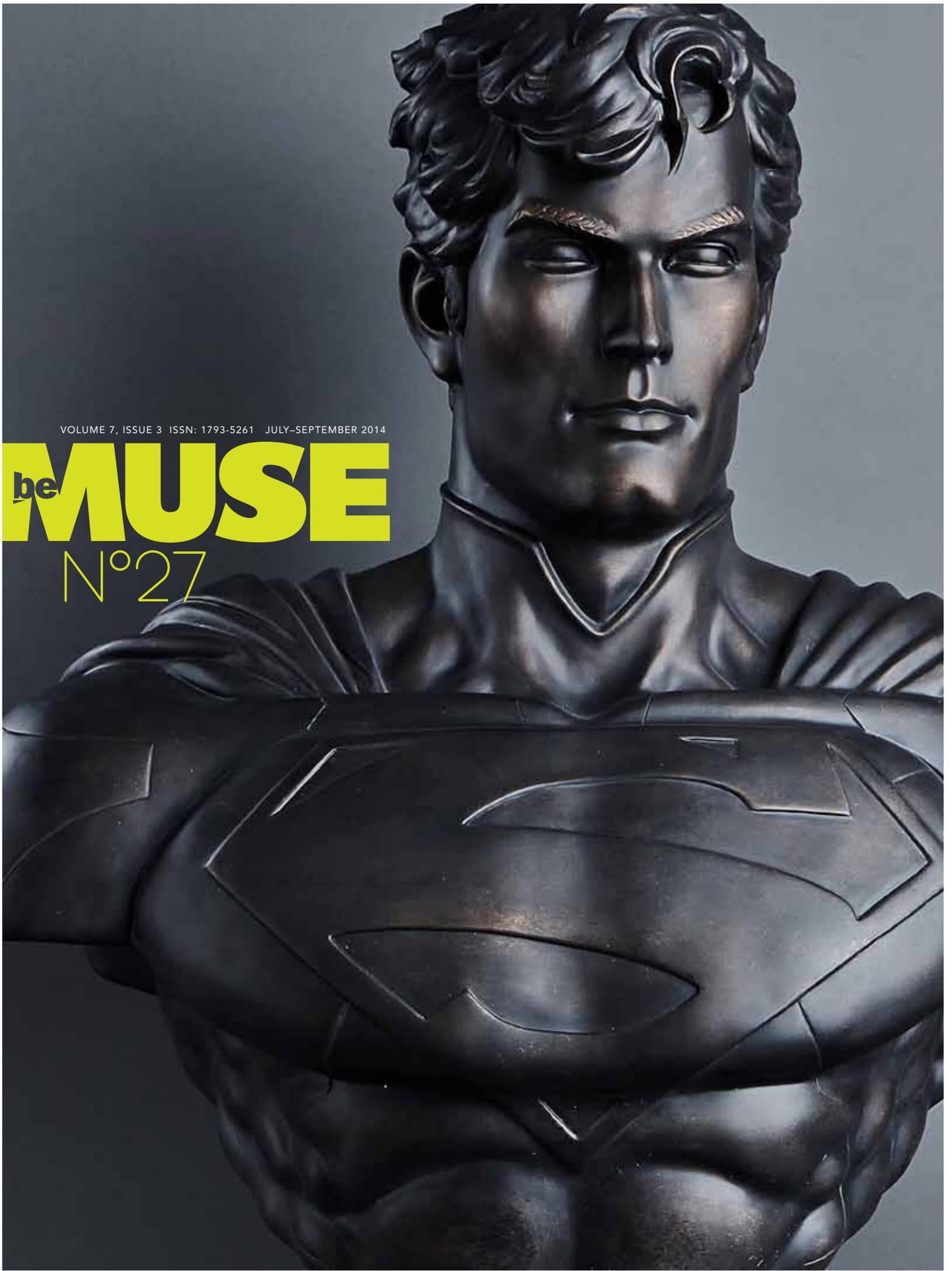


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be **MUSE**

N°27





## National Day Tote Bag

It is common to see Singaporeans carrying the official tote bags given out every year at the National Day Parades (NDP). This year, the bag is designed by Singaporean industrial designer Olivia Lee, who used the iconic Chinese Almanac calendar to add a touch of nostalgia to the annual National Day celebrations.

