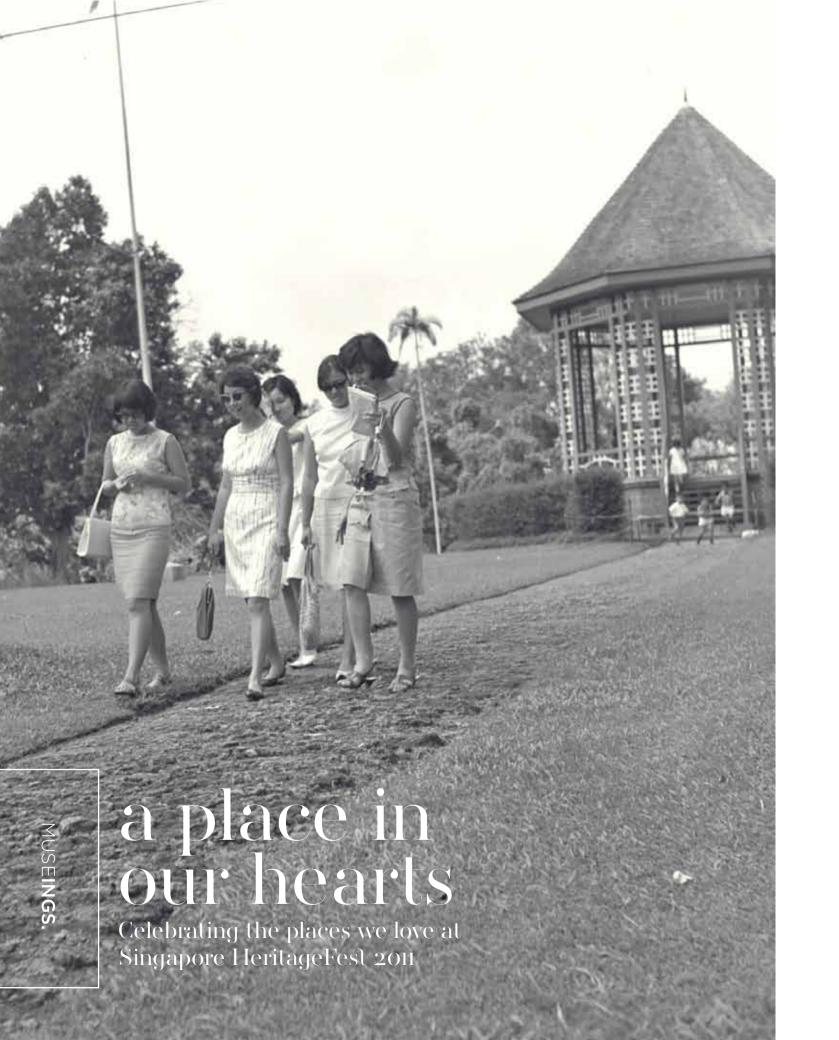
Located a stone's throw from the site of the National Theatre, the Van Kleef Aquarium was another institution that provided hours of fascination for families and schoolchildren. Built in 1955 as the first public aquarium in Southeast Asia, the facility was named after Karl Willem Benjamin Van Kleef, a Dutch businessman who bequeathed his wealth to the municipal government of Singapore. The aquarium's fairly non-descript exterior hid dim halls where the primary sources of light were rows of glass receptacles housing thousands of aquatic creatures. Sharks, piranhas and electric eels as well as seahorses, anemonefish and other exotic reef inhabitants swam in the tanks that drew around 400,00 visitors a year in the 1970s. Interest waned, however, in the 1980s and a fatal blow came with the opening of the Underwater World at Sentosa in 1991.

One attraction that is still open for business, which *SHF* will spotlight at Novena Square, is a west coast theme park devoted to far eastern folklore. Since 1937, Haw Par Villa, as known as the Tiger Balm Gardens, has treated visitors to a smorgasbord of Chinese mythology, history and moral lessons based on Confucian teachings. From statues that depict pivotal scenes in Chinese legend to gruesome dioramas of what sinners endure in the 10 Courts of Hell, the gardens are an unabashed celebration of Chinese beliefs by the Aw brothers, who made their fortune from the sale of Tiger Balm, a medicated ointment still available today.

For a different diversion, Singaporeans of all stripes flocked to other, more worldly, theme parks in the 1950s and 1960s. One of a trio of playgrounds that offered evenings of entertainment was the Great World Amusement Park at Kim Seng Road, which first roared into action in the 1930s but hit its peak in the late 1950s under the ownership of Shaw Organisation. Offering joyrides, action films, live performances, restaurants and food vendors, *Tua Seh Kai* (meaning 'Great World' in Hokkien) even boasted a Ferris Wheel, carousel and Ghost Train ride.

In its heyday, up to 50,000 people thronged Great World Amusement Park each night to catch the latest English and Chinese movies, dine at restaurants serving what was said to be the best Cantonese food in Singapore and take in the sassy cabaret acts of the

What are the some of the places that refuse to be forgotten and continue to stir fond recollections in those who found pleasure, peace and perhaps even love in these icons of popular memory?



Flamingo Nite-Club, By the late 1960s, however, the three 'Worlds' were losing ground to television and most of the attractions of Great World were closed in 1964, followed by the final screenings of the cinemas in 1978. Today, the site is occupied by the Great World City Shopping Centre.

Still with us, though a victim of modern cineplexes located within shopping malls, the Capitol Theatre was in the 1950s and 1960s the place to go for premieres and pretty faces on the silver screen. Located across the road from Raffles City and St. Andrew's Cathedral, the Capitol vied with other movie houses such as the Majestic, Cathay, Roxy and Sky for the patronage of film buffs, who also enjoyed the bonus of live variety shows before the opening credits. Built in 1930, the Capitol closed its doors in 1998. The building, which is earmarked for preservation, and its surrounding area, are being redeveloped into an integrated lifestyle and entertainment centre.

f you walk pass the ION Orchard and Orchard Central* shopping malls, you will see giant sculptures of nutmegs on the entrance pavilions. The artwork is a visual reminder of Orchard Road's origins as a country lane lined by spice plantations and fruit orchards in late 19th and early 20th centuries, with nutmegs a popular crop in the mid-1800s. Cemeteries also occupied many plots of land now housing massive shopping complexes today.

One of the earliest businesses along Orchard Road was Cold Storage, which opened a retail outlet there in 1905. In 1909, the company moved to a building where Centrepoint now stands and became synonymous with quality imported meats, fruit and vegetables. Magnolia ice cream and milk also made their debut through Cold Storage in 1923. The trans- Singapore HeritageFest 2011, with the theme 'Home formation of Orchard Road into Singapore's most famous shopping strip continued in the 1950s when 2011. Visit www.heritagefest.sg for more information retailers such as Tang Choon Keng, better known as about the festival venues, performances and other CK Tang, set up shop to cater to the residents of the activities for the entire family.

nearby Tanglin and Holland Road districts, Tang's commercial instincts proved astute and the distinctive Chinese-style architecture of Tang Department Store still dominates Orchard Road's skyline to this

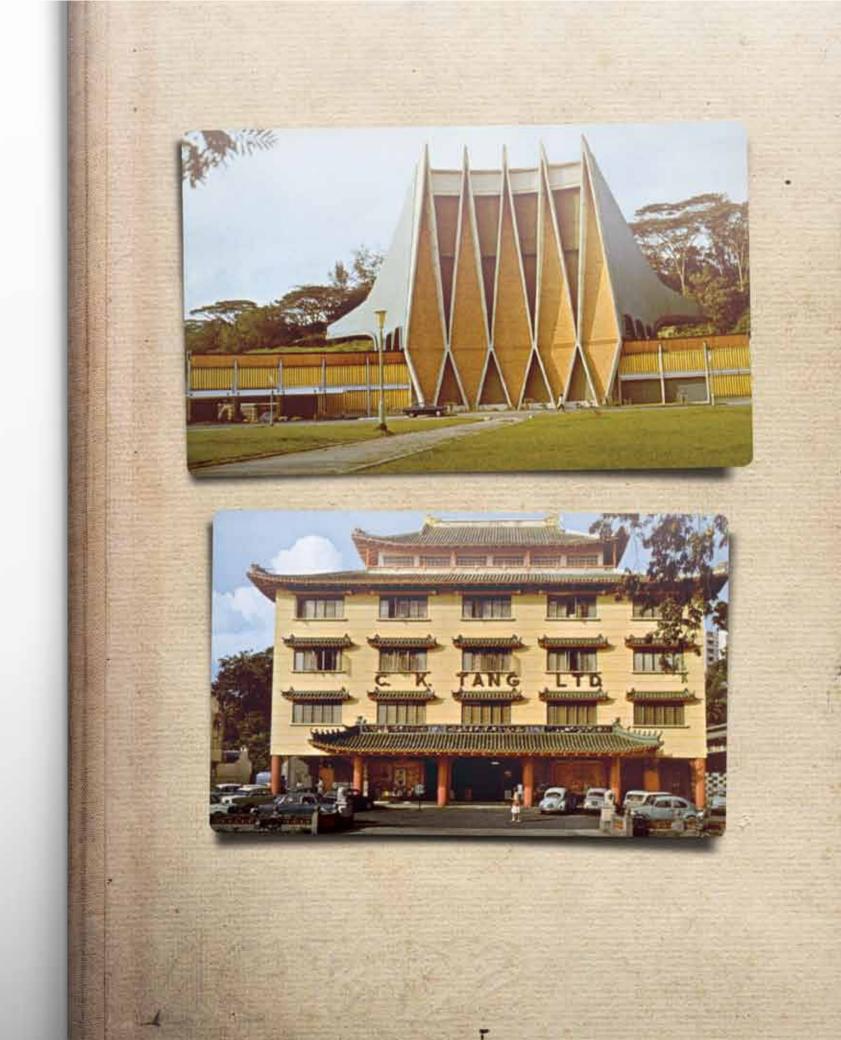
To walk off the effects of heavy meals or simply escape the crowds of the city, Singaporeans would make their way to green retreats that lie just a little distance from Orchard Road. Since 1859. the Botanic Gardens at Tanglin have welcomed visitors from all over the world to a sanctuary of tropical plants and peaceful lakes. The gardens had a more commercial function in the late 19th century, though, as they provided the test bed for Henry Ridley's attempts to develop the rubber industry in Malaya. Today, the gazebos and landscaped groves provide ideal spots for picnics and garden parties in the shade of century-old trees.

Despite a plethora of change, some habits happily remain across the generations. The seafront by Oueen Elizabeth Walk was a popular destination for dating couples in the 1960s and 1970s. Offering refreshing breezes and clear views of the bay before the mouth of the Singapore River, the broad pavilion saw a spicy addition in the 1970s with the Satay Club and its sizzling offerings of charcoal-grilled meat served with a peanut dip. Today, the Esplanade -Theatres by the Bay and the Merlion Pier flank the bay and offer a contemporary choice of eateries. But for many Singaporeans of all ages, the experience of sharing a stroll by the waterfront and savouring the lights of the city continue to be part of what we love about our home and hopefully, a memory that will last a lifetime.

- What We Love About It' takes place from 15-31 July

For many Singaporeans, the experience of sharing a stroll by the waterfront and savouring the lights of the city continue to be part of what we love about our home and a memory that will last a lifetime.

* Did you know the food courts of today have their origins in roadside stalls that provided hungry shoppers with piping hot food in the lanes off Orchard Road? The site of the present Orchard Central was in the 1970s a popular dining spot called Glutton's Square. A carpark by day, the square became a hive of stalls, tables and stools in the evening as itinerant hawkers arrived to prepare street delicacies such as carrot cake, char kway teow and oyster omelette. Due to poor hygiene, these hawkers were later relocated to permanent sites such as Newton Food Centre.



JOHN CORBETT
SINGAPORE FROM
THE ROADS

1860

PENCIL AND WATERCOLOUR

COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE





Detail of 'Singapore From The Road'

Born in 1822, John Corbett joined the British Royal Navy in 1835, rising through the ranks to become Captain in 1857 and retiring as Admiral in 1887. A keen amateur painter, Corbett often painted topographical watercolours during his voyages in the 1850s and 1860s. As Captain of the *HMS Scout*, Corbett stopped over at Singapore for refilling in 1860. The transit period provided the occasion for this watercolour, a panoramic view of Singapore Harbour from the sea painted over two joined sheets.

Corbett's impression of Singapore is that of a bustling harbour to a variety of ships, each depicted with considerable detail compared to the less discernible coastline. This is most evident in the two British corvettes featured – the *HMS Scout* (centre) and the *HMS Pearl* (far right) – both screw-propelled steamships. The most prominent landmark in the background is the flagstaff on what Corbett labels 'Signal Hill'. Government House would have been demolished by this time, and the Fort, later named Fort Canning, was in the midst of construction.



TRANSFORMING LAMSCAPES, IMPROVING LIVES

50 YEARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BY PRISCILLA CHUA

s the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, it is also timely for Singaporeans to look back on the country's economic development, a critical block in the nation-building process over the past five decades. Behind the myriad of facts and figures that charted Singapore's growth – from a per capita GDP of SGD980 in the 1960s to a per capita GDP of SGD59,813 today – were challenges that brought out the foresight and pioneering spirit of Singapore's leaders.

Playing equally important roles were various actors in Singapore's society and economy. Workers and companies alike helped to steer Singapore towards economic success, and their stories take centrestage in the exhibition *Transforming Landscapes, Improving Lives: 50 Years of Economic Development*. Personal accounts and anecdotes in the form of artefacts and audio-visual productions are displayed throughout the exhibition, illustrating not only how lives and the physical and socio-economic landscape of Singapore have been transformed alongside her economic development, but also providing a glimpse into the future that Singapore is working towards.

(Above): Dr. Goh Keng Swee presenting pioneer certificates at the Singapore Economic Development Board office in Fullerton Building, 1963. MITA Collection, courtesy National Archives of Singapore. (Below): A Rollei operator at work, 1970s. National Archives of Singapore.



A PIONEERING SPIRIT

The year 1959 marked a milestone in Singapore's history, when she gained self-government from the British. But the economic reality then was such that there was little time for celebration. The fledging nation had to deal with massive unemployment, rapid population growth and labour unrest while having no natural resources, industrial infrastructure or a significant domestic market to speak of. The subsequent loss of the Common Market with Malaysia in 1965 and British withdrawal in 1971 also provided obstacles to economic progress. Despite these challenges, then Minister for Finance, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, guided Singapore towards economic stability during the first, trying years of nationhood. With the formation of the EDB in 1961, Singapore set off on the twin paths of industrialisation and investment promotion, as a 'can-do' and pioneering spirit characterised the foundational years of her growth.

Perhaps nothing epitomised the pioneering spirit better than Dr. Goh's proposal for Jurong Industrial Estate, which transformed a swamp into a self-sufficient industrial town in the 1960s. Initially dubbed 'Goh's Folly' as many doubted the feasibility of building an industrial town from scratch, Jurong Industrial Estate proved to be a success, attracting businesses to establish factories there, the first being National Iron & Steel Mills. Singapore's industrialisation

programme was thus kick-started, and it was on Jurong Industrial Estate that labour-intensive factories manufacturing a wide range of products – including mosquito coils, joss sticks, sugar, textiles, plastic flowers and hair wigs – were set up, providing much-needed jobs.

One of the many companies that the EDB courted was Rollei, a world-renowned camera maker. Rollei's arrival in the early 1970s signalled the dawn of precision engineering in Singapore, a vital industry that propelled the country to the next level of economic development. Apart from creating jobs and bringing German production excellence to Singapore, Rollei also trained thousands of Singaporeans in precision engineering skills, laying the foundation for the rise of the electronics industry, which remains a mainstay of Singapore's manufacturing sector today.

Besides acting as the intermediary between potential investors and the various government bodies, the EDB also awarded pioneer status to some companies, giving them an exemption from corporate taxes. Thanks to these industrialisation efforts and measures to develop and market Singapore as an ideal base for manufacturing, Singapore reached full employment by the late 1970s, with industries thriving and foreign investments pouring in.

THE TRANSITION YEARS

If the 1960s were the formative years and the 1970s a period of consolidation, the 1980s was a critical transition point. When the economy suddenly contracted by 1.7 percent in 1985, it was the first time since independence that Singapore had recorded negative growth. Former EDB chairman Chan Chin Bock called the 1985 recession an "emotional experience" which dealt Singapore a reality check after 20 years of continuous economic progress.

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While global conditions such as the US slowdown played a part, the reasons for the 1985 recession were largely domestic. A loss of competitiveness due to rising operating and wage costs – especially in relation to the other countries in the region – and high Central Provident Fund (CPF) contribution rates all contributed to the country's first major downturn. That said, this crisis also showed the willingness of Singapore's leaders to take bold and innovative steps in restructuring the economy to meet new challenges. In light of a new phase in economic development where sole dependence on labour-intensive industries was no longer viable, Singapore sought a 'total business' concept, creating 'twin engines of growth' that placed a new emphasis on the services sector to complement the traditional stranglehold of the manufacturing arm. In 1986, the EDB established a Services Promotion Division to drive inbound investment promotion in 18 tradable service sectors.

A crucial factor that helped Singapore regain her cost competitiveness was the tripartite relationship between the government, employers and the trade unions. Drastic cost-cutting measures including a reduction of employers' CPF contributions

and a wage restraint policy were successfully implemented without social unrest as they were endorsed by the trade unions. The concerted efforts to turn things around on all fronts paid off, as Singapore recovered from the recession in two years, and entered a new economic era confident of assuming the role of a global business city.

BECOMING FUTURE READY

Since taking the first tentative steps towards industrialisation 50 years ago, Singapore has become an economy driven by capital, knowledge, talent and innovation. Despite fresh challenges from the rapidly changing global economy, Singapore remains well-positioned to move into the

next stage of economic development. The same core attributes possessed by Singapore's economic pioneers when they guided the country to economic stability are helping to maintain Singapore's sustainability and competitiveness in the global market today.

In a world increasingly shaped by trends such as greater urbanisation, growing affluence and ageing populations, Singapore continues to promote an enterprising and conducive environment for companies to set up their headquarters, while providing good job opportunities to meet the aspirations of the population. Potential investors are often persuaded by ready access to a grow-

ing international and local pool of highly skilled talent as well as excellent infrastructure. Local companies are not left out either as the robust economic climate ensures a steady supply of opportunities for them to flourish. Indeed, Singapore has become the leading hub for a number of high technology and creative industries, including the biomedical science, aerospace, energy and chemical sectors, along with interactive and digital media. Jurong Island, for example, is home to almost a hundred global petroleum, petrochemical and specialty chemical firms.

There is little doubt that Singapore's economic development and achievements over the past five decades present an eventful chapter in the nation's history. The 'cando' spirit, common vision and the strong cooperation between the EDB and other government agencies have been a galvanising force in the economy. And it is this same passion and guiding principles that will spearhead Singapore's development into the future.



Priscilla Chua is Assistant Curator, National Museum of Singapore.







(Right, from top):

- An aerial view of Jurong Industrial Estate under development, 1960s. David Ng Collection, courtesy National Archives of Singapore.
- •Black Rollei XF35 rangefinder camera made in Singapore, 1970s. National Museum of Singapore Collection.
- or Then Minister for Social Affairs
 Othman Wok at the opening of
 Regency Wigs Limited in Jurong,
 1969. MITA Collection, courtesy
 National Archives of Singapore.

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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2011 • 21

he annual Night Festival is back for the fourth year. Organised by the National Museum of Singapore, the Night Festival is set to dazzle the public and demonstrate how art and culture can revitalise the urban experience, foster community engagement and transform the heart of the city.

Night Festival 2011 recalls a time in Singapore when the Civic District was a beacon to different nationalities of merchants and settlers – Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Chinese, Indians and Bugis. We remember the spirit of our forefathers from Asia and Europe who landed in Singapore and left legacies that have enriched our people.

The festival also takes its inspiration from the histories and traditions of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Arabian Sea and South Seas, retelling the stories of the cultural crossings and maritime journeys ages.

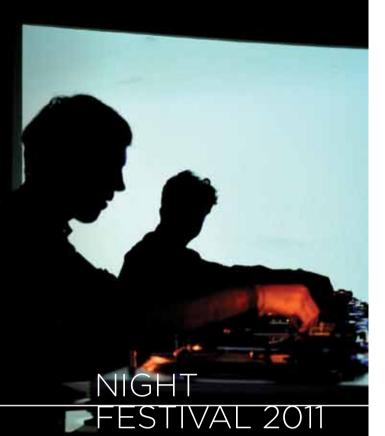
he annual Night Festival is back—that have fed our cultures and imaginations.

Teaming ethnic and contemporary music, song and dance, magical lights, films, documentaries and visual arts with the amazing, all-encompassing language of outdoor performance, Night Festival 2011 celebrates the unity of diverse cultures and histories and the will and sense of adventure of diverse peoples ~ a cultural apotheosis.

Celebrating cultures touched by waterways that have borne the great maritime adventures, from those of Chinese envoy Zhenghe and the Portuguese conquerors in Asia to the Venetian merchant Marco Polo and swashbuckling Sinbad, the festival is an evocation of the spirit behind journeys and departures, arrivals and landings; of passages, pilgrimages and inter-marriages encountered in sound, movement and im-

From the haunting *fado* of Goa to the Argentinean tango of old world Romania; from the spiritual melodies of Bulgarian women to fiery Georgian grooves; from the adventures of Marco Polo told in traditional Chinese puppetry to the imaginings of Ulysses' travels in a visual sound installation, the festival culminates with an outdoor aerial spectacular, paying homage to the resilience of all peoples who embark on journeys in search of love, faith, peace, new lands, new homes and riches.

An array of performances and events will be spread over various locations in the Bras Basah precinct: the National Museum of Singapore, the Singapore Art Museum, SAM@8Q, the Peranakan Museum, The Substation, Singapore Management University Campus Green and Stamford Green. We welcome all to join us on a voyage under the stars.



NIGHT OF WONDER

HIGHLIGHTS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

THEATER TOL (BELGIUM)

Voyage Night Festival 2011 would not be complete without a magnificent outdoor spectacle. This year, the historical and social context of the Civic District provides the inspiration for the Belgian troupe Theater Tol, who will integrate the authentic features of National Museum's iconic facade into an aerial extravaganza. In a dazzling journey which combines music, dance, film, acrobatics, live performance and pyrotechnics, Theater Tol will take the audience through a world of voyages and encounters, fascinating and magical like summer night dreams.

SOUNDWALK (UNITED STATES)

An important dimension in this festival is contemplation – providing respite from the frenetic pace of life to catch up with our intuitive selves and emerge refreshed in spirit. This is to be found in Soundwalk's works *Ulysses Syndrome*, *Rub' Al Khali* and *The Passenger*.

The international sound collective has meticulously charted routes from the open sea of the Mediterranean to the deserts of Oman and the Straits of Gilbraltar. With an ever-growing catalogue of environmental recordings, intercepted communication, distant song and the obscure, Soundwalk creates what can be described as audible journeys that retrace our natural, urban and social landscapes.

HIGHLIGHTS AT SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS GREEN & STAMFORD GREEN

CAKE THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS (SINGAPORE)

Our history is filled with stories of people who leave everything behind to discover new beginnings across continents and oceans. In *The Shape of a Dream* by Cake Theatrical Productions, pilgrims embark on a journey. They move across vast terrain bearing curiously shaped, sometimes towering structures – symbols of the past, present and future, of hope and necessity and of dreams taking shape. As they move with these lit installations, the pilgrims pattern the open space with signs of human activity and quest. The enigmatic larger-than-life symbols they bear morph and evolve to capture the physical, metaphysical and spiritual dimensions that journeys kindle. Glowing in the night sky, they magnificently conjure visions of faith, courage and hope in a journey across all boundaries.

THE SHIN (GEORGIA)

The Shin's "instrumental theatre" is the sound of Georgia's musical encounter with the world. The Persian-inflected melismas of the eastern Georgian regions, the rich polyphonic textures of the country's West and the fiercely proud rhythms of the mountainous North are woven with musical threads of India, the Iberian peninsula, jazz and even European classical music. The Shin's dancers are true soloists who emerge organically and spontaneously from among the seated musicians, adding an improvised visual melody to the mix.

OANA CATALINA CHITU (ROMANIA)

Bucharest Tango is a tribute to days long past, more precisely the period between the World Wars, when the Romanian tango was extremely popular, even as far abroad as Berlin. Oana Catalina Chitu's warm and sonorous voice does justice to the tangos; the arrangements are original and yet remain in touch with tradition. No other singer of the younger generation from Romania has been able to approach the tangos a la romanesque so authentically and yet so freely.

FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST & SATURDAY, 27 AUGUST 2011 7pm - 2am National Museum of Singapore, the Singapore Art Museum, SAM@8Q, the Peranakan Museum, The Substation, Singapore Management University Campus Green and Stamford Green. (Including Night Lights)

FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST TO SATURDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2011 (9 evenings) 7.30pm - 2am Spectacular light installations at the Singapore Art Museum and various locations along Bras Basah Road and its vicinity.



MIAO XIAOCHUN

THE LAST JUDGEMENT IN CYBERSPACE

2006 C-PRINT

418 X 360 CM

COLLECTION OF THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUI

SINGAPORE

ART MUSEUM

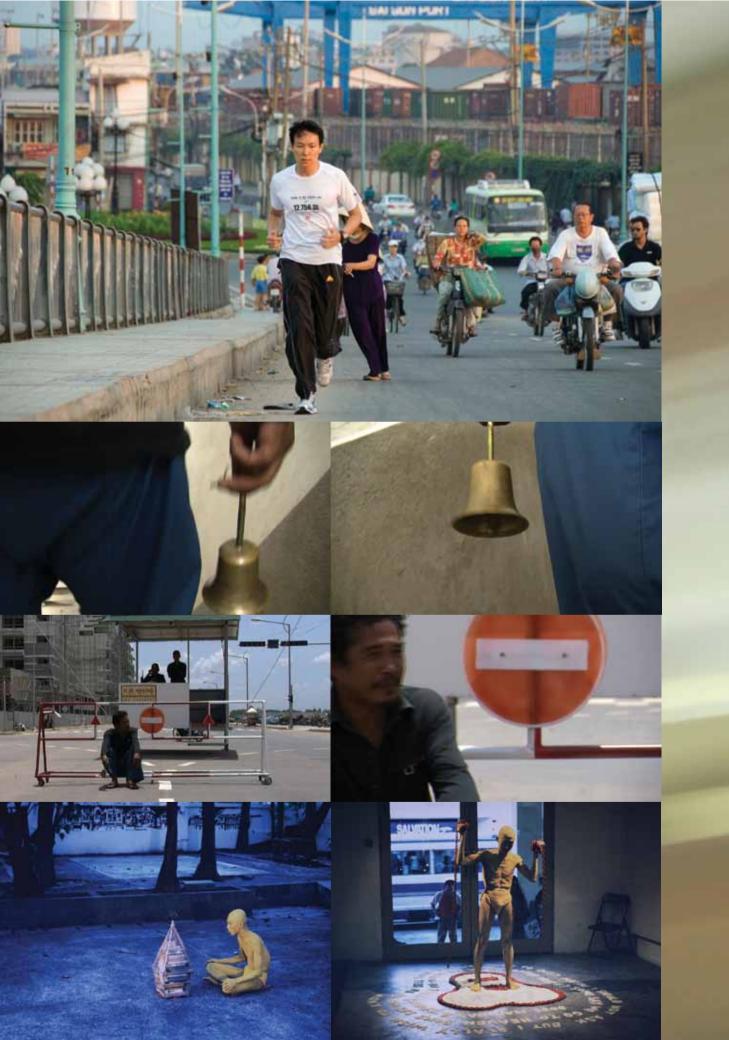


Beijing-based multidisciplinary artist Miao Xiaochun expands the boundaries of photography by incorporating elements of new media. Representative of recent new media art of China, Miao's works play with digital manipulation, the traditional Chinese scroll format, and the alter ego.

The Last Judgement in Cyberspace is part of a series that appropriates and develops Western canonical paintings into computer-generated scenarios that provide different perspectives of the original work. The different perspectives combined give viewers a larger-than-life experience of the original painting.

Miao appropriates Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes, creating a virtual model of the Apocalypse, replacing each of the 400 figures in the iconic work with an image of himself, representing the 'every man'. While placing these figures in the corresponding pose and position as in the original fresco, Miao captures this same scene from different vantage points, showing The Second Coming from within and outside the scene. The view from the top pictures the viewer as saint or seraph, while from below, as the damned.





THE

ongoing exhibition *Video, an Art, a History 1965–2010* presents at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) a selection of video works from the Centre Pompidou collection, in resonance with works from the SAM collection. About 50 works

are shown at SAM and SAM@8Q. It is a pilot exhibition bringing together two institutional collections: one that began in France in 1976 with works from 1965 till today, the other since 2008 in Singapore; one turned towards major international trends, the other steered towards Asian works – more specifically those from the currently very prolific region of Southeast Asia.

Nowadays, most international exhibitions, biennales, museums of contemporary art, certain private collections and even contemporary art fairs exhibit and present video works in diverse forms. The exhibition recounts the development of video art from 1965 to 2010 in six main themes.

UTOPIA AND CRITIQUE OF TELEVISION

Video was born in the 1960s into two contexts: those of the fine arts – performance art in particular – and television production and broadcasting. The first section of the exhibition presents works which explore the processes of television production, the political and social influence of the media as well as the role of the viewer. Television here appears as the key subject of the works and the medium of production and broadcasting. Video is thus shared between television and artistic creation.

At first, some artists explored the television set as an object by placing it within the artistic and displaying it in exhibitions. The first to do so was Korean artist Nam June Paik who made use of the signal emitted by television sets. He manipulated it in a very minimalist way in the installation *Moon is the Oldest TV*, realised in 1965, and later in the video *Global Groove*, produced for the New York television channel WNET in 1973.

Other artists. like Valie Export in Austria in 1971 and Bill Viola in the United States in 1983–84, question the role of television audiences and adopt an ethnological approach to this 'new population of spectators'. The screen becomes a mirror reflecting the attitude of this new 'ethnic group'. Some other artists examine television programmes from a more critical angle, studying their strengths, powers of attraction and flaws. In the works of Sonia Andrade and Mako Idemitsu, video deflects television broadcasts to serve critical purposes, analysing semiologically their content in the 1970s and 1980s.

ISSUES OF IDENTITY

In the 1970s, video art entered a period of social and political revival marked by student movements, the rise of feminism and demonstrations against war and racism. Following Joseph Beuys' idea that "every man is an artist", the human body becomes a piece of artistic and aesthetic material. In this context, video registers, deconstructs and recreates performances by artists, whether in public or alone in their studio. In the latter case, the camera becomes the only witness to artistic expression. The human body – the artists' and actionists' primary instrument – most often expresses feelings of pain, violence (Vito Acconci) and desire, but also objectified physical experience which transforms the body into analogical codes, such as in the work of Toshio Matsumoto.

In 1988, Jean Baudrillard posed this question: "Am I a man or a machine?" Valie Export belongs to the first generation of women artists who challenged a patriarchal media society, using the female body to combat fossilised stereotypes. As for Sonia Khurana, by showing her denuded body, she attacks clichés about conventional ideals of beauty. The integration of the public into performances or as a participant in video installations leads to an interactive reflection on the role of the individual in our society, as in the works of Lee Wen and Joan Logue. In 1996, Tony Oursler conceived the installation *SWITCH*, a circuit of *mise en abyme* within the museum itself, which incorporates the visitor in an imaginary narrative throughout his or her visit using 'talking heads' and surveillance cameras, while at the same time questioning our contemporary world populated with cameras and surveillance systems.

(Title page): Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, *Two Planets, Millet's The Gleaners 1857 and the Thai Farmers* (detail), 2008, video 16 minutes, Singapore Art Museum collection. (Facing page, from top): Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Breathing is Free: 12,756.3*, 2008–2009, Singapore Art Museum collection. Keith Deverell, Sue McCauley, Meas Sokhorn, Bandol Srey, *The Hawker's Song*, 2010, Singapore Art Museum collection. Lee Wen, *Journey of A Yellow Man No. 3: Desire (Lee Wen: Documentation of Performances on Video)*, 1993, Singapore Art Museum collection.

FROM VIDEO TAPE TO INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION

The 1960s and 1970s were conducive to research in phenomenology, parapsychology, conceptualisation and technology. In art, the emergence of video coincided with the acceptance of performance art and the arrival of installations.

This section examines representations of the self and the other, especially through the placement of the body in space. Artists such as Bruce Nauman began to document their performances on videotape before delegating the role of the performer to the viewer who is also bound by the conditions of museum space. In the age of minimalism and conceptual art, artists like Martial Raysse, Peter Campus, Dan Graham and Bruce Nauman transformed the visitor into an active and indispensable parameter of the artwork which cannot otherwise function. This is seen in Raysse's picture, Graham's mirror and Nauman's white cube (in connection with the works of author and playwright Samuel Beckett).

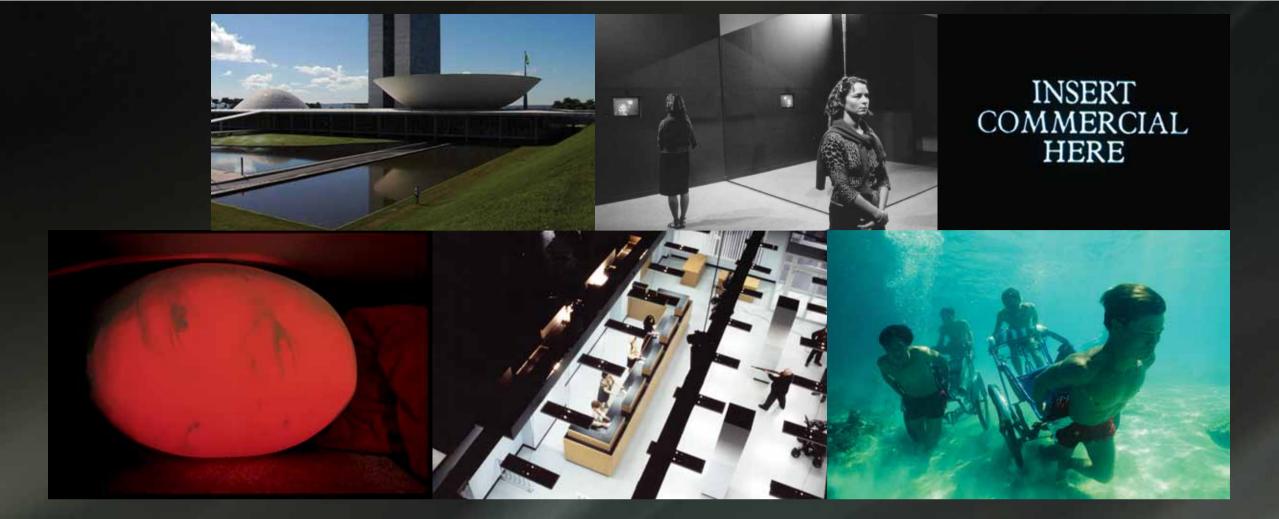
Most of the works in this section employ the closed circuit (a video camera linked to a monitor) or the surveillance circuit. The screen is likened to a window or a mirror, and the camera to the eye. The visitor is often filmed unbeknown and his or her image is reversed, delayed or displaced several metres away in a meticulously designed space.