*Great Singapore Souvenirs brought to you by MUSEUM LABEL, SINGAPORE SOUVENIRS, AND FARMSTORE.*

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# N°27

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Volume 7, Issue 2.

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Buſt of SUPERMAN  
Limited Edition, 1/30  
*Collection of DC Comics Super Heroes  
Store (J.T. Network)*  
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## back cover

Limited edition Singapore Poſt  
BATMAN 75 MyStamp Collection  
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*Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection*

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## Editor's Letter

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Every once in a while, the lighter side of our shared heritage comes to the fore, whisking a breath of fresh air into the sometimes dusty corners of history. Lifestyle and leisure activities have a legacy too, after all, one that is worth preserving and celebrating as much as any other aspect of heritage.

This issue of BeMuse celebrates the “fun” aspect of heritage; one that brings a smile to a child’s face or tickles your funny bone. From high-octane crime fighting to high fashion, our lifestyle also has heritage in it. And nothing better illustrates this than the Singapore Philatelic Museum’s latest DC Super Heroes Exhibition, held in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of BATMAN and the first of its kind in Asia. Children and adults alike will enjoy tracing the evolution of the Dark Knight, SUPERMAN, WONDER WOMAN and other comic book superheroes, and marvelling at their array of colourful costumes and trusty gadgets.

A different kind of accessory – suitcases and luggage bags – is on display in Amsterdam and brought to life in this issue. The exhibition “Welcome Abroad” in the Museum of Bags and Purses provides not just an intriguing look into the origins and adaptations of these travel accoutrements, but also a refreshing perspective on the development of the transportation industry. Showcasing a range of trunks from Louis Vuitton to Samsonite, this article will enthral bag lovers of all ages.

As Singapore celebrates her 49th National Day this August, a timely reminder of the rich diversity of her ethnic cultures can be seen at the Malay Heritage Centre, where an exhibition on Baweanese Heritage & Culture in Singapore is currently showing, as well as at the Peranakan Museum, which is displaying a special exhibition of batik cloths that adorned the altars of the Peranakan Chinese of Southeast Asia. And don’t forget to take in the sights, sounds, smells and excitement of the Singapore Heritage Festival running from 18th to 27th July and the Night Festival happening on 23rd, 24th, 30th and 31st of August. For a more exotic experience, take in the intoxicating atmosphere of the Middle East with our travelogue on Iran.

In the wide world of cultural heritage, there’s something for everyone. Come on in and enjoy yourself.

**Thangamma Karthigesu**  
Editor-In-Chief

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The Batmobile Tumbler was designed by Nathan Crowley and Christopher Nolan for the movie *Batman Begins* in 2005. The Tumbler also made appearances in the subsequent movies *The Dark Knight* in 2008 and *The Dark Knight Rises* in 2012. *Collection of G&B Comics*



# WELCOME ABOARD

Suitcases and travel bags from  
1850 to the present day at the  
Museum of Bags and Purses

/ art

Just over a century ago, travel was still quite an undertaking. What now involves just a few hours of flying took days during the 19th century. Until 1850, people travelled by coach or ship or on foot, but the invention of the steamship and steam train brought the dawn of a new age of luxurious travel. While coach trunks were still sturdy and had convex lids to keep rain from accumulating on them, trunks made after 1875 could be stacked on the wharf or the railway platform. Their dimensions were adapted to the height of train benches, and wardrobe trunks had special compartments to hang clothing. The suitcase and the travel bag underwent a continual adaptation of form and material in response to the innovations in travel. The exhibition Welcome Aboard in the Museum of Bags and Purses in Amsterdam shows how the suitcase and travel bag became symbols of mobility.