LANDSCAPE DREAMS

The Chinese concept of landscape (*shanshui*) has two basic elements, mountain (*shan*) and water (*shui*), and has inspired countless poets and painters. Using ink and brush, China's greatest artists strived to transcribe their contemplations on paper or silk. In this artistic practice, which is one of the noblest, the quest for the Way (*Dao*) and breath resonance (*qiyun*) unites the artist and nature through meditation (Toshio Matsumoto)

The mountain is also the land of myths and legends, feared at times, venerated at others and sometimes even deified. In Asia, Mount Wutai in China and Mount Fuji in Japan attest to this (Ko Nakajima). After sojourning in Japan, artists living in the United States (Bill Viola) and in France (Thierry Kuntzel) have expressed an interest in landscape as a metaphor for time and space. Both of these artists, who filmed in Japan, present man with the infinity of the landscape in their exhibited works.

The urban landscape has become a recurrent theme in contemporary video art. With the largest number of megalopolises in the world today, Asia's transformation



over the last few years has been rapid and dramatic. Urban dynamics (Louidgi Beltrame), population influxes (Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba), architectural renewal (Rachel Reupke) as well as the effects of globalisation (The Propeller Group) and the loss of natural spaces or local patrimony (Keith Deverell, Sue McCauley, Meas Sokhorn, Srey Bandol) preoccupy the artists in their video works. The natural landscape – the field of meditation and contemplation – confronts the urban landscape, the theatre of a passive and apprehensive observation.

MEMORY:

BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY

In the post-Marxist era, especially in countries with emerging contemporary cultures, artists prefer to use digital media like photography and video to express themselves. The evolution of a new geopolitical map of creation has picked up pace over the past few years, affecting most parts of the world, including the Balkans, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. It should be remembered that from the 1960s to 1980s, video artists came largely from North and South America, Japan, and Europe.

The artists in this section focus on questions linked to the reality of their world, of our world – political reality (Liu Wei), ethnological reality (Sima Salehi Rahni), cultural reality (Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook), religious reality (Than Sok), and sociological reality (Arahmaiani) – and transform them into artistic works that are generally poetic. *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* is the symptomatic title of Johan Grimonprez's work that revisits historical events in a poetic, and certainly subjective, way.

By adopting the documentary style, artists stay close to historical reality. They sometimes replay, interpret, and comment upon isolated fragments of reality (Richard Streitmatter-Tran) through technical interventions like cuts, shots, sound, language, and special effects (Dinh Q. Lê). The format of documentary rests upon the tradition founded on experimental cinema and the works of filmmakers like Chris Marker. Today, a new generation of artists offer a distinct perspective on their community that has become global, most notably through new media such as the Internet. Video thus acts like a memory exercise of societies, transposing events often situated on the boundary between myth/fiction on one hand and reality/history on the other.

DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVES

The sixth section of the exhibition explores the crisis of narratives and the end of representations with works from the 1980s to 2009: six artists deconstruct images and sounds from their cinematographic culture (Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Huyghe, Yang Fudong, Isaac Julien, Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu). Video art has much evolved since Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* towards spectacular installations involving video projections, large screens and multidirectional sound in specially devised dark spaces that resemble auditoriums for some (Julien) and staged exhibitions for others (Huyghe).

Video artists now look to the professionals of documentary, narrative film and television series for resources. Shooting with professional teams, and editing and sound mixing in studios are common practices in art. Sound itself has become an incontrovertible element of video installation and is handled with great care. Some artists shoot their own images and record their own sound (Julien, Yang), while others appropriate images and sounds from existing films, borrowing and mixing filmed images and recorded sounds (Huyghe). The purpose of these manipulations of images and sounds is to recreate newly structured narratives that are closer to contemporary concerns. Installation here gives way to various modalities. By including the visitor in the work's space, the visitor actively becomes one of the work's constituent and necessary parameters.

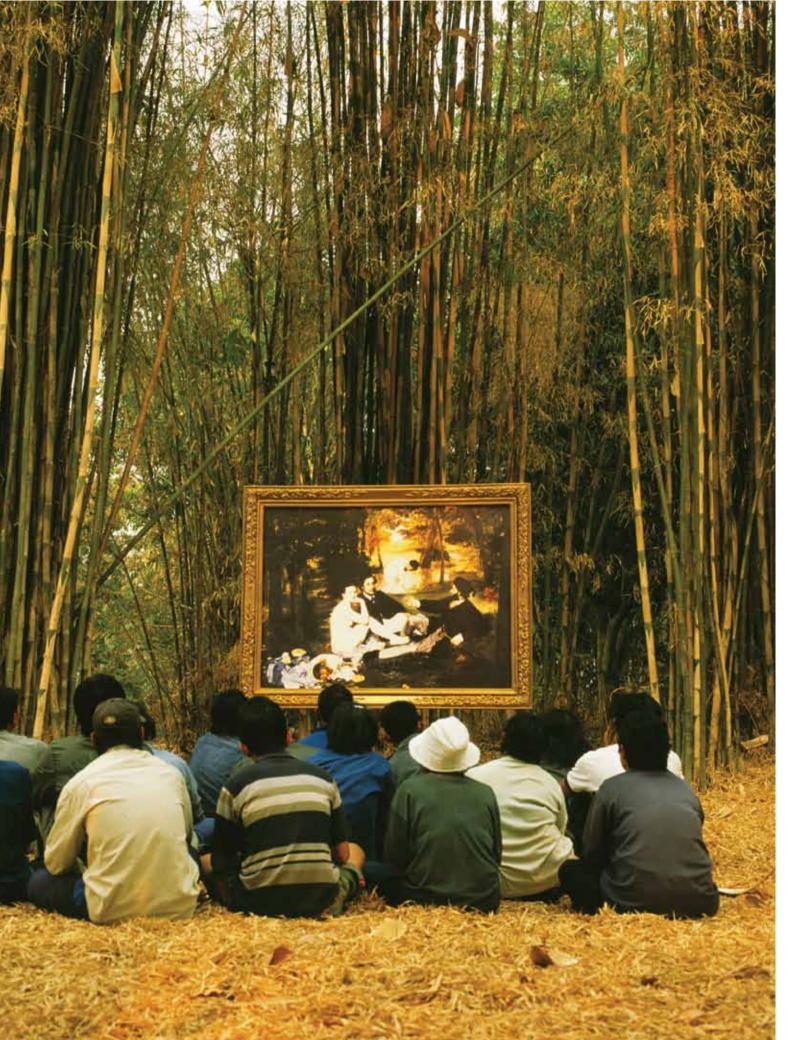
CONCLUSION

Today we cannot but notice the proliferation of works using digital tools such as video, photo and sound. Video has been in existence since 1960, for already half a century. Nonetheless, during these 50 years, video has made considerable progress, not only in pushing against the frontiers of aesthetics but also in the fields of technology and art history.

(Clockwise, from top left): Louidgi Beltrame, Brasilia/Chandigarh, 2008, © Louidgi Beltrame. Courtesy Jousse Entreprise, Paris. Dan Graham, Present Continuous Past(s), 1974, © Coll. Centre Pompidou. Photo Philippe Migeat. Johan Grimonprez, DIAL H-I-S-T-O-R-Y, 1997, © Coll. Centre Pompidou. Photo Johan Grimonprez and Rony Vissers. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam: Towards the Complex – For the Courageous, the Curious, and the Cowards, 2001, © Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba. Coll. Centre Pompidou. Lehman Maupin Gallery, New York. Courtesy of Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo. Pierre Huyghe, The Third Memory, 1999, © Coll. Centre Pompidou. Photo Georges Meguerditchian. Tony Oursler, SWITCH, 1996, © Coll. Centre Pompidou. Photo Jean-Claude Planchet.

(Next page): Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, Two Planets, Manet's Luncheon on the Gras and the Thai Farmers (detail), 2008, video 16 minutes, Singapore Art Museum collection.

Christine Van Assche is Chief Curator, New Media Department, Centre Pompidou. Patricia Levasseur de la Motte was formerly Assistant Curator, Singapore Art Museum



An exclusive range of merchandise designed by Singapore artist Justin Lee.

INSPIRED BY LEE'S ARTWORK IN THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM COLLECTION.



Visit the Asian Civilisations Museum and view a range of merchandise designed by Singapore Artist Justin Lee in conjunction with the exhibition Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor And His Legacy.

ALSO AVAILABLE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE AND THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM.



WALTER MERCHANDISE

in SAM's Art Garden and bring home the a chance to participate in a colouring contest who chance upon him. when you purchase the Colouring Storybook, and stand to win the complete set of Walter Walter, a pet project by Singaporean artist Dawn merchandise! Come soon before he hops away. Ng for SAM, is a celebration of Singapore's ordi-Walter merchandise is available at the Singa-

This Children's Season, look out for Walter pore Art Museum, National Museum of Singapore and Asian Civilisations Museum. Walter huggable special edition Walter plush toy! is a series of guerrilla installations of a curious Visit Walter and grab your very own Walter colossal bunny who pops up across Singapore's Colouring Stoybook that tells of his curious landscape. His contrast to the environment adventures. Also available are limited editions makes us relook the overlooked and overof a Walter pencil case, tissue holder and pouch familiar places in our country by invoking a set, inflatable toy and postcards. You will get sense of surprise and wonder among those

nary that helps us see our city as children again.

MADE BY ME

Inspired by the inquisitive and imaginative nature of children, MADE BY ME is a range of fun and engaging D.I.Y. kits that showcase elements of Singaporean heritage and encourage creativity. This Children's Season, try your hand at designing your very own puzzle cube, kaleidoscope, tote bag, t-shirt or even build an iconic Singapore heritage building!

MADE BY ME is available for sale at the National Museum of Singapore, Singapore Art Museum and Asian Civilisations Museum.



MUSE**SHOP.**



Life After Death: An Installation by Justin Lee

• 8 June = 30 October 2011

This dream-like night scene features stylised Terracotta Army warriors flanked by graceful fairy-like maidens armed with modern technologies. Rising above the quirky army are flags emblazoned with symbols of contemporary Singapore and bordered with Lee's signature motif, the Chinese character for 'Double Happiness'. Blending Western pop art with traditional Eastern imagery, this installation gives rise to new readings of a work that is a mix of many cultures and thus decidedly Singaporean. Although the Terracotta Warriors are tomb figures, Lee's playful use of colour and light suggest that life after death might not be so bad after

Providing for the Afterlife: Han Funerary Art

• 11 June - 30 October 2011

This exhibition introduces a broad range of Chinese funerary objects from the Han dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE). Referred to as minggi or 'spirit objects'. these items cater to the needs of souls in the afterworld and highlight the longstanding concern of the Chinese for the life beyond.

//THE NATIONAL ART GALLERY, SINGAPORE

Notable Acquisitions Exhibition 2011: Featuring works by Tan Oe Pang

• Till 21 August 2011

Held at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), the Notable Acquisitions Exhibition is an ongoing series that highlights recent acquisitions and donations at the National Art Gallery, Singapore. The present exhibition features a selection of works by Tan Oe Pang. One of Singapore's established ink artists, Tan Oe Pang (b. 1947) is known for his daring use of ink and vivid composition which push the boundaries of Chinese ink practice.

Liu Kang Centennial Exhibition

• 29 July – 16 October 2011

Liu Kang (1911-2004) is regarded as one of Singapore's most important artists. Held at SAM, this exhibition provides insights into Liu Kang as a figure who was actively involved in various visual arts fields, from the creation of artworks to education and criticism. Featuring 100 works by Liu Kang, this exhibition commemorates the artist's centennial year of birth and invites visitors on a journey of exploration into the life and mind of the artist.

Seeing the Kite Again Series II

• Till 12 November 2012

Held at SAM, this exhibition is inspired by Wu Guanzhong's metaphor of a kite and how it expresses the connection between an artist, his life and the people around him. By bridging Chinese and Western aesthetics, Wu blazed the trail for the modernisation of Chinese art In 2008, the internationally acclaimed artist donated his largest gift of 113 important works to the National Heritage Board. This exhibition showcases some of Wu's most outstanding works produced from 1960s to 2000s in the oil and ink medium

// THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF

William Farquhar Collection Goh Seng Choo Gallery

• From September 2011

Prior to becoming Singapore's first Resident and Commandant, William Farguhar served as Resident and Commandant of Melaka from 1803-1818. During this period, he made several important botanical and zoological discoveries, and amassed a sizable collection of natural history drawings. These watercolours depict the diverse flora and fauna of the Malay Peninsula and demonstrate Farquhar's oft overlooked contributions as a natural history enthusiast. These 477 drawings have since found their way back to Singapore through Mr Goh Geok Khim, who purchased and donated the complete set to the National Museum of Singapore in 1995. This year, the Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings finds a permanent home in the Museum's Balcony with an exhibition showcasing a rotating selection of the drawings presented in their original 19th century context of colonial expansion, exploration and discovery.

Transforming Landscapes, Improving Lives: 50 Years of **Economic Development**

• 15 June - 30 September 2011

From a per capita GDP of \$500 in the 1960s to more than \$50,000 today, Singapore's economic growth has come a long way. As the Economic Development Board (EDB) celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is timely for Singaporeans to reflect upon the country's economic development, a critical block in the nation-building process. People and 'war stories' take centre-stage in this exhibition, with personal anecdotes providing a glimpse into how lives have been transformed alongside Singapore's economic development.

Abbas, 45 Years in Photography

• 18 June –18 September 2011

A member of the prestigious photo agency Magnum since 1981, Iran-born photographer Abbas has roamed the world for 45 years, covering major political and social events and publishing his works widely in world magazines and newspapers. Through his early photojournalistic and other major works covering the Iranian Revo// THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

Night Festival 2011 26, 27 August & 2, 3 September 2011

This year, the Night Festival takes its inspiration from the histories and cultures of the Black Sea to retell the stories of the cultural crossings and maritime journeys that have fed our own cultures and imaginations. Teaming ethnic and contemporary music, song and dance, magical lights, film and visual arts with an amazing international outdoor performance, Night Festival 2011 celebrates the unity of diverse cultures and histories as well as the will and sense of adventure of diverse peoples! The main events will take place on the public green spaces of the Singapore Management University and Stamford Green, with museum late night openings to 2am and special events happening in and around the National Museum of Singapore, Singapore Art Museum, the Peranakan Museum and The Substation.

lution and the Islamic world. Abbas has shown his dedication to the struggles within different societies in this rapidly globalising world, with an emphasis on religion defined by him as culture rather than faith. This first retrospective exhibition of Abbas' works features 133 visually striking black and white photographs, and four audio-visual clips.

Treasures of Vacheron Constantin - A Legacy of Watchmaking since 1755

• 24 June –14 August 2011

This exhibition explores the heritage of the oldest Swiss watch manufacturer Vacheron Constantin, which spans more than 250 years, and the watchmaker's cutting edge technology and craftsmanship through a display of 180 timepieces. Besides telling the fascinating story of highly skilled artisans and their creations in the history of timekeeping, the timepieces also accentuate the evolution of the measure of time and the equilibrium between technical prowess and aesthetic perfection.

Tracking Memories: An Exhibition of Photo Works by Kwek Leng Joo and Watercolour Paintings by Ong Kim Seng

• 15 July - 28 August 2011 Tracking Memories is a showcase of photographs by Kwek Leng Joo, a business leader and avid photographer, and the watercolour paintings of Ong Kim Seng, one of Singapore's most recognised watercolourists. This collaboration pays tribute to the historical significance of the railway, following the recent developments in Malayan Railway sites in Singapore. Tracking Memories offers not only refreshing

perspectives of train stations, railway

tracks and activities around them, but also a peek into train operations rarely seen by the public

VINSECALENDAR.

History Seminar 2011

• 16 July 2011

This History Seminar is an inter-disciplinary platform where the audience can actively interact with academics, researchers and filmmakers on the interplay of memory and identity. By means of personal stories, ethnographic anecdotes, and the use of film as well as research findings, the alluring process of how past recollections can create and shape the outcome of individual lives is brought into the open for discussion. Two films by Boo Jun Feng, Stranger and Keluar Baris will also be screened. The line-up of speakers includes Dr. Kevin Blackburn, Dr. Roxana Waterson, Mr Leong Kar Yen and Mr. Boo Jun Feng. The seminar is open only to registered participants. Those interested can email historyfest.2011@gmail.com.

Tea: The Drink That Changed the World

27 July 2011, 7,30pm

Tea is often perceived as a calming beverage. Its history is, however, anything but gentle. From wars, revolutions and espionage to artistic expressions, religious aestheticism and social change, tea has played a pivotal role in shaping many aspects of the world today. In this talk, part of the museum's Lighter Side of History series, Melanie Lee will take you through the riveting narrative of this common vet humble drink, making connections with local tea heritage and today's popular tea practices. Registration is needed. Please email your contact details to nhb nm lectures@

// THE PERANAKAN MUSEUM

Sarong Kebaya: Peranakan Fashion and Its International Sources

• Till 26 February 2012

Explore the sarong kebaya - favoured fashion of Peranakan women for generations in this visual feast that traces the evolution of the *kebaya* from its roots in 16th century Islamic garments through its development across Southeast Asia Through rare and beautiful works, visitors will discover how Peranakan fashion was influenced by other communities and how it developed its own unique character.

// SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Video, an Art, a History 1965 - 2010 A Selection from the Centre Pompidou and Singapore Art **Museum Collections**

• 10 June – 18 September 2011 Based on the video and multimedia installations of France's Centre Pompidou and SAM, this exhibition recounts the history of this very contemporary field punctuating the main phases of contemporary art from 1965 to 2010. This exhibition presents Centre Pompidou's well-received new media travelling exhibition with an added Southeast Asian touch. Expanded for its Singapore and Southeast Asia debut, the exhibition will showcase SAM's own collection of video works and installations by Southeast Asian artists such as Lee Wen, Dinh Q Lê, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, alongside Centre Pompidou's collection featuring artists such as Nam June Paik, Bill Viola, Bruce Nauman, Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Huyghe and Isaac Julien.

Art Garden

• 3 June - 30 August 2011

The well-loved Art Garden returns with a selection of artworks chosen for their

imagination and interactivity. Say hello to Walter, the curious colossal bunny. Catch the Dancing Solar Flowers installation and discover how light makes the flowers dance. Step into the fantastic blue universe of Paramodelic-Graffiti, dress up life-size hand-painted dolls in Mummy Dearest, shop at our lively Fruits market and create your own 3D paper fruit.

Moving Image Gallery

- Artist Films

• 1 & 8 July, 5 August, 16 September

SAM presents a series of exceptional film and video works that explore the relationship between art and the moving image and promote dialogue on contemporary practices in visual culture. For a list of screenings, please visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg. Tickets cost \$10. Seating is limited, so please email nhb_sam_programs@nhb.gov.sg.

Home Movies

• 22 & 29 July, 5, 12 & 19 August,

2 & 9 September 2011

SAM is proud to present a special series of films in conjunction with Video: An Art. A History 1965-2010: A Selection from the Centre Pompidou and Singapore Art Museum Collections. These eleven films are notable for their unique takes on the themes of home movies. amateur film, and found footage. For a list of screenings, please visit www. singaporeartmuseum.sg. Tickets cost \$10. There is limited seating, so please email nhb_sam_programs@nhb.gov.sg.

// SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM

Singapore Takes Flight

- A Hundred Years

• Till 30 September 2012 Aviation history in Singapore was made on 16 March 1911 - the day the first

// NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE

National Day Parades Over the Years: Through the Eyes of MICA **Photographers**

5 - 27 September 2011

Beaming participants waving flags and the Air Force's ceremonial State Flag fly-pass have become synonymous with our National Day celebrations. See how Singapore marked her first birthday in 1966 and witness how the celebrations of our nation's independence have transformed over the years in this exhibition at the Marine Parade Library. Jointly presented by the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts (MICA) and the National Archives of Singapore, this exhibition showcases a selection of National Day Parade photographs taken by the MICA Photo Unit from 1966 to 2005.

aircraft, a Bristol Boxkite biplane, took flight in the country. This exhibition commemorates the centenary of this event through postage stamps, picture postcards and first day covers which trace the aviation history of Singapore.

Bunny Wonderland

• Till 1 January 2012 Bunny mascots, Stampy and Choppy,

will lead you into their wonderful world through stamps and interactive displays. You can pat the fur of bunnies, feel their weight and discover amazing facts about these adorable creatures. For instance, did you know that a rabbit's nose has more than 100 million olfactory cells? While rabbits are small and cute, they are a big responsibility. Learn about responsible ownership through multimedia games and admire colourful bunny stamps and philatelic materials. Held to celebrate the zodiac year of the rabbit, this exhibition is suitable for children aged 5 years and above.

The Story of Dr. Sun Yat Sen

• 28 May - 16 October 2011

Did you know that Dr. Sun Yat Sen visited Singapore eight times? In fact, he was a great traveller who had supporters from all around the world. Unrayel the life and times of this great revolutionary leader of China in this interactive exhibition. Children can explore a recreation of Dr. Sun's room and discover little known facts about him through stamps and play. They can also bring home a free activity book. Developed by the Singapore Philatelic Museum (SPM) in collaboration with the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, this exhibition is suitable for children aged 7 years and above.

- The Man Who Changed China

Dr. Sun Yat Sen

• 9 July - 18 September 2011

There is no man in the history of modern China as universally revered as Dr. Sun Yat Sen. SPM celebrates the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution of China with an exhibition on this great revolutionary leader. Discover the origins of Dr. Sun, his political ideologies and actions, and the role Singapore played in his revolutionary efforts. Developed by SPM in collaboration with the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, this exhibition features loaned artefacts such as a calligraphy scroll handwritten by Dr. Sun, and the Sun Yat Sen philatelic collection of Meng Zhao Long, a Beijing philatelist.

// NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE

10 Years That Shaped a Nation, 1965-1975

• July - August 2011

On 9 August 1965, Singapore was suddenly thrust into independence and separated from the Federation, With no natural resources and facing un-

employment, vulnerable security and far from satisfactory health conditions, Singapore's leaders had to stand up to the challenges of building a viable nation. This exhibition looks back at an important period of Singapore's history - our first decade of independence Learn about the major contributions of our founding generation of leaders and appreciate how they laid the foundation for an independent city-state. This exhibition will be held at the Central Library from 4-24 July and Jurong Regional Library from 1-30 August.

Chalo Dhili (On to Delhi) - Historical Journey of the Indian

National Army

• 5 - 25 September 2011 The rich social cultural economic and political ties between India and Singapore started soon after Stamford Raffles established Singapore as a trading post in the Far East. In Chalo Dhili, you will be brought through the struggle for India's Independence, from the revolutionary origin of the Indian National Army (INA) in wartime Singapore to the post-war trials of these freedom fighters at The Red Fort in Delhi. This exhibition is held at the Central Library.

Five-Footway Traders

• 7 - 26 September 2011

Revisit the trades and activities along the busy five-foot ways of early Singapore! This term originated from the town plan of Sir Stamford Raffles, which stipulated that all buildings were to have a covered walkway or corridor of about five-feet in width at the front. This enchanting exhibition at the Jurong Regional Library looks through the windows of time to the days when fivefoot ways sheltered trades such as letter writers, mamak stalls, garland makers. fortune tellers, locksmiths and cobblers. Get to know these vanishing trades. for you might just still see one around the corner of old streets in Singapore.

// PRESERVATION OF MONIIMENTS BOARD

Preservation of Monuments Board Walking Tours

Do you have a passion for history, art, architecture or simply love a good story? If so, don't miss the Preservation of Monuments Board's (PMB) new walking tours of Singapore's National Monuments and historic sites within the Civic and Cultural District and surrounding areas.

Led by Volunteer Guides and student Monument Ambassadors, these tours highlight Singapore's rich architectural heritage and the stories of diverse immigrant communities. Covering religious monuments, schools, colonial landmarks and museums, the tours have limited places so interested individuals are advised to register early to avoid disappointment. More information can be found at www.pmb.sg.

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a sunny island, set in the sea. There's a Kampong of low-rise flats by a bay of plenty with dedicated barbeque pits for halal food. Drive past the local mosque, head for the hills and you will arrive at a settlement with a coffee shop offering wanton mee and chicken rice amid apartment blocks that would not look out of place in Tiong Bahru or Balestier Road. Temples dedicated to Kuan Yin, Mar Chor the Sea Goddess and Tua Pek Kong (the 'grand old man' beloved of Chinese seafarers) overlook a coast of sun-drenched cliffs, while the names of pioneers who perished far from their homelands are carved on granite headstones in the shadow of tall forest trees.

Suspend belief and you could imagine yourself in the heart of Southeast Asia, where the descendants of migrants as well as more recent arrivals rub shoulders over *roti prata* and prawn noodles, exchange greetings in Malay or Hokkien and celebrate the end of the day with a stroll by the beach and dip into warm tropical waters.

Then you see the crabs. They infest nearly every corner of the island, from the rainforests of the deep interior to the gardens of village houses. And come the wetter months of the year-end monsoon, the bright red crustaceans emerge to overrun roads, shops and unguarded dwellings on their annual migration to spawning grounds by the sea. Walls, wheels and wide open spaces fail to deter their march, though thousands perish under speeding cars or die of dehydration in exposed fields.



Look up and the sky offers a scene of primeval beauty and natural brutality. Instead of crows or mynahs, there is a perpetual fleet of frigatebirds, pterodactyl-like soarers with long hooked bills and even longer wings that grant mastery over the island's airspace. The aerial pirates await the daily arrival of fellow fliers, boobies and tropicbirds, enroute to their nests with crops filled with fish and other pelagic creatures. Harassing the weary parents, the frigatebirds force their victims to regurgitate a measure of food, which the avian highwaymen snare in mid-air to feed themselves and their own chicks.

Remote yet replete with reminders of what life was like a generation ago, Christmas Island offers a cultural shock that stems less from its exotic location than the sight of familiar favourites and friendly faces on a rocky plateau in a little-visited corner of the Indian Ocean. This uncanny blend is enriched (or some would say, encroached) by a physical landscape of dense jungles and deserted shores where fearless birds and large land crabs far outnumber a

ALL PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR.











Phosphate has supported the economy of Christmas Island for over a century and left an indelible mark on the island's landscape. The now unpopulated peripheries continue to betray signs of former mining settlements in abandoned railway tracks and lonely temples that still receive the tribute of locals.

human population in the low thousands.

Australian in nation yet very much Asian in nature, Christmas Island's communal diversity arose from a history that is as short as it is turbulent. The island was named by Captain William Mynors of the East India Company vessel the *Royal Mary* when he passed by on 25 December 1643. But until 1888, when the British annexed the territory to gain possession of its phosphate deposits, Christmas Island was uninhabited by man, save occasional forays by ship crews eager for fresh water and fowl meat.

Administered as part of the Straits Settlements, the British quickly opened phosphate mines that drew thousands of labourers from China, India and Malaya. A prized fertiliser and industrial mineral, phosphate has supported the economy of Christmas Island for over a century and left an indelible mark on the island's landscape and society. Vast tracts of rainforest were cleared for mines and remain as barren scars devoid of trees. The now unpopulated peripheries of the island continue to betray signs of former mining settlements in abandoned railway tracks and lonely temples

that still receive the tribute of locals on important Taoist festivals.

For indentured miners, life on Christmas Island was far from paradise. The harsh terrain made phosphate extraction an arduous task and a diet limited to mostly polished rice led to regular and often fatal outbreaks of beri beri, a disease caused by vitamin deficiencies. Their colonial masters enjoyed the comfort of spacious bungalows and urbane clubs located far from the mines, while the miners found solace in opium and the occasional visit to the 'White House', a shack where working girls from Malaya offered an hour of physical comfort.

hristmas Island's mineral wealth made it a minor arena in the Second World War, when a Japanese submarine torpedoed the Norwegian phosphate freighter *Eidsvold* at Flying Fish Cove on 21 January 1942. Aerial bombardment soon followed and the miniscule British garrison succumbed when a contingent of 30 Indian troops mutinied and murdered

their officers. The surviving Europeans were imprisoned when the Japanese made landfall on 31 March 1942 and commandeered the phosphate operations for their war effort. The remaining islanders were forced to work the mines or were shipped to Surabaya, although some managed to hide in the jungles throughout the Japanese occupation. Harassed by allied submarines and shackled by daring acts of sabotage, the Japanese failed to make much of the mines before the war ended and Christmas Island flew the Union Jack once more.

In the postwar years, the reopened mines continued to attract workers from Malaya and Singapore, as well as Cocos Malays from the nearby Cocos-Keeling Islands. These waves of migration eventually led to the island's current demographics with individuals of Chinese origin making up 60-70 percent of residents, Cocos Malays accounting for about 20 percent and minorities of Indian, Australian or European descent. The mining operations were acquired by the Australian and New Zealand governments in 1948 and with Singapore's self-rule imminent, Christmas Island was sold to Australia on 1 October 1958 for 2.9 million pounds, a sum based on the estimated value of phosphate earnings forgone by the Crown Colony.

The 1970s were a time of labour unrest, as mine workers sought to achieve social and wage equality between employees of Asian and European origin through the Union of Christmas Island Workers (ICIW). Their goals made substantial headway when Gordon Bennett became the General Secretary of UCIW in 1979 and strove to dismantle what he saw as archaic and rac-

ist industrial practices. A larger-than-life, plain-speaking Australian who almost single-handedly fought the efforts of the mining company to crush the union, Bennett was dubbed "Tai Ko Seng" (Big Brother who delivers) by his colleagues and upon his death in 1991, was honoured by a lavish memorial in the Chinese cemetery, which still receives regular offerings of food and flowers by the Chinese community.

The island's industrial legacy is evident in the giant cantilevers that load phosphate onto visiting ships at Flying Fish Cove. Now operated by a consortium partly owned by UCIW, the mines are a shadow of their former scale and living on borrowed time, for their present operations hinge on old

stockpiles and existing reserves due to a ban on clearing the island's remaining rainforests

A casino briefly opened in the 1990s, offering a weekend getaway for wealthy punters from Southeast Asia, but folded in the wake of the regionwide financial crisis of 1997-98. The ex-gambling resort now provides rooms for tourists, who are becoming an increasingly important source of revenue as divers come in pursuit of whale sharks, birdwatchers seek out rare endemics and curious explorers of the unbeaten track arrive in time to see the spectacle of millions of migrating crabs.

Another source of employment that is proving to be a mixed blessing is the use of

Christmas Island as an immigrant detention centre by the Australian authorities. About 2,000 asylum seekers, mainly from the Middle East and South Asia, now occupy detention facilities in two locations, pending the approval or rejection of their applications to enter Australia as refugees of war and civil strife. Occasional rioting and tragic episodes such as a recent attempt by refugees to land on Christmas Island amid a storm, resulting in the deaths of thirty men, women and children, have fuelled debate over the future of the centres. But there is also fear that closing the facilities would cripple the island economically, now that many earn a living by supplying or working for the camps.

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At Lily Beach, a popular cove for swimming and picnics, we encountered Adelle and Anna, a pair of Sydneysiders who serve as volunteers at a refugee camp for women and families. Their typical work shift spanned 12 hours of lessons and social interaction, but on this day off, they had hired a scooter to find respite in quieter corners of the island. The road from the beach was a steep ascent, so Anna hitched a ride in our rented 4-wheel drive until Adelle reached the summit on her own throttle and deemed the rest of the journey fit for a party of two.

Located on the northeastern fringe of Christmas Island, Lily Beach is a sheltered bay of coral sand and crystal clear water protected by sheer cliffs and a shallow reef. A boardwalk provides access through a landscape of jagged limestone. Brown boobies, goose-sized seabirds that make spectacular dives for fish, raise their young in this unforgiving environment, while endemic white-eves, tiny warblers related to the *Mata Puteh* of the Singapore songbird scene, inspect the coastal pandans and fan flowers for insects. Fallen fruit and leaves provide nutrition for the ubiquitous red crabs, which forage in numbers that reflect their ecological status as the island's dominant land animal.

hough a mere 135 square kilometres in land area compared to Singapore's 712 sq km, Christmas Island boasts a remarkable diversity of unique wildlife thanks to its isolation from continental land masses and belated colonisation by man. Home to more than 250 endemic plants and animals (endemic is a biological term used to denote a species found only in one locality or country), the island has been termed the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean. This irreplaceable natural heritage was recognised by the Australian government which gazetted nearly two-thirds of the island's area as the Christmas Island National Park on 21 February 1980. Covering unique terrace wetlands, freshwater mangroves, plateau rainforests as well as marine and littoral habitats, the park offers walking trails of varying difficulty and look-out points where visitors can take in the island's rugged coastline and myriad birdlife.

The Christmas Island red crab (Gecarcoidea natalis) is by far the most well-known endemic. There is at least one individual in every square metre of rainforest, feeding on berries, leaves and carrion or hiding in burrows where they sit out the dry season. Though equipped

with lungs and adept at climbing trees and cliffs, the crabs are still vulnerable to heat and desiccation. The sea remains a part of their life-cycle, a cosmic imperative that forces a tide of red bodies to leave their wooded homes and trace ancient routes to the surf zone, where the crabs couple and shed their eggs into the water before returning to the forests, and even to the very same burrows, they had left. The mass spawning is also a bonanza for whale sharks and other plankton feeders, which gather around the island to feed on the crab eggs and larvae. When they reach about 5mm in length, the baby crabs abandon the sea and begin a hazardous journey from the coast to the forest floor. In some years, few or no baby crabs survive their first month, but a bumper crop results every ten years or so, providing enough young crabs to sustain the population.

During the breeding season, which typically runs from October to December, major roads are closed to traffic and vehicular access to many parks and beaches is restricted. Local radio and public notice boards provide daily updates on the animals' movements and drivers are warned to watch their speed and avoid running over the crustaceans. Along mining routes and other essential thoroughfares, park managers have devised ingenious ways of saving the crabs such as modular fences that channel the animals away from the road and towards 'underpasses' that allow safe passage across the highway. There are even overhead bridges that exploit the crabs' penchant for climbing. Local children join in the effort with banners and placards to remind fellow islanders and visitors to spare a thought for the creatures.

Another common inhabitant of the coastal forest is the coconut or robber crab. A heavy beast weighing up to 4 kg and reaching 40 cm in length, these massive crustaceans are fond of coconuts and, like Singapore's suburban monkeys, are not above swiping untended food from unwary park visitors. Powerful claws provide the means to open tough fruit and ward off curious humans, but offer no protection against motorised vehicles, whose drivers are warned to skirt rather than straddle road-crossing individuals lest the claws get caught in the undercarriage and damage both car and crab.