## TRAIN TRAVEL

In 1804, the Englishman Richard Trevithick developed the first steam locomotive. It could go only eight kilometers per hour – not much faster than a horse. Due to the rapid growth of industry in England, the railway network developed quickly, and in 1825 the first passenger train was running in the northeast. The British travel organization Thomas Cook followed in the wake of this railway development and, in 1841, began organising domestic train trips and later international trips as well. In 1828, the first railways were being built on the continent in Europe, but the expansion of these ran into difficulties, since smaller railway companies were proliferating and no track width had been agreed upon. It was not until the mid-19th century that track widths were standardised nationally and internationally, and cross-border connections were established. This change made it possible to travel considerable distances in Europe.

Luxurious trips by train became popular after the American George Pullman developed the Pullman sleeper: lavish train cars with first-class service, a dining car and berths for sleeping. After his journey throughout the United States, the Belgian Georges Nagelmackers was inspired to become the “European Pullman” and set up the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits (CIWL).

In 1883, the CIWL’s legendary, luxurious railway connection known as the Orient Express made its first journey from Paris to Istanbul in three days and three nights. It was only the well-to-do who could afford such trips. They wanted to travel as comfortably and take along as many luxuries from home as possible.

This gave rise to a new industry of suitcase manufacturers, such as Louis Vuitton, Goyard, Mädler and Moynat. The range of suitcases, shoe- and hat-boxes, and dressing cases expanded. Trunks with convex lids, which could be easily transported on top of a horse-drawn carriage, were increasingly replaced by flat leather suitcases and travel bags that could be stacked and easily carried by hand. Dressing cases containing brushes, manicure sets, little bottles and boxes made of silver, crystal, ivory and mother-of-pearl were the forerunners of today’s beauty cases.

By **Sigrid Ivo**

Images by **Tassenmuseum  
Hendrijke Museum of Bags  
and Purses, Amsterdam**

## VOYAGES BY SHIP

Until 1838, oceans could be crossed only by sailing ships and the journey from Europe to America could take up to forty days. The invention of the steamship brought about a major change: a trip to America took just two-and-a-half weeks with steam power. The first steamships were opulently furnished, had a level of comfort comparable to posh hotels and qualities reminiscent of manors and palaces.

At the start of the 20th century, the transatlantic transportation of passengers became more rapid, more spacious and even more luxurious. The voyages by first class were affordable only for the extremely wealthy: a first-class ticket for the RMS Titanic cost, for instance, about US\$2,500 (in today's terms about 43,000 euro). During the voyage, lunches and dinners were alternated with activities such as clay pigeon shooting, shuffleboard, fitness exercises and walks on the deck. The captain's dinner and the masked ball were particularly important social occasions. On the maiden voyage of the SS Normandie in 1935 from Le Havre to New York, celebrities such as Maurice Chevalier, Cary Grant and Josephine Baker were among the passengers. On this trip, all first-class passengers were each given a clutch in the shape of the Normandie as a souvenir of this special occasion.

The luggage taken aboard consisted of wardrobe trunks initially produced around 1870. Attached to the top and sides of these were sturdy handles. The insides were lined with beautiful fabrics and had chromed rods and varnished wooden drawers. The trunks could be folded open, revealing a hanging section on the left and drawers on the right. Each provided enough space for fifteen to eighteen dresses, suits or coats. The trunk did not need to be unpacked, as it could immediately serve as a wardrobe.

Wardrobe trunks were manufactured by well-known firms such as Louis Vuitton, and often included the owner's initials, coloured strips or other symbols. Marlene Dietrich, who had an extensive collection of trunks, had a trunk made specially for her shoes. These exclusive and very special trunks could be made only for a limited group of very prosperous individuals.