Christmas Island is also a centre of endemism for birdlife. The Abbott's Booby is an endangered seabird with a population of just 3,000 pairs. Until mining activities were phased out in its habitat in the 1980s, this large seabird with a wingspan of two metres was threatened with extinction by the loss of mature trees that it needs for nesting. Another vulnerable species is the

Island boasts a remarkable diversity of unique wildlife thanks to its isolation from continental land masses and belated colonisation by man. Home to more than 250 endemic plants and animals, the island has been termed the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean.









Christmas Island Frigatebird, which also relies on trees for nesting and survives in three colonies with a total population of just 1,200 breeding pairs. A long-range wanderer that is sometimes spotted in Singapore waters, this frigatebird offers an unforgettable sight as it glides over the coast on wings that span 2.3 metres and engages in mid-air manoeuvres with rivals and mates.

The most beautiful of fliers, however, are probably the bosunbirds. Snow-white plumage with long tail streamers, these seabirds are clumsy waddlers on land but transform into feathered wraiths when they launch themselves into the air and float with effortless ease on long, graceful wings. Two species nest on Christmas Island: the red-billed Silver Bosunbird and the Golden Bosunbird, which reveals in flight a rich apricot sheen over its plumage and nests only on the island.

In the forest understorey, the endemic Christmas Island Imperial Pigeon, clad in metallic purple and green, feeds on figs and other fruit, while the endemic Christmas Island Thrush inspects the leaf litter for grubs and insects. Higher on the food chain are two endemic avian predators: the Christmas Island Goshawk and Christmas Island Hawk-Owl, which hunt smaller birds and other forest residents.

A wide choice of walking trails, from simple boardwalks to barely marked routes over treacherous rockfaces, offer ample opportunities to spot indigenous wildlife and lose yourself in forests littered with the remains of ancient coral reefs and shaded by towering Tahitian chestnut trees with buttress roots that wind over the terraces like giant snakes. The crabs mind their own business, save swift darts to avoid trampling feet, and the canopy echoes with the whistles of thrushes and sonic booms of feeding pigeons.

Though a good distance away from town, the Dales at the far west of Christmas Island offer perhaps the most rewarding trek. A series of small valleys fed by seasonal streams that help maintain a stable, moist environment, the Dales are one of two places on the island recognised as RAMSAR sites, an international conservation status accorded on the basis of the wetland's pristine condition and provision of habitats to 20 species of land crab and many other threatened animals. Red crabs and their rarer blue cousins occur in unusual densities here, along with coconut crabs and lesser-known creatures such as an endemic gecko and blind snake.

A slippery boardwalk leads one through the humid forest, where there is little to distinguish between solid ground and slivers of clear water that envelope the soil and at times erupt as misty cascades over karst outcrops surrounded by ferns and lush mosses. The steep terrain and abundance of subterranean springs make for difficult progress at times, but it is here that Christmas Island still harbours faunal secrets, which researchers from the Raffles Mu-

A wide choice of walking trails, from simple boardwalks to barely marked routes over treacherous rockfaces, offer ample opportunities to spot indigenous wildlife and lose yourself in forests littered with the remains of ancient coral reefs and shaded by towering Tahitian chesnut trees.



seum of Biodiversity Research in Singapore are seeking to uncover in recent surveys that have found new species of crustaceans in its limestone caverns.

Chinese woman working as a chambermaid at our lodge quipped, "It's boring to live here." Originally from Kuala Lumpur, she shared that her daughter now works in Melbourne and there is little to do on the island other than fish, grow vegetables and raise a few chicken. Pork is also dreadfully expensive at nearly 20 dollars a kilo, she added, as fresh supplies have to be airflown from Malaysia each week.

Another lady we met at the national park headquarters revealed that she was born in Singapore, but had moved to the island with her husband about 10 years earlier. Her original intention was to stay for just a few months, but the allure of island life amid unspoiled nature sans the pressures of the city led to a permanent posting as a ranger. Now responsible for the welfare of the creatures that live in the park as well as the people who visit them, she declares, "I like the pace of life here."

It's certainly not everyone's cup of tea. But like the crabs that help support the forest ecosystem, Christmas Island occupies a special niche in the market for the experience of a lifetime. For those who hanker for a change of scenery from the roar of bright cities and soul-sapping voids of urban malls, this tiny island of scarlet crabs, soaring cliffs and surprisingly decent Chinese food offers a chance to rediscover habitats in harmony and explore the pulse of a community in touch with their roots. And before long, a week will seem barely enough to savour the flavours of a world that still heeds the laws of nature and is never far from the pummelling power of the deep blue sea.



GETTING TO CHRISTMAS ISLAND

There are regular flights from Perth in Western Australia, but visitors from Southeast Asia will find it easier to join a weekly charter that departs from Kuala Lumpur every Friday. An Australian visa is required and reasonably priced cars are available for rent from a makeshift counter at the airport.

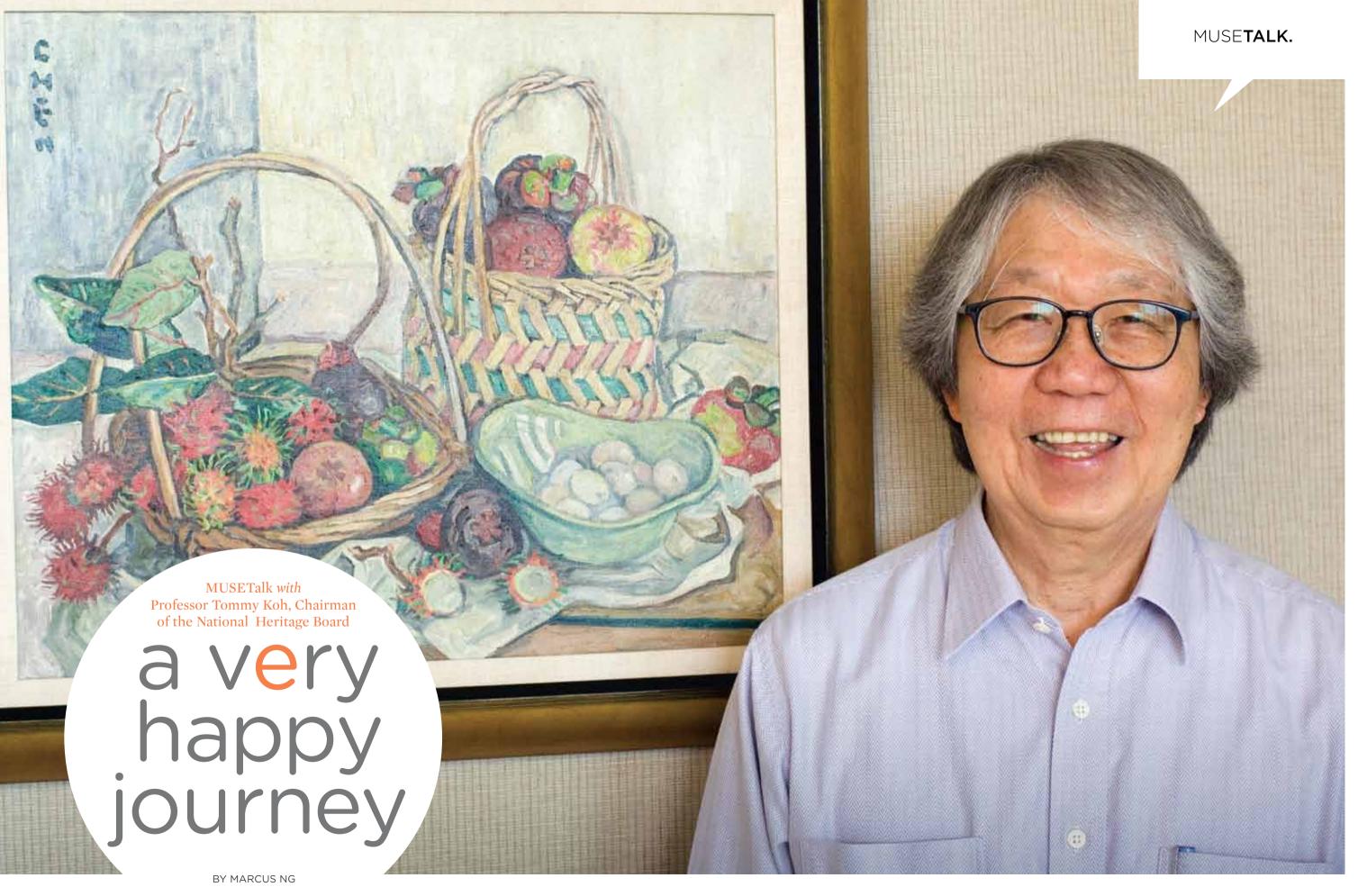
There is little shopping available, save a stretch of retail outlets along Gaze Road, but groceries and basic necessities can be obtained at minimarts that open till late at the Kampong and the largely Chinese settlement of Poon Saan. Dining options range from fresh fish-and-chips from a hole in the wall at Poon Saan to

full service Chinese restaurants and western-style taverns serving beer and pub grub. A choice of lodging facilities is provided at www.christmas.net.au and for maximum convenience, it's recommended that you book your trip through one of the travel agents listed on the site.

More information about the communities and wildlife of Christmas Island can be found at these websites:

- www.christmas.shire.gov.cx
- www.environment.gov.au/parks/christmas/index.html

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"It has been a very happy journey."

umming up the past nine years, Professor Tommy Koh expresses great pleasure at having led the National Heritage Board (NHB) for nearly a decade. Since assuming the chair of the NHB in August 2002, Professor Koh has overseen a major transformation of the country's museum scene. New museums, heritage centres and festivals have emerged to add breadth and depth to the once-derided notion that Singapore has a history worth telling or museums worth visiting. Residents as well as tourists now throng the NHB's family of museums, interpretative centres and festivals in numbers that were unthinkable a mere decade ago.

But, at the heart of it all, Professor Koh maintains that vision, energy and a committed and talented team are critical factors that drive the future of an organisation such as the NHB. "I have realised that what makes a museum great is not just its collection or infrastructure," he stated. "It's the people."

Currently Singapore's Ambassadorat-Large, Special Adviser to the Institute of Policy Studies, Chairman of the Centre for International Law, Rector of Tembusu College, NUS, and Chairman of the SymAsia Foundation of Credit Suisse, Professor

Koh offers a glimpse into his own dip into the world of arts and heritage. Revealing that his father, Koh Han Kok (1910 – 1985) was a great reader, he mused, "From him I developed a love for reading and literature." His mother, Tsai Ying, was "an unusual woman of her time, because she was an actress and a dancer," he added. "When I was growing up, I met many actors, actresses, dancers and visual artists. It was from her that I developed a love for the visual and performing arts."

A twist of fate later started what would be a lifelong affair with Singapore visual art. "I only collect Singapore artists since I don't have much money," recalled Professor Koh, half in jest. His very first art purchase, made soon after he began working in 1962. was a painting by Wee Beng Chong (who won the first Cultural Medallion in 1979). Recounting the circumstances behind the buy, Professor Koh said he had attended an exhibition to raise funds for the artist's studies in Paris. "Each of us bought one painting," he recounted. "Wee has developed so much from his student days that he probably thinks the painting I bought is naïve! But people like it and my wife and I have lived with it through our marriage and in our many homes, here and abroad."

A lifelong career in international relations has also enabled Professor Koh, who co-chairs Singapore's bilateral dialogues with China, Japan and India, to introduce visitors from abroad to Singapore's museums and cultural institutions. "I have been opportunistic in riding on other work that I do with foreign friends," he remarked on his habit of weaving in a visit to a Singapore museum during many bilateral meetings. "My friends would say, 'Oh, I didn't realise there were such wonderful museums in Singapore!" He also recalled with satisfaction that the opening dinner for the Asia-Middle East Dialogue in 2005 was held at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

BUILDING REGIONAL TIES THROUGH TOURS, THEMATIC FESTIVALS AND TRAINING

Going further, Professor Koh also initiated a series of exploratory tours to fellow ASEAN nations for NHB curators and managers. "Initially, I didn't receive much enthusiasm, as Singaporeans would rather go west," he recounted. "But my strategic vision was that our strength lies in our own region and we should not just tell our own story but tell the region's stories." By visiting all nine ASEAN countries, he paved











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the way to an era of active dialogue and mutual learning between Singapore and the region's museum community via the ASEAN Museum Directors' Symposium, which was first held in 2007 and is now a biennial event. "That was my dream, that we would be well-connected with our region and we would help project the region's cultural power to the world," Professor Koh declared.

One happy by-product of these links is a regular series of country-themed festivals that involves the entire NHB family. "During our tours we met many museum leaders and collectors and when we said that we would like their support to mount a museum-wide festival, this was met with great enthusiasm," shared Professor Koh. Kicking off with a Vietnam Festival in 2008, the NHB has since celebrated the heritage and cultures of the Philippines and Indonesia in two subsequent festivals. "Next year will be Thailand," he revealed, "And in the coming years I hope we will have festivals on Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos and Brunei."

Ever the diplomat, Professor Koh noted that the festivals are NHB's way of telling Singapore's ASEAN partners "that we are members of the same family and we would like to work with you to showcase your history, heritage and culture. I think they appreciate that."

In 2010, the NHB founded the NHB Academy to provide specialist training to museum professionals and serve as a centre of excellence for museum scholarship and research. "I come from an academic background. Therefore, I have always attached great importance to developing intellectual capital," said Professor Koh. Pointing out the need to attract good people and develop a learning culture in NHB, he said, "One of the reasons we founded the Academy was not only to train ourselves and upgrade our knowledge but also to help our neighbours."

"That's my vision, that we could be the intellectual hub of the region, not just in museology but also in scholarship." Another academic thrust Professor Koh hopes to develop is the rewarding of NHB colleagues who publish good articles, monographs or books in their fields of specialisation.

THE VALUE OF HISTORY

There is a practical side to Professor Koh's efforts to raise local awareness of regional cultures through the museums. He cited

the case of a Singapore company which acquired a plot of land in Hanoi, Vietnam, that housed a prison. "They were given permission to demolish the prison and redevelop the site," retold Professor Koh. "But because they didn't know enough about the history of their host country, they weren't aware that to the Vietnamese war veterans, this was a sacred site." Popularly known as the Hanoi Hilton, the prison was where the French had incarcerated early Vietnamese nationalist leaders in the colonial era. "Some of them lost their lives in that prison," he added. "And, during the Vietnam War, this was where American prisoners-of-war, including Senator John McCain, were imprisoned."

As a result, the developers were puzzled by a public backlash to their plans. "If they had a deeper understanding of the history of the country, they would have realised that they must accommodate the sentiments of the local people," said Professor Koh. "So in the end, they kept part of the prison, which is now a museum."

Such accounts reinforce Professor Koh's conviction that a better understanding of history is crucial to Singapore and Singaporeans. "That story inspired me to find an enjoyable way, by using our museums, to help Singaporeans who travel and work abroad understand our neighbours' history and culture."

Other tangible signs of Singapore's ties to the world at large can be seen by the Singapore River in a series of NHB markers dedicated to foreign friends to our shores. Sharing the story that led to the first plaque to the Polish-English novelist Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski in 2004, Professor Koh said, "We must give credit to our former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong for that. The President of Poland was coming to Singapore, so Mr Goh was wondering if there was anything we could ask him to unveil or launch, something that is a link between Singapore and Poland."

The son of a Polish nobleman, who became a merchant seaman and visited Singapore numerous times in the 1880s, Conrad drew upon his adventures in Southeast Asia to write stories that helped establish the region in European imagination. The suggestion was accepted with delight by the Polish Embassy and, according to Professor Koh, "whenever a Polish leader visits Singapore, he always makes it a point to go to the marker and put flowers there." Jose

Rizal, Ho Chi Minh and Deng Xiaoping were honoured in subsequent years. "The next one will be Nehru," revealed Professor Koh, noting that such gestures evoke very powerful sentiments in countries which place a premium on their national heroes. "We must connect with others with our heads as well as with our hearts."

MAKING MUSEUMS MATTER

On the domestic front, Professor Koh has left his stamp on Singapore museums in both numbers and quality. "When I first took over as chairman, I was dismayed by the low visitorship," he recounted. Challenges faced by the board then included the public's perception that museums were uncool and only for the elite. Setting a bold internal target of raising the visitorship from half-a-million to a million within three years, Professor Koh drove a rejuvenation of the NHB that saw the launch of blockbuster exhibitions, greater outreach to heartlanders and tourists, as well as a more active partnership with the business and art-loving and art-collecting communities.

Working together with schools and grassroots bodies such as the People's Association and roping in 'ambassadors' from

the local entertainment scene, the NHB embarked on a campaign to win the mind- and heart-share of Singaporeans who would otherwise have neglected the stories of the nation and those of the region. The board also mobilised the support of businesses and foundations, presenting the museums as partners for social events and corporate social responsibility programmes. "I also worked very hard with the media," revealed Professor Koh, "The media is a multiplier and I needed their partnership. I must say we have enjoyed very strong support from the media. Through these efforts, the NHB was able to exceed its own targets and Professor Koh is now looking forward to breaching the three-million mark, which would signify a six-fold increase in museum visitorship since 2002.

The NHB's attempt to work with the Singapore Tourism Board to attract more overseas visitors to make the museums a part of their itinerary has also borne fruit. "We are getting a significant percentage of tourists and some of the museums have become world famous," noted Professor Koh. "Ten years ago, visiting a museum in Singapore was not on the itinerary for most friends from China, Japan and India,

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but now they know that there are many museums worth visiting."

Professor Koh also encouraged the museums to develop exhibitions that display the strengths of the national collection. "I was very proud of shows like *Beauty in Asia*, which was mainly from our collection and therefore homemade," he stated. Another high point he takes much pride in is the growing international recognition of the collections and capabilities of Singapore museums in events such as the Peranakan Museum's *Baba Bling* exhibition at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris.

One local museum has a special place in Professor Koh's heart. "I used to be a stamp collector when I was a child, so I have a particular affection for the Philatelic Museum," he said. "I have tried very hard to see how we can revitalise the Philatelic Museum and help them reinvent themselves so that they can prosper and endure"

"I would say the Philatelic Museum is a very important institution for Singapore, even if it's true that fewer and fewer people are using stamps and postcards. The Philatelic Museum is the most child-friendly institution in our family. Therefore, if for no other reason than that, we must preserve the Philatelic Museum. In the absence of a children's museum, the Singapore Philatelic Museum is the entry point to the world of museums for many families with young children."

Apart from its approachable scale and wealth of child-friendly installations, Professor Koh noted that this "little gem of a museum" is very quick on its feet to set up exhibitions that piggyback on special events such as the Youth Olympic Games and F1 race. "I recently asked them, for example, if they could mount an exhibition in November of stamps featuring the elephant, and they immediately said yes," he said of an upcoming Elephant Parade to be held in Singapore this November.

Professor Koh also expressed great satisfaction at the success of the annual *Singapore HeritageFest*. "This is an excellent way to bring heritage to the people," he stated. "It is also a way to celebrate our rich cultural diversity."

MAKING THE PAST COME ALIVE

Reflecting on more recent developments, Professor Koh offered his view that the union of the NHB with the Preservation of Monuments Board (PMB) is one that "needs sensitive management". He added, "At a strategic level, I think it is the correct decision, but we must make sure that our friends in the PMB don't feel that we are taking away their autonomy or professionalism. What we should do is to help the PMB make our 64 national monuments better known to the public." Singling out the PMB's Monumental Walking Tours as an excellent initiative, he expressed his gratitude to the former Chairman of PMB, Alfred Wong and the current leadership of Chairman Tham Tuck Cheong and Director Jean Wee.

Taking the example of the Armenian Church, Professor Koh revealed that this national monument is enjoying a new lease of life thanks to a revival of the local Armenian community. "Ten years ago, it was in danger of disappearing – there were fewer than 20 Armenians in Singapore," he remarked. "But the happy story ten years later is that the community is now 60 in strength and they have the highest birth rate of any community in Singapore. They seem very happy here and I think the seven million-strong Armenian Diaspora appreciates the fact that we value them and have honoured them by making their church a national monument."

Donning his diplomat's hat once more, Professor Koh shared that the two nations are still forging close links. "For example, Professor CN Lee and Professor Peter Robless at the National University Hospital are training cardiac surgeons in Armenia," he said, adding that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently hosted a delegation of senior Armenian officials who wanted to gather lessons from Singapore which they could apply in their country.

Observing how monuments such as the Armenian Church and Hong San See temple have become the scenes of community events and musical performances, Professor Koh said, "I want our national monuments to come alive, to be visited and if appropriate, host festivals, functions and concerts."

In Professor Koh's opinion, Singapore's three new community heritage institutions, the Malay, Chinese and Indian heritage centres, will present an interesting challenge. Crediting the late Dr Balaji Sadasivan, former Senior Minister of State for Information, Communications and the Arts and Foreign Affairs, for convincing the government to place the management of the three centres under the NHB, he said, "I

think we must not let him down. When the Malay Heritage Centre and the Sun Yat-sen Nanyang Memorial Hall re-open, and the Indian Heritage Centre opens, we must make sure that their content is world-class and the quality and design of presentations are equal to the best of our institutions. But we must also manage them with great cultural and political sensitivity, because they are, after all, owned by their respective communities."

It is clear that Professor Koh is looking forward to a narrative of diversity when the heritage centres open or re-open their doors. Singapore's Indian and Malay communities, for instance, comprise peoples from various parts of India and the Malay Archipelago, respectively, so this diversity must be acknowledged. "We must keep a certain balance, openness and inclusiveness so nobody feels excluded," he maintained. "And we will tell all their stories."

Professor Koh also hopes that the NHB will continue to spread its wings abroad and "be the interface between Southeast Asia and the world." He added, "Beyond Southeast Asia, we should also get closer to the emerging Asian powers: the Chinese, the Japanese, the Indians, the Koreans." Recalling a recent trip to Seoul in which he was struck by the world-class quality of their museums, he remarked, "I was very impressed. The Koreans are really worth watching and we should connect more closely with them."

As he points out various paintings that showcase the artistry of fellow Singaporeans on the walls of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is clear that Professor Koh's passion and personal involvement with the Singapore story and those who have played a role on this stage pervade all his endeavours. "I still have many dreams," he shared, citing as examples his ideas of a children's museum, a museum of photography and moving pictures, and a Southeast Asian crafts museum. The national collection of textiles also deserves a museum of its own, he believes. But for now, he is simply looking forward to the day when he can converse with his new grandson, Toby. "Then we will have a good time together in the museums," he laughs, casting an eye on a Singapore where history comes alive for all ages. "I think it's important for us to treasure our past, to make it relevant to our present and our future."

"I have realised that what makes a museum great is not just its collection or infrastructure. *It's the people*."

TRIBUTES & THANKS

eclaring from the onset that he is no "solo performer", Professor Koh took the opportunity to thank those who have shared his vision for the NHB and helped bring it to fruition. "One of my few virtues is that I am a team player," he quipped. "I have been very lucky to have had good people, good CEOs like Lim Siam Kim, Lim Siok Peng and now, Michael Koh, working with me." The success of the Asian Civilisations Museum, according to Professor Koh, "is due in no small part to the leadership of James Khoo, Lim Siam Kim, Priscylla Shaw and Lee Suet Fern as well as Kenson Kwok, Huism Tan, Gauri Krishnan and their colleagues, and I want to say a very big thank you to them."

"As for Kenson, I owe a second thank you to him because he was the creative leader who helped set up the Peranakan Museum. At the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), I must thank the first three Chairmen, Dr. Earl Lu, Kwee Liong Keng and Koh Seow Chuan, and long-time Director, Kwok Kian Chow. They made SAM a highly respected museum. Under the current leadership of Jane Ittogi and Tan Boon Hui, SAM is in good hands."

"At the National Museum of Singapore, I first asked Professor Tan Tai Yong to be the chairman and when Tai Yong stepped down, I asked GK Goh because I wanted to bring in somebody from the private sector. I think Lee Chor Lin has done a super job at the National Museum."

"At SPM, I think Koh Seow Chuan, Daniel Teo and Tresnawati Prihadi have done a very good job. Tres is probably the most entrepreneurial of all our museum directors. She and her team have a difficult brief but have succeeded in many imagina-

tive ways."

"I think the Heritage Conservation Centre is a world-class institution. Loh Heng Noi and her team have done a wonderful job. That is why, at the opening of exhibitions, I always mention the contributions of the conservators, because people always forget that they play a very important role and are a valuable link in our value chain. The people behind the scenes – the curators, writers, designers – we should value all of them."

Professor Koh also expressed his gratitude to colleagues at the National Archives. "Kwok Kian Woon and Kwa Chong Guan have been excellent Chairmen," he said. "Lily Tan and Pitt Kuan Wah have built up the high reputation of NAS." He also highlighted Reflections at Bukit Chandu and the Memories at Old Ford Factory as excellent interpretative centres.

"Another highlight is *BeMuse*," he added. "When I was living in Washington D.C., I was a fan of the *Smithsonian* and I told myself that it would be wonderful if one day Singapore had a magazine of that genre and quality. I think *BeMuse*, under Thangamma Karthigesu and Marcus Ng, has become a first-class magazine in a short period of time. When I give copies to my foreign friends, they are happily surprised that we produce such a good magazine. So, to both of you, congratulations and thank you."

Finally, Professor Koh said he looked forward to the opening of The National Art Gallery, Singapore in three years time. He shared that when he instructed then NHB CEO Mrs Lim Siok Peng to make a bid for the City Hall and Supreme Court buildings, his dream was to make them into the home of Singapore's largest and most important museum. "Under the leadership of Koh Seow Chuan and Michael Koh, that dream will be realised," he said, adding that he is confident that The National Art Gallery, Singapore will be as iconic as the Esplanade, Theatres on the Bay.







his single-storey bungalow in the tropical Art Deco style is a rare survivor from the early 20th century, when Chapel Road was located right by the seafront prior to land reclamation of the east coast. A home that has passed from one generation to another, the bungalow now serves the needs of a modern family who cherishes and sought to sustain their architectural legacy.

Revived and restored at the joint initiative of the owners and architects, the sensitive repair of this house was recognised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority which granted the project an Architectural Heritage Award in 2010 under Category A, which honours national monuments and fully conserved buildings in historic districts and good class bungalow areas.

RESTORING LAYERS OF MEMORY

Raised 1.5 metres above the ground by concrete piers (a measure to prevent flooding during abnormally high tides), this striking bungalow is a tripartite structure constructed with timber beams and in-filled with bricks. The roof is made from timber with an overlay of clay tiles.

One notable element of the house is a polygonal open verandah that overlooks the front yard. The floor of the verandah

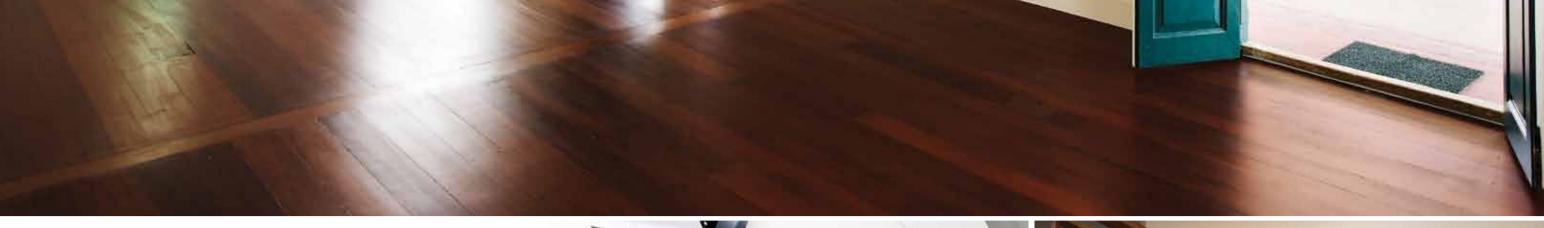
has an unusual finish of patterned and coloured cork installed by the father of the present owners, who have chosen to retain this layer of personal history at the venerated property. Linked to the main house via a sheltered linkway was a service block housing a garage, store, ironing room and kitchen.

With great care, the project team, led by RichardHo Architects repaired and reinstated many of the bungalow's unique and distinguishing features. These details include intricate floral mouldings along the sides of the external walls and staircases as well as the original well-seasoned timber flooring of the main house. Also retained with colourful Terrazzo threads and Peranakan glazed pattern tiled risers on the two flights of steps that lead to the covered verandah.

On many windows and doors there were ornate ironmongery locksets, while lattice patterns occupied the ventilation spaces above the internal doors and windows; these features were retained, along with patterned glass panels on the secondary windows, which were left in their original green.

Cracked and discoloured areas of the cork flooring on the verandah were repaired, while regrinding and revarnishing restored the lustre of the interior timber flooring. Many of the original clay roof tiles

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were broken, so original clay tiles from the 12-metre lap pool. service block, which was demolished, were used to re-tile the roof. A metal deck was added beneath the tile roof to ensure watertightness. Even some of the old sculpture stands in the compound found new uses as landscaping features in the rejuvenated garden.

HOME FOR A NEW LAP

Inside, the house was originally divided into four quarters. The left side of the verandah led to the living room, followed by the dining room. There were also two bedrooms with attached bathrooms. To address the greater space requirements of modern lifestyles, the internal layout was reconfigured into a single-volume living and dining space by the careful removal of the diving wall.

The existing bathrooms were converted into a powder room and study to provide small corners of privacy. A stretch of timber laid perpendicularly to the timber flooring remains a visual reminder of the original configuration of the house. With the original bungalow kept largely intact, room for the family was created by removing the old service block and linkway and putting in their place a new wing housing five ensuite bedrooms, a covered patio and a life story.

hough distinctive in its own right, the new structure does not overpower the older house and the two buildings resonate in harmony with each other. For instance, the double casement windows on the new wing mirror the lattice of their older counterparts. The wall surfaces are also finished with cement mouldings that resemble the timber mouldings of the original bungalow and the roof features a similar timber construction and tiles. More subtle touches include keeping the new extension not taller than the older building and using a lighter shade of green for the panels and pillars. To connect the 'old' and 'new elements of the compound, a new single-storey extension was introduced. Positioned on the same raised ground floor level as the original bungalow, this extension allows items such as air-conditioning condensers, the washing machine and dryer to be discreetly tucked underneath.

The result is an East Coast gem resuscitated through sensitive and careful restoration into a charming contemporary family home that brims with past memories and is ready to continue into the next lap of its





Images by Raymond Toh Courtesy of RichardHo Architects



PANYA VIJINTHANASARN (B. 1956)

DIMENSION OF LIFE

2008
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
200 X 1800 CM (12 PANELS)

THE NATIONAL ART GALLERY, SINGAPORE



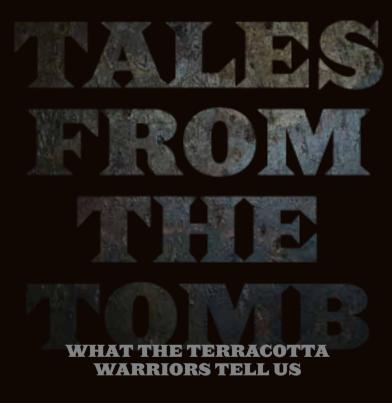


Detail of 'Dimension of Life'

Dimension of Life is a colossal 12-panel painting created by Thai artist Panya Vijinthanasarn. The largest painting of the artist to date, this tour de force can be displayed both vertically and horizontally and was accomplished with the help of a team of 10 artisans under the artist's supervision.

As with other works of Vijinthanasarn, this painting broaches the subjects of Buddhist beliefs – earth, heaven and hell, and reflects his opinions about the current society. He opines that science in general has been a threat to religion, levelling itself against the religious conceptions of man and the universe. As he draws from Buddhist symbols and other Western supernatural figures like fairies and gremlins, Vijinthanasarn stresses the inevitability of the struggle between the forces of good and evil.





BY ALAN CHONG

IMAGES COURTESY OF SHAANXI CULTURAL HERITAGE PROMOTION CENTER

Right): Light infantry officer (detail), Qin dynasty (221 - 206 BCE).



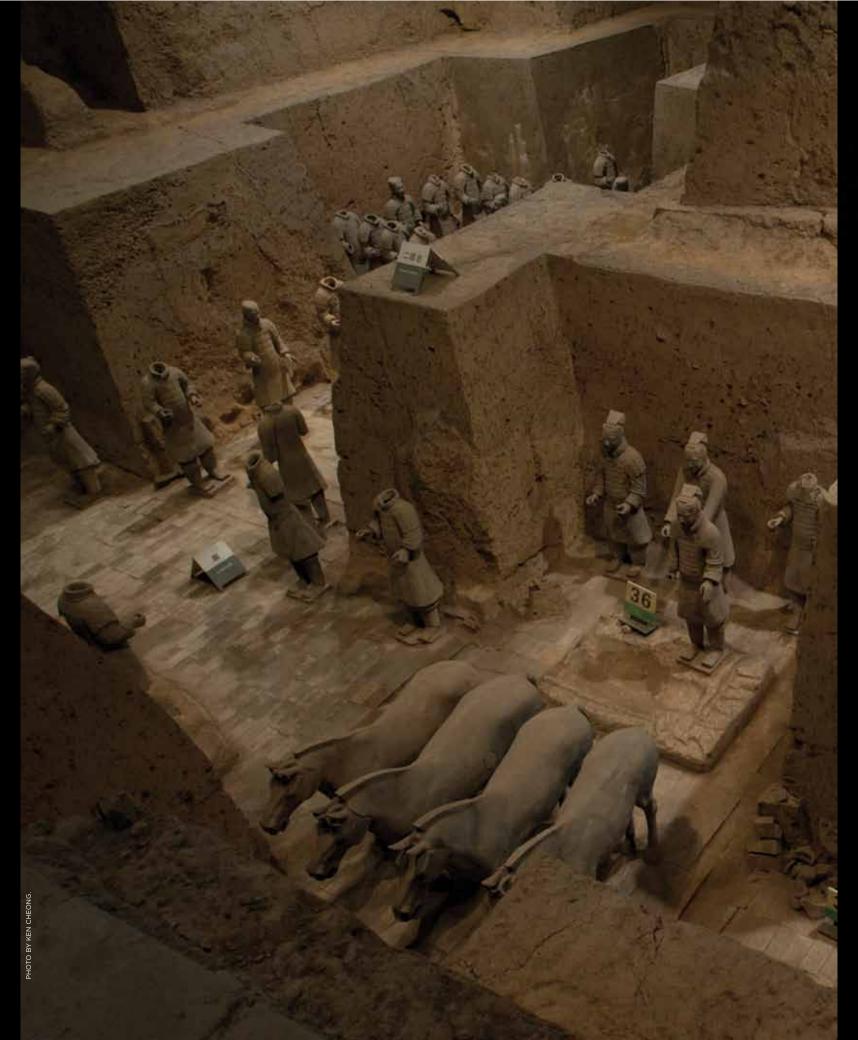
he terracotta warriors of China's First Emperor, or Shi Huangdi, have drawn worldwide attention since their chance discovery outside Xi'an in 1974. They impress with their life-like appearance, the evident attention to detail and the fact that there are so many of them. To date, about 1,900 have been unearthed, but there may be as many as 8,000 figures all together. Investigation of the vast tomb complex of the First Emperor continues and new discoveries await. The terracotta warriors have been exhibited around the globe and have become worldwide celebrities. But they are more than just spectacle – they tell us a great deal about history and art.