#### CAR TRAVEL

Towards the end of the 19th century, the automobile began to appear regularly on European streets. It was invented, almost at the same time, in France and in Germany. In 1886, Karl Benz patented a gas-powered engine, creating the first full-fledged car, which nonetheless still looked very much like a carriage.

In the early years, driving an automobile was no easy task: breakdowns were frequent, and technical know-how was required in order to operate and repair it. Because roads were not yet paved with asphalt, and the automobile still had no windows or heating, passengers had to protect themselves with hats, goggles, scarves and warm coats. As technical adaptations and equipment developed, car travel soon became a luxurious pastime as well. The American Henry Ford was able to meet the rising demand for automobiles by producing them on an assembly line. In 1908, his Model T Ford, one of the first mass-produced cars, was put on the market. Fifteen million of them were sold.

At the start of the 20th century, anyone who could afford to travel by car had to be very wealthy. Baggage could be sent ahead by train, but the new vehicle still created a demand for new designs in luggage. In the early days, automobiles had no special space for baggage; luggage manufacturers and saddle makers therefore made custom-designed trunks to be placed on the roof, at the back and on the side of the car. Because they had to be adapted to the shape of the car, these automobile trunks often had unusual and futuristic forms. Furthermore, they had to be sturdy and weatherproof. In 1916, Georges Vuitton, the son of Louis, designed a three-piece automobile trunk: a box containing two pieces of hand luggage. As the automobile developed, a closed-off space for baggage was created; and from that time on, small bags and wheeled suitcases could be placed in it.





#### AVIATION

The airline industry was also developing rapidly at the start of the 20th century. In 1903, the Wright brothers carried out the first documented flight with a motorised airplane. This prompted a race: many different companies in various countries began designing airplanes.

In 1924, the first flight from the Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies was completed: a voyage of twenty-two days. Around 1930, airplanes were lavishly furnished with carpeting, lounge chairs and beds, and had lots of space in which to move. Five-course – and sometimes even seven-course – meals were served. Today only the Airbus A380 has individual berths and similar luxuries on board.

After tourist class was introduced during the 1950s, an airplane could hold up to 100 passengers. In the 1960s, the airplane became a means of transportation for the masses: Lufthansa carried 1.5 million passengers in 1961. Taking off in 1970 was the first commercial flight of the Boeing 747 (the Jumbo Jet), which would become the largest and best-known passenger aircraft in the world at that time.

The arrival of air travel brought about changes in suitcases as well: they had to become lighter in weight, and new materials such as vulcanised fibre, cane and aluminum were introduced. Around 1950, suitcases made of synthetic materials, created by the American company Samsonite, were put on the market. The same brand introduced suitcases on wheels in 1974. That would ultimately evolve into today's trolley bag: the small suitcase on four wheels that can turn on its own axis and has an extendable handle. Nowadays, given the frequent travel by car, train or airplane, the key developments in luggage are the use of lighter, stronger materials and the evolution of more compact designs for easy carrying. ❁

» *Sigrid A Ivo, Director/Curator, Tassenmuseum Hendrije Museum of Bags and Purses, Amsterdam*

The exhibition *Welcome Aboard* is on until 31 August 2014 in the Museum of Bags and Purses in Amsterdam.

The Museum of Bags and Purses showcases the history of the western (hand) bag from the 15th century right up to the present day. The museum holds a collection of 5,000 bags, pouches, cases, purses, travel bags, suitcases and accessories and is the most extensive and most specialised museum of its kind in the world.

[www.museumofbagsandpurses.com](http://www.museumofbagsandpurses.com)





## / design

By **Tan Shin Bin**  
Images by **eco-id architects**

1923 was a significant year for Singapore. It was the year the Singapore-Johor Causeway was completed, the year broadcasting started in the Republic, and the year the country's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was born.