The terracotta warriors are connected with one of the most remarkable – and controversial – figures in China's history: the king of Qin who united China in 220 BCE and became the First Emperor. He invented for himself a new title, *Huangdi*, based on two words to describe mythical kings, and all emperors after him used the same title. He centralised authority and attempted to unify China by standardising her money, writing and measurements. However, after his death, he was condemned as corrupt, militaristic and despotic. He is alleged to have buried Confucian scholars alive and burned their books. And he built a grandiose tomb to himself that supposedly required the efforts of 700,000 workers.

Beyond this historical connection, the terracotta warriors are intriguing works of art that completely changed long-held beliefs about early Chinese art. Before the discovery of the terracotta warriors, nearly nothing was known about the art of the Qin dynasty, which was one of the pivot points in Chinese history. While the terracotta army confirmed the emperor's militaristic reputation, the figures themselves seemed to be the product of a cultured and sophisticated court. Often thought to be portraits of individual warriors, on close inspection, the figures repeat a few basic types. Details of armour, costume and footwear vary within certain patterns, and the faces seem to have individual personalities because six or eight different moulds were used; beards, moustaches, hair and other details were later added. Some soldiers were shaped to hold weapons or the reins of horses. Other figures seem to stand at attention.

The warriors present us with many mysteries and we cannot be certain of their precise meaning. They look real, but can we be sure that they accurately reflect Chinese soldiers of 2,200 years ago? The terracotta figures are not documents, but works of art made to decorate the First Emperor's tomb. They therefore had powerful symbolic value. Are they a legion of the emperor's army or his palace guard? We might assume that the warriors were meant to defend the emperor in the afterlife, but against what?

It is sobering to realise that the terracotta warriors, magnificent though they are, are only one part of a vast supporting structure of the First Emperor's



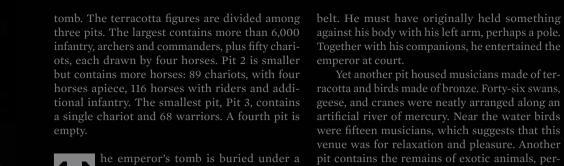


(Left): Pit 3 of the First Emperor's tomb complex. (Above): General, Qin dynasty (221 – 206 BCE).



Beyond this historical connection, the terracotta warriors are intriguing works of art that completely changed long-held beliefs about early Chinese art.





large, man-made, pyramidal hill. It is protected by mountains to the south and west, and water to the north. The terracotta warriors all face east. The tomb mound was surrounded by two walls that enclosed several buildings devoted to the rituals worshipping the deceased emperor. Surrounding the tomb were numerous pits, some containing actual human and animal remains.

Several half life-size chariots were buried very near the tomb. Wooden chariots ornamented with bronze and gold fittings were found on the north side, while to the west were the two famous bronze chariots, drawn by miniature bronze horses. A pit containing thousands of small stone plagues was discovered in 1999. Eventually, someone realised that they used to form sets of armour. Because limestone is too heavy and too fragile to played a purely symbolic role. But we do not know who was meant to wear this symbolic armour.

of the First Emperor was not only devoted to the military. Workers were buried near the tomb along with horses and other animals – demonstrating that human and animal sacrifice, conducted in China for thousands of years, was still a part of imperial funerary practice. And twelve pottery officials were found huddled together in a small

Another pit contained eleven life-size terracotta figures different from the warriors. These were bare-chested men in various animated poses. Compared to the blank expressions and stiff postures of the warriors, these acrobats are much precedent in Chinese art. One heavily muscled figure, perhaps a weightlifter, has bulging biceps, a barrel chest and a thick belly supported by a wide

against his body with his left arm, perhaps a pole. Together with his companions, he entertained the emperor at court.

Yet another pit housed musicians made of terracotta and birds made of bronze. Forty-six swans, geese, and cranes were neatly arranged along an artificial river of mercury. Near the water birds were fifteen musicians, which suggests that this venue was for relaxation and pleasure. Another pit contains the remains of exotic animals, perhaps a zoo to delight the emperor.

Taken as a whole, these discoveries show that many aspects of the emperor's life were recreated in underground burials. But any interpretation of the terracotta warriors remains tentative without knowledge of the tomb itself - the underground palace that houses the emperor's coffin. No excavations have yet been conducted there, but further discoveries are sure to come.

e can speculate as to the meaning of the terracotta warriors. They may have been commemorative, that is, a celebration of the military power that unified China. Although the tomb was started when the First Emperor was still king of the Oin state, plans must have expanded significantly when he became emperor. The warriors undoubthave been used in battle, the armour must have edly played a protective role against evil forces (as similar figures had in earlier tombs), perhaps against the spirits of old enemies to the east. The army also appears to be a component of the emperor's worldly life made in symbolic form for the had multiple meanings, and we should be open to new avenues of interpretation.

The terracotta sculptures have radically altered our understanding of early Chinese art. Despite the overwhelming historical importance pit, ensuring that bureaucracy would live on with of Shi Huangdi, almost nothing could be associated with his reign. Objects from the Shang and Zhou dynasties had been greatly appreciated for their abstract patterns and decorative designs especially bronze vessels. At the exhibition Terracotta Warriors: The First Emperor and His Legacy, the Asian Civilisations Museum shows a livelier and even humorous, features that have no range of goods buried in Oin state tombs before the reign of the First Emperor. These include ritual bronzes, jades and gold objects.

Western Han dynasty, 1st Century BCE, Rooster, Western Han dynasty, 2nd century BCE, Crane, Qin dynasty (221 - 206 BCE),









(Adove): Bell of Duke wu of Qin, spring and Addunin period, 697 – 678 BCE (Facing page): Chariot (replica) from the First Emperor's tomb complex.

THE HAN DYNASTY

The Qin dynasty quickly collapsed after the death of the First Emperor. After a period of civil war, Liu Bang established the Han dynasty in 202 BCE. Many of the First Emperor's reforms were retained. The small seal script, standardised weights and measures, and revised coinage continued to be used during the Han empire. Using the Qin bureaucratic system, the Han dynasty developed a highly centralised government and successfully ruled China for four centuries.

Han tombs, however, are very different from the First Emperor's. It seems as though the first Han emperors, while retaining the long tradition of burying terracotta figures, wished to separate themselves as much as possible from Shi Huangdi. Early Han rulers preferred simplicity to sumptuousness, the miniature to monumentality. Compared to the lifesize Qin terracotta figures, Han pottery figurines are much smaller and represent many aspects of daily life. In addition to soldiers and courtiers, Han tombs feature kitchens and domestic animals. The sacrificial pits around Emperor Jing's mausoleum contain a great number of officials, entertainers and attendants. The faces of these figurines are softly contoured, usually with graceful facial expressions and serene smiles. The Han people's affection for tranquillity and simplicity was based on the core concept of Daoism – the pursuit of harmony with nature.

In the pits around Yangling, the tomb of Emperor Jing, large numbers of soldiers were found naked and armless. Originally, they had wooden arms and wore costumes made of cotton and silk. Just as the First Emperor inherited a rich tradition, so was his legacy a powerful one. Although the Western Han dynasty tried its best to set itself apart from the notorious unifier of China, it followed the same ancient traditions of burial and preparation for the afterlife. The soldiers and court officials made in terracotta for Han tombs provide a fascinating contrast to the imposing Qin terracotta warriors. The First Emperor perhaps must now be regarded as a force in art as powerful as in military might and governmental authority. The terracotta warriors and the other objects from his tomb complex continue to startle and delight us because they are magnificent works of art.

Alan Chong is director of the Asian Civilisations Museum.



hat is communication? The word originates from the Latin term *communicare*, meaning to "share" or "make common". By exploring the development of communication, we can chart mankind's progress across the fields of science, history and technology.

Before the advent of writing, men gathered to narrate stories and exchange ideas. Some daily routines and annual occurrences were recorded on walls, stones and bones. Later, the written and printed word encouraged learning and more people participated in this form of communication. With a little help from electricity, words were then transmitted over greater distances.

The tools of communication have gone through amazing transformations. Without missing a step, we call, email or text each other. Communication engages people and it draws the world closer. In *Message Me*, a new exhibition at the Singapore Philatelic Museum, we reflect on man's ingenuity in

overcoming obstacles in the effort to share and in keep in touch.

CUNEIFORM AND HIEROGLYPHS

In the prehistoric era, men communicated by speaking. Individuals talked to other people around them but not to those who were far away. A man could use his memory to store some information for the future but he had no way of saving it in other forms. To preserve the stories they knew, early man drew simple pictures on cave walls. Over time, these images became more detailed and complex and started to represent animals and objects encountered by early man. This was the beginning of writing.

Clay remnants found in the Mesopotamia region show shapes of animals, food and clothes. Some of the earliest forms of writing can be traced to the Sumerians of Mesopotamia around 3,000 BCE. Clay was an early writing surface but it was not easy to use. Depending on the writing tool used, the lines could be of different thicknesses.

Instead of curves, wedge-shaped lines were used. This wedge-shaped writing is known as cuneiform script.

When cities were first built, their inhabitants began to specialise in different fields of work. Some became farmers or herders of animals, while others worked as craftsmen making pottery and baskets. Traders helped to exchange goods. Very often, the products of one city were traded in other towns. To keep track of these items and their movements, early traders used clay tablets to record their goods.

Hieroglyphic script appeared in Egypt around 3,100 BCE. The ancient Egyptians started with pictograms (picture signs) and phonograms (sound signs). Ideograms – signs that represent ideas or things – were introduced later. For a long time, nobody could translate the hieroglyphs until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 by a French soldier with Napoleon's army in Egypt. It took Frenchman Jean-François Champollion 15 years before he made the

connections and deciphered the hieroglyphs in 1822. a paper-like material made from the pith of an aquatic sedge native to the Nile River.

ALPHABET AND WRITING

Not everybody can draw, and given the sheer number of things to be represented, the alphabet was invented. The alphabet is a selection of consonant and vowel sounds which form words when strung together. The English language, for instance, comprises words made up of 26 letters. The Chinese written language uses nine basic strokes, but when combined, these create a vocabulary of more than 100,000 characters. In its simplest form, the Tamil language has 12 vowels, 18 consonants and one special character.

What did man use to write in the early days? During the Stone Age, men wrote on pre-existing materials such as rocks, bones and cave walls. Clay tablets later provided a handy surface but were heavy and required laborious preparation before they could be used. The ancient Egyptians used papyrus,

a paper-like material made from the pith of an aquatic sedge native to the Nile River. In the Middle Ages, leather and parchment made from animal skin were used for manuscripts. Around the 2nd century CE, Cai Lun, an official at the Chinese court of Emperor He of the eastern Han dynasty, invented paper. Europeans learnt about paper much later in the 12th century when the Venetian Marco Polo visited China.

To write, the ancient Egyptians used the trimmed ends of reeds. Metal styluses were used in the Roman Empire, but due to an alarmingly high number of stabbings, they were banned and replaced by bone and ivory tools. In the Middle Ages, writing was done using quill pens obtained from duck and goose feathers. A scribe would dip the sharpened end of the quill into a jar of ink, tap off the excess ink and put quill to paper. As quills wore out very quickly, some people turned to more lasting materials such as horn and tortoiseshell.

Much later, the Briton Samuel Harrison

crafted pen points of metal in 1780 and this marked the birth of modern steel pens. The fountain pen was patented by Lewis Edson Waterman, an American, in 1884. With an internal reservoir of ink, this tool advanced the art of writing to a new level. In 1945, the Hungarian László József Bíró invented the portable and disposable ballpoint pen.

LETTERS OF NOTE

Ever since writing was invented, letters served to bridge distances between people. Letters nurtured relationships, maintained friendships, conveyed condolences and best wishes, and even provided missing pieces of information for historians and biographers of notable personalities.

Some letters are serious and historic. For example, the physicist Albert Einstein wrote to US President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939 to warn him of the German government's interest in developing atomic weapons. This letter prompted the formation of an Advisory Committee on Uranium

let's talk

communication across history



Letters served to bridge distances between people. Letters nurtured relationships. maintained friendships, conveyed condolences and best wishes, and even provided missing pieces of information for historians.









programme.

How much is a love letter worth? A lot if you are John Keats, the great English poet of the Romantic Period. In March 2011, one of Keats' love letters to his fiancée an auction in London.

Letters also provided a means of communication for early migrants. In the 1800s, many Chinese men landed in Singapore to seek jobs. These manual workers and coolies were mostly illiterate. Letter writers were in great demand by migrants who wanted to send money and messages back to their families in China. These letters provided an essential lifeline and a source of comfort for the workers.

PRINTING AND TYPING

Before the invention of the printing press, books were written by hand. This made books very special and expensive. The Chinese invented block printing some time in the 8th century. To make copies, pictures and text were carved on wooden blocks. The blocks were first coated with ink and a piece of paper was laid the surface and pressed to transfer the contents

During Singapore's early years, flags were flown at Fort Canning. A red ensign indicated the arrival of European ships while a yellow flag stood for ships from China.

and the start of America's nuclear research of the print. In the 11th century, Pi Sheng, a Chinese, made individual clay types, the world's first movable type. A movable type consists of individual letters or characters that can be assembled and rearranged to form different words and texts. Pi Sheng's Frances (Fanny) Brawne fetched £96,000 at clay types, however, broke easily and the sheer number of characters in the Chinese language made it impossible to carve

In 1450, the German Johannes Gutenberg developed movable metal types for printing. Using this method, he invented a press that was used to create the first printed book, the two-volume Gutenberg Bible. Printing revolutionised communication. As books became affordable and common, more people learnt to read and write and the dissemination of new ideas, discoveries and information became faster and more widespread.

The typewriter was invented by Christopher Latham Sholes, an American newspaper editor, in 1868. The original keyboard, with a layout commonly known as QWERTY, is still in use today. This arrangement of the letters on the keyboard prevented typists from working too fast, which caused the keys on the machine to jam. Confusingly, the first people who used Sholes' invention were also called typewriters. Only later were they known as typists.

FROM PONIES TO THE PENNY POST

In the old days, only royalty, religious leaders and the very rich could afford to send letters. Runners were employed to carry the letters. Later, horseback riders covered greater distances and achieved higher speeds using a relay system with





the American West. Another courier of correspondence and probably the earliest form ferried messages attached to its legs or tail.

Ordinary people relied on the goodwill of travellers to carry their letters. Sometimes, the letters failed to reach their destination. As more people became literate and communicated with each other, the penny post was introduced in 1683. For a penny, the London penny post would convey messages anywhere within the city of London. This was the beginning of a postal service for the masses.

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Signals are messages communicated without words. Like doorbells and sirens, they usually convey only one simple message. Primitive tribes sent messages by beating drums which could be heard at a distance by other tribes. Signals that use visual means include smoke, fire and light. Native Americans used blankets to control the smoke over a fire as a method of sending messages to distant tribes. On a good day, or foe. Naval signal flags are governed by Charles Wheatstone. This system was

fresh horses at regular stations. The most these signals could be seen from afar. But the International Code of Signals. Ship days or at night.

of airmail was the carrier pigeon, which to reflect sunlight on mirrors. As early as at Fort Canning. They signalled the arrival the 5th century BC, the Greeks were already using sunlight reflected on metal mirrors to convey signals. In 1867, British Royal Navy Captain Philip Colomb introduced the use of a lantern to send messages from ship to ship. A few years later, the British inventor Arthur Aldis built an electrically powered signal lamp which was faster and brighter. Light continues to be a warning system in functions such as lighthouses and traffic lights.

FLYING THE FLAG

Semaphore signalling uses an alphabetbased flag system. A signal man holds up two bi-coloured flags to indicate alphabets, numbers or a universal standard code. Naval communication flags have been used since the days of Christopher Columbus when he explored the New World.

Ensigns are national flags displayed by ships to show their origin and status: friend

famous of these was the Pony Express of this technique was not possible on windy crews of all nationalities understand and use this universal messaging system. Dur-Another way of sending messages was ing Singapore's early years, flags were flown of a ship with mail. A red ensign indicated the arrival of European ships while a yellow flag stood for ships from China. In the night, residents were informed of arriving mail by the firing of a gun.

THE BIRTH OF MODERN **TELECOMMUNICATION**

In the 1830s, the American inventor Samuel Morse devised the telegraph system and this marked the beginning of modern longdistance communication. Using electric currents to represent letters or numbers, an operator taps on a transmitter to produce short or long buzzes. A short buzz is called a dot and a long one is called a dash. Combined, these dots and dashes spell out a message. The most famous is the universal code dot-dot-dot, dash-dash-dash, dot-dotdot for "SOS" in emergencies.

In Britain, the first successful telegraph line was built in 1837 by William Cooke and



ery few people in ancient times knew how to read and write, including kings and queens. Scribes, people who specialised in writing, therefore played a very important role in ancient civilisations. They took note of offerings made at temples, recorded tributes paid to the rulers, wrote contracts and accounts for traders, penned wills and generated official correspondence.

In the Middle Ages, under the patronage of kings, wealthy nobles and powerful religious orders, scribes documented historical events, judicial and legal records, and copied books and sacred texts. But with the invention of printing in the 15th century, these professional writers





originally used by railway operators to send messages to stations about train services. Later, underwater sea cables connected continents. The first telegraph link using this method was between Britain and France in 1850. A submarine telegraph link was eventually laid out between Europe and America after many unsuccessful at-

Several inventors in America and Europe were developing the telephone at around the same time but it was Alexander Graham Bell who made the breakthrough in 1876. Bell allegedly cried, "Mr Watson, come here. I want you" when he spilled battery acid on his clothes. His colleague Thomas Watson, who was in the next room, heard Bell's voice over a wire. Thus the telephone was invented.