It was also the year No. 5 Chatsworth Park was built, alongside many other buildings, during a construction boom that followed the end of World War I. This elegant two-storey Art Deco bungalow in the Tanglin area was designed by Frank Brewer, an English architect whose works have significantly shaped Singapore's built landscape.

Although Brewer hailed from the cooler climes of England, he demonstrated a sympathetic appreciation of the challenges of hot and humid tropical living. No. 5 Chatsworth Park incorporated large overhanging roof eaves, oriole casement windows, and timber louvres – thoughtful elements that helped to maximise natural ventilation and were critical in providing much-needed thermal respite in the absence of modern-day air-conditioning.

Brewer also incorporated many of his signature touches into the property's design, such as exposed brick pillars, flared eaves and buttressed walls, as well as popular features of the Art Deco style prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s. These include rough-cast plaster rendering, unglazed natural clay roof tiles, grid ceilings and latticed transom with glazed panels.

Surrounded by lush tropical greenery, the bungalow, like others in its vicinity, provided a comfortable home away from home for top Straits officials based in colonial Singapore.

*No. 5 Chatsworth Park*

# A Landmark Property

## TIMELESS DESIGN

Many decades on, much has changed. The British colonists, as well as Brewer himself, have long left Singapore. No longer a backwater colonial outpost, Singapore itself has transformed into a gleaming, efficient, modern city-state.

While No.5 Chatsworth Park still stands at its original location, it too has undergone considerable adjustments. The biggest of these – literally – is the addition of a new extension three times the size of the original house in order for the property to accommodate a multigenerational family.

But in a tribute to Brewer's timeless design, many of the early features of the bungalow have been preserved. The project's architects, Eco-id Architects, took special care to retain and restore distinctive features including the casement windows, the lattice and louvred timber windows, the overhanging eaves and clay roof tiles. They also cleverly reused bricks that were recovered from a former outhouse – which was demolished to make way for the new wing – to patch up parts of the crumbling brick pillars.

Within the bungalow, the architects repositioned the timber staircase in order to accentuate the soaring, double-volume space at the entrance foyer. The new staircase was designed with simple, clean lines that fit seamlessly with the rest of the Art Deco elements in the bungalow.



In creating the new extension, the architects also wanted to ensure that the original bungalow remained the star of the show and that the extension, though larger, would complement the principal building without overshadowing it. To achieve this, the architects decided to keep the new building light, modern and discreet—a refreshing contrast to the robust, masculine quality of the bungalow. With its neutral grey façade and steel finishes, the new wing provides a quiet counterpoint to the bungalow’s resplendent solid wood doors and warm brick.

The architects also borrowed detailing such as the overhanging roof eaves and horizontal louvered timber windows from the original bungalow, and incorporated these into the new wing. Doing so ensured that the old and new parts are knit together by a coherent design language.

A linkway provides a physical connection between the two parts of the development, allowing seamless passage from the old building to the new. The sense of singularity is enhanced by the meandering green landscape that wraps around both buildings, lending a charming “home on a hillock” feel to the whole property.



#### » *Introducing Frank Brewer*

Frank Wilhim Brewer was an English architect who worked in Singapore between 1921 to 1939. From 1922 to 1932, Brewer practiced at Singapore’s oldest architectural firm, Swan & Maclaren. During his time in the Lion City, Brewer designed many iconic buildings that have since become major historical landmarks. These include the Flagstaff House at 17 Kheam Hock Road, which is today known as the Command House. The Flagstaff House was the official residence of the British General Officer Commanding of Malaya and other military officials, and functioned as the Combined Operations Headquarters of the British Army and Air Force during World War II. The building was gazetted as a national monument in 2009.

Another architectural icon by Brewer is the 16-storey Cathay Building, once Singapore’s tallest building. During World War II, the property was converted to a Red Cross Casualty Station, and was later used to house various Japanese military departments. After the war, it served as the headquarters for Admiral Lord Mountbatten. Today, the art-deco style façade of the building has been gazetted for preservation while the rest of the building has been redeveloped.