Today, instead of wires, our voices are converted into beams of light and transferred through thin strands of glass called optical fibres. It was said that in 1891, an American funeral parlour owner named Almon Strowger was so upset with the bad service of the switchboard telephone

****** REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA

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operators that he invented the automatic MAKING COMMUNICATION telephone exchange.

NEW WAVES OF COMMUNICATION

Radio waves travel through the air and do not need wires - making them very useful for establishing contact with airplanes and ships. Heinrich Hertz, a German physicist, discovered radio waves in the 1880s. Based on Hertz's discovery, the Italian Guglielmo Marconi experimented with transmitting radio waves and successfully sent a "wireless telegraph" across the Atlantic Ocean

In 1906, using radio waves, Canadian engineer Reginald Fessenden made the first radio broadcast of voice and music. As early as 1927, engineers were experimenting with sending pictures using radio waves. After solving some major technical difficulties, television broadcasting arrived in the houses of the general public in the late 1940s and quickly became the most popular form of home entertainment and communication in the 20th century.

MOBILE

Primitive mobile phones made their first appearance in the 1940s but it took another forty years before these devices became affordable and practical. Early mobile phones weighed about 34 kg and were mainly fitted in cars. Besides making calls, mobile phones today, or more correctly smart phones, are multiple usage devices. They enable us to send text and video messages, exchange email, browse the Internet, play games, capture images, make voice recordings, play music, listen to the radio and navigate using the global positioning system or GPS.

The first text message was apparently sent by Neil Papworth, a young test engineer, from his personal computer to a friend's phone on Christmas 1992. Text messaging is probably the most highly used mobile data service. The activity is so popular that "texting" and other similar phrases have entered the mainstream lexicon. Interestingly, text messages and ancient Egyptian writing share a similarsymbols that represent words. Text, numbers and pictures are often combined in a single message. For example, "i <3 u" uses the pictogram of a heart to represent love and convey a message that is simple and One-to-one communication is still prevalent, but staying in touch with large

groups of people and the world en masse through mobile channels like Facebook and Twitter is becoming a major trend in smartphone usage.

THE INTERNET, THE WORLD WIDE WEB AND EMAIL

The Internet has its origins in a 1950s military research project in the United States to counter Soviet missile threats. The early model was called SAGE; it had several kevboards and screens attached to one big computer. In 1969, the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network or ARPANET was built. It allowed scientists in the US Department of Defense to share information.

This was a new type of computer net-

ity – the use of rebus, meaning pictures or work that would not break down even if one or more of the computers did not work. Large universities and other research institutions joined the network and made it a worldwide system of interconnected networks and computers. The Internet was introduced to the public in 1983. With about 14 billion users today, the Internet can be described as a global system of interconnected networks and computers.

> The World Wide Web or Web is a way for information to be retrieved and distributed over the Internet. In the early years of the ARPANET, to find information, one needed to know where to look and use complex computer codes. Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist, changed this when he created the World Wide Web. Initially the Web was meant only for scientists but in 1991 it was made available to the public. The Web uses computer languages like http (short for hypertext transfer protocol) to send information. To call up pages with graphics, sound, text and video, users access the web through software called browsers such as Internet Explorer and Firefox.

Electronic mail or email actually predates the Internet but it was the computer network at ARPANET that contributed to its development. Email started as a digital message board for scientists working on ARPANET where the @ address format was born.

COMMUNICATION AND YOU

Technology is advancing at an amazing pace and bringing people closer through faster and easier communication. With the advent of the Internet, all traditional forms of communications have become condensed and accelerated. Communication has become more rapid but not necessarily

What is communication to you?



Chua Mei Lin is Curator, Singapore Philatelic Museum.

annous more



Text messaging is probably the most highly used mobile data service. Interestingly, text messages and ancient Egyptian writing share a similarity - the use of rebus, meaning pictures or symbols that represent words.









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ith much of the island a sprawl of brick and steel, it can be easy to forget that Singapore is also home to many creatures that thrived long before man arrived and still survive in surprising numbers in the green lungs of the city. A mere remnant remains of the rainforests, mangroves and coral reefs that once enveloped the island and its coastal fringes with a landscape of trees, swamps and tidal flats. But what habitats exist today harbour a bewildering diversity of wildlife that make Singapore a hotspot for urban biodiversity and a treasure trove of discoveries for students of natural history.

The tiger and tapir are long gone from local jungles, but more than 50 species of mammals still

share the island with man, having adapted to life in suburban niches or dwelling in the depths of the near-impenetrable forests. Some, like the Norway rat, are recent arrivals that colonised the island in the wake of vessels drawn to Raffles' promising free port. Others, such as the plantain squirrel and long-tailed macaque, are commonly encountered residents of park edges that offer visitors an untamed counterpoint to manicured hedges.

But many four-legged Singaporeans only cross paths with cityfolk when weekend warriors make inroads into protected zones such as Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and the vast green heartlands that make up the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. Boardwalks and broad trails provide safe access to many corners of these refuges. But even a

short walk under the dense canopy of an exuberant secondary forest can render the bright lights of the city a distant memory and lure the senses into a world where chirps, whistles, growls and warbles accompany those who keep their mouths shut and eyes (and ears) wide open for a glimpse of the forest's elusive inhabitants.

WHAT LIVES IN THE WOODS

The nature reserves serve as the final strongholds of two notable natives: the banded leaf monkey and the cream-coloured giant squirrel. The former, a robust primate that subsists almost entirely on fruit and young leaves, once ranged all over the island, but now maintains a tenuous existence in the woods around MacRitchie and Lower Peirce Reservoirs.

Recent surveys have found higher numbers than earlier thought, but the current population of 40 or so individuals is still threatened by high infant mortality, disease and genetic bottlenecks. Compared to the monkeys, the giant squirrel is in far dire straits, with no sightings since 1995. If not already locally extinct, this cat-sized arboreal rodent, which was discovered and scientifically described by Raffles in 1821, faces a bleak future and may well join the bear-like binturong and the red muntjac or barking deer as a permanent victim of overhunting and habitat loss.

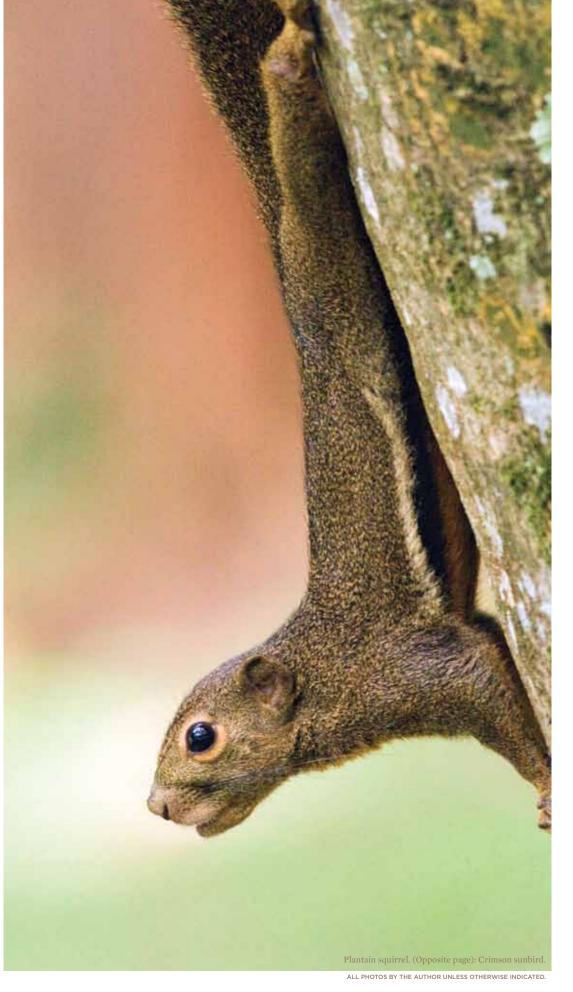
One large mammal that has made a comeback after a century of persecution by hunters is the Eurasian wild pig. Also known as the wild boar, populations of this sizeable beast have returned to suitable habitats such as the thick forests around

> Lower Peirce Reservoir and the woods adjoining Nanyang Technological University in the west of the island. Herds also roam Pulau Ubin, where they frequent the coastal forest of Chek Jawa Wetlands and often surprise visitors with sudden dashes across the paths. Zoologists suspect the current populations originated from animals from Malaysia which swam across the Johor Straits in the past decade. Lacking natural predators such as big cats to control their numbers, the ecological impact of these wild pigs is still unclear. They pose little threat to humans, though, if left alone should one come across a family by the forest trails.

In recent decades, formal protection of Singapore's remaining mangroves has led to the return of another mammal, the smooth otter. Reaching over a metre

in length, this aquatic carnivore eats mainly fish and lives in the shelter of coastal mangroves and mudflats. Highly social and vocal creatures that communicate with sharp yelps, otters in pairs or small family groups have been seen in Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Pasir Ris Park and Pulau Ubin. Although their habitats are largely protected, the species is still critically endangered in Singapore due to its small population. Abandoned nets left by illegal fishermen may also trap and drown the animals as they chase after prey in murky water. Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve is probably the best place to catch sight of these endearing mammals as they nap by the riverbanks on warm afternoons.

Residents of high-rise apartments close to the forests sometimes report seeing a strange creature



clinging to trees or the wall of their facility. The culprit is likely to be a lost Sunda colugo, a shy mammal with broad skin membranes between its limbs that allow it to glide through the forest. Sometimes called the flying lemur, despite being unrelated to the Madagascan primates, the colugo occurs in healthy forests and is often spotted at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve and Bukit Batok Nature Park. Colugos feed on leaves at night and spend the day on large tree trunks, where their mottled colours and quiet disposition render them near-invisible to casual observers.

WINGED NATIVES AND WINTER MIGRANTS

Moving from fur to feathers, Singapore offers budding birdwatchers a wealth of colourful fowl if one is willing to look beyond the introduced mynahs, crows and sparrows that feed on urban refuse. But most of the 367 species on the national checklist will reward only twitchers (as keen spotters of rare birds are known) who leave their comfort zones and venture out to the forests, mangroves and coasts. One little red dot, however, can be easily seen at the heliconia groves of the Botanic Gardens. Voted Singapore's national bird in a public poll by the Nature Society in 2002, the crimson sunbird is a hyperactive bundle of feathers that frequents the Gardens to feed on nectar. The male is resplendent in scarlet and electric blue, while the female is a duller blend of olive green and vellow. Sometimes mistaken for hummingbirds, which are found only in the Americas, sunbirds prefer to feed from a perch than hover.



Singapore is home to many creatures that thrived long before man arrived and still survive in surprising numbers in the green lungs of the garden city.

The otters' avian counterparts are the kingfishers. Singapore is home to five resident species of kingfishers as well as three migrants that visit our shores during the winter months. With spear-like bills and the ability to dive into water to snare unsuspecting fish, these charismatic birds also feed on reptiles, insects and even other birds if the chance arises. A harsh, repeated cackle from the treetops is usually a sign that a collared kingfisher has just bagged a meal. The most abundant native kingfisher, this species is a smart white and blue and nests in tree holes. A much more colourful cousin is the blue and orange-brown stork-billed kingfisher, which can be seen at the Botanic Gardens, where individuals perch above the water to seek out aquatic prey.

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Seagulls are scarce in Singapore waters, but their close relatives, the terns, are not uncommon along the island's coastline. Clothed in white with webbed feet and slender beaks, these seabirds feed on small fish such as anchovies which they capture by diving from mid-air. One species, the black-naped tern, is probably familiar to Singaporeans who have used the Bird Series \$1 currency notes issued between 1976 and 1984. Collected and described by Raffles, this graceful flier nests on isolated outcrops (Pedra Branca is one known nest site) but is threatened by predators such as herons and unscrupulous egg collectors.

WORLD BENEATH THE WAVES

The seas around Singapore, though appearing barren from afar, reveal their secrets when the tide is low enough to unveil an expanse of reefs and seagrass beds. This littoral wealth was noted by early travellers such as John Cameron, who wrote, as he sailed past Bukit Chermin at Telok Blangah, of "beautiful beds of coral, which in their variegated colours and fantastic shapes appear to vie with the scenerv above." Nearly 150 years after Cameron's account, Singapore's southern waters still host an incredible diversity of corals, with 255 reefbuilding species and many others in the shape of fans, whips, flowers and submarine trees. This amounts to nearly half as many coral species as Australia's Great Barrier Reef in an area just less than 0.1% in size.

Seagrasses grow

close to the reef flats and shelter fantastic creatures such as sea stars and seahorses. A family of marine plants that bear flowers and fruit, seagrasses are threatened by pollution and coastal development in many tropical regions. Singapore still harbours lush seagrass beds at areas such as Changi, Pulau Semakau, Cyrene Reef and Chek Jawa, a feature that offers possible lessons on how such habitats can thrive amid zones of high human impact. For seafood lovers, it is an issue that hits home, for these ecosystems provide valuable nurseries for prized creatures such as prawns, crabs, sea cucumbers and the young of many edible fish species.

Combining equine and piscine features with the breeding habits of a kangaroo, seahorses devour tiny

crustaceans using a tube-shaped mouth and brood their young in a belly pouch, a task undertaken by the male. Though difficult to spot among the seagrass, these unique fishes are threatened by collection for use in traditional Chinese medicine. These slow-moving creatures share their home with sea stars, five-armed spiny animals that use rows of tube feet to move about and lack a head and eyes. One species, formerly common but now abundant only on offshore islands, burrows through loose sand and is often found in a pre-copulatory embrace, in which the male grips the female prior to reproduction. Another large local asteroid (the scientific term for sea stars) is known as the knobbly sea star. Reaching a foot in arm span, these armoured stars come in an

array of colours from red to brown to blue to green. Found in seagrass beds and reef flats, knobbly sea stars are endangered by overharvesting for souvenirs or aquaria.

In the reefs proper, there is a veritable menagerie that few are aware of. For instance, Pulau Hantu, a small island facing the oil refineries of Pulau Bukom, offers divers and waders a chance to see exotic wildlife without having to go to sites such as Tioman or Bali. Surrounded by shallow reefs, the island is home to sea slugs, butterflyfishes. feather stars, sea turtles and many other marine creatures that surprise visitors who explore its waters. Further south. the offshore landfill of Semakau combines a solid waste disposal facility with healthy ecosystems where turtles, sharks and even dolphins have been

potted.

Here, too, are found living homes within a larger home. Carpet-like sea anemones live attached to sand or rock on the reefy fringes of many southern islands. A barrage of sticky tentacles awaits blundering fish and crabs, but some ocean inhabitants have managed to avoid the stings by coating their bodies with a thin layer of slime. Thus protected, tiny shrimp and gaudy anemonefish feed and frolic in the safety of deadly arms. With luck and a little love from fellow Singaporeans who are learning to appreciate the value of their natural heritage, these unassuming creatures will hopefully survive to nurse new generations, find new hosts and enjoy the delight of all who cherish and call this island home.







THOSE THAT SLITHER AND SING

Though not everybody's cup of tea, reptiles and amphibians abound in Singapore's forests. Many are cryptic and camouflaged, and so escape the notice of most people. The green crested lizard can be found in parks such as the Botanic Gardens, where it hunts insects among shrubs and low trees. In turn, it serves as prey for the oriental whip snake, a pretty serpent that blends perfectly with foliage. Mildly venomous but harmless to humans, this snake is an adept climber and gives birth to live young, which are coloured brown.

Reptiles enjoy basking in the sun, but frogs welcome wet days, when their mating calls resound from drains and other damp places. The banded bullfrog is a chubby insectivore with a croak that resembles the bellowing of cattle. Though common throughout the island, this pretty frog is believed to be an introduced species, though one that has not caused discernible harm to true natives. In contrast, the indigenous common greenback emits a bird-like warble and offers a soft chorus of echoes from ponds in city's parks and rural marshes.



Want more information about visiting wildlife-rich places in Singapore? Visit the following websites:

- Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, www.sbwr.org.sg
- Other parks and nature reserves, www.nparks.gov.sg
- Flora and fauna of Singapore, http://florafaunaweb.nparks.gov.sg/
- Wild places of Singapore, www.wildsingapore.com/places/index.html
- Pulau Hantu, www.pulauhantu.org
- Semakau Landfill, www.nea.gov.sg/cms/wmd/SL%20Brochure.pdf

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Issued on 3 June 2011, these new stamps were drawn by local television celebrity Edmund Chen Zhi Cai, who was appointed by Singapore Post as their Stamp Ambassador. A keen artist since he was young, Mr Chen worked on the drawings for several months. This is his first attempt at drawing for a stamp issue.

"Stamps are invaluable 'windows' to a country's heritage, commemorating important events in a country's or region's history," said Mr Chen on the new stamp series and his role as Stamp Ambassador. "As a stamp designer, I can do my part as a citizen in helping to preserve our heritage. I hope that through my ambassadorship, I can make a difference by bringing a new dimension to the people's perspective of stamps."

The drawings vividly depict the Oriental Small-Clawed Otter, also known as the Asian Small-Clawed Otter. These otters are very rare in Singapore, but can be found at Pulau Ubin and Pulau Tekong. The Oriental Small-Clawed Otter is regarded as vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

These drawings, which are considered as the original stamp artwork, will be handed over to the Heritage Conservation Centre of the National Heritage Board, which is the custodian of the Singapore Philatelic Archival Collection. Autographed copies of the First Day Covers in English and Chinese have been added to the collection of the Singapore Philatelic Museum.