»About Chatsworth Park and Tanglin

Chatsworth Park is a conservation area, as well as a Good Class Bungalow Area, that consists of 27 conserved bungalows. While these houses were built in the 1920s and 1930s after the end of World War I, many were designed in the “black and white” style that characterised prewar architecture.

Others followed an Art Deco style.

Prominent British and American firms like the Straits Trading Company, Cable & Wireless, and the Firestone Rubber Company owned many of these houses in Chatsworth Park and used them to house their expatriate staff.

Chatsworth Park forms part of the greater Tanglin area, known today for its luxurious residences and five-star hotels, as well as the embassies, consulates and High Commissions of various countries. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tanglin was full of large gambier, nutmeg and pepper plantations. It was popular among Europeans and Teochews, who established residences and plantations there.

The name Tanglin comes from the Chinese dialect word *Tang Leng*, which means “east hill peaks”. This name alludes to the area’s location east of Singapore’s Chinatown, as well as its hilly nature.

Within Tanglin, roads like Ardmore, Dalvey and Chatsworth were named after the estates of their early European owners, and still conjure up images today of the verdant English countryside.



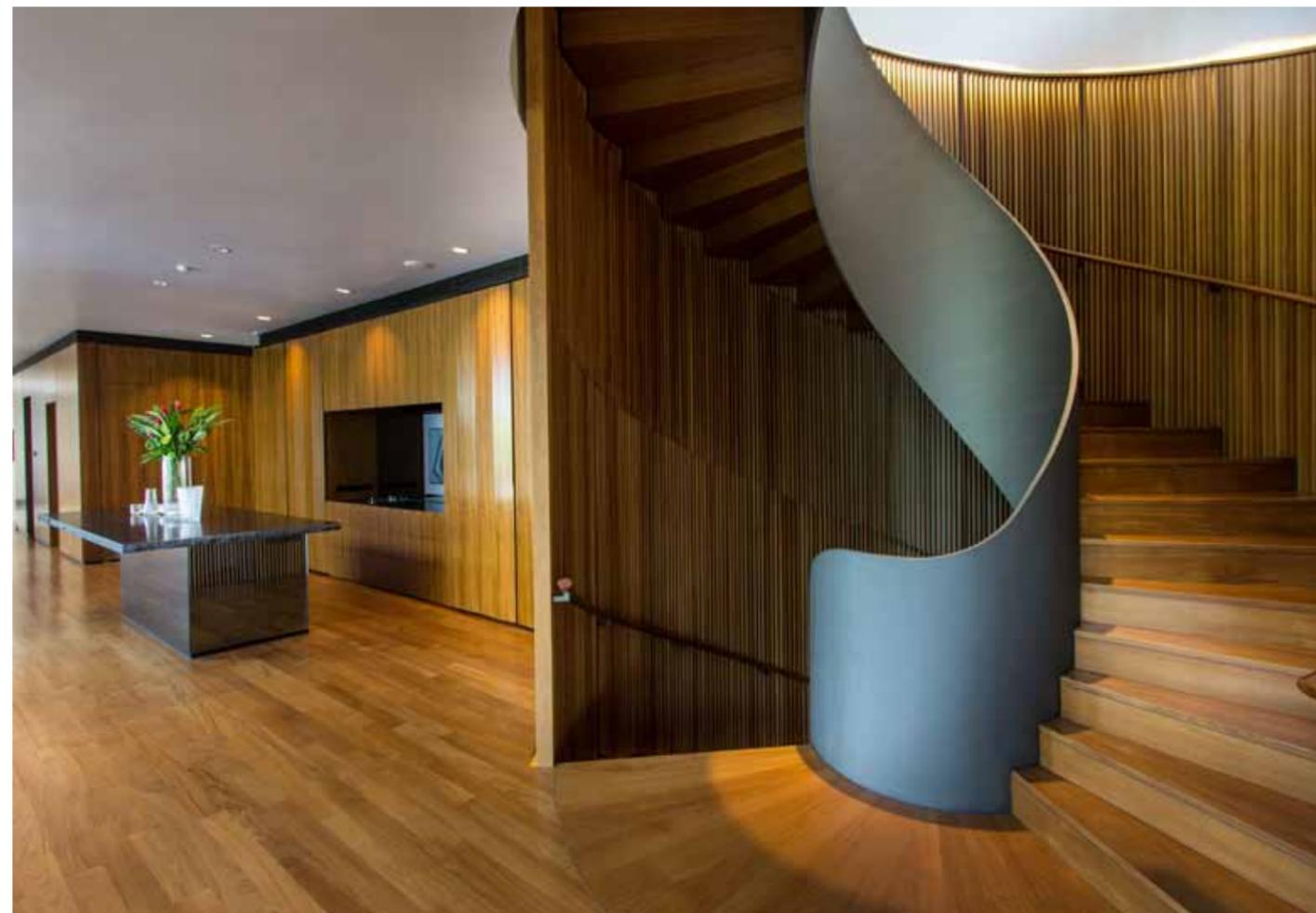
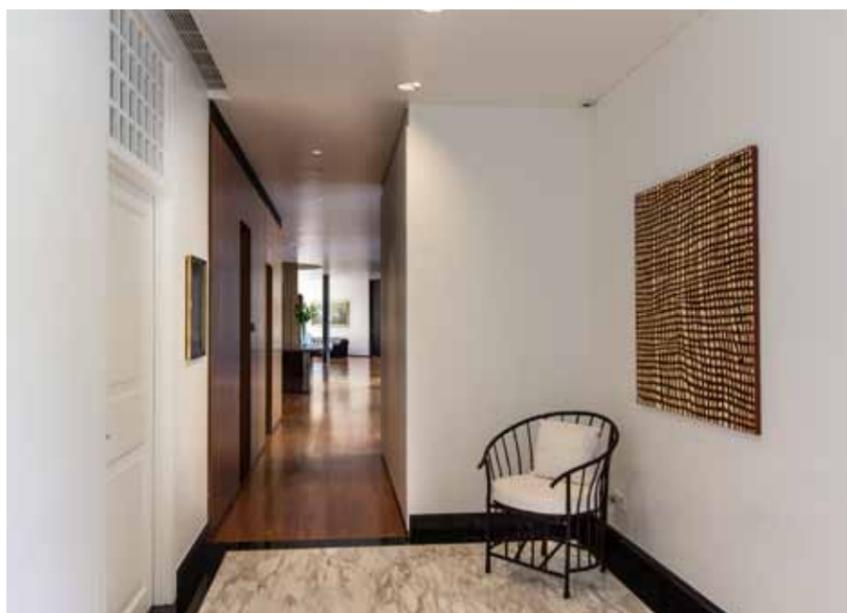


*» Art Deco: A Movement of Change and Modernity*

The Art Deco phase took off after World War I, together with the Jazz Age. It marked an era of change, hope and energy, as people clamoured for a new start and new ideas after the devastating war. The Art Deco movement, which influenced architecture, interior design, fashion and jewellery, responded to this thirst by creating a streamlined and modern yet luxurious approach to design.

Famous Art Deco buildings around the world include New York City's Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building. These are characterised by clean lines and futuristic forms, bringing to mind to modern inventions such as planes, ships and cars, as well as geometric design flourishes like stepped zig-zurats, chevrons and sunburst motifs.

In Singapore, notable Art Deco buildings include Clifford Pier, Capitol Theatre, Cathay Theatre and old SIT flats in Tiong Bahru.



**ACCOLADES**

The respectful and sensitive treatment of the original colonial bungalow has been recognised by Singapore's architectural community. In 2013, the building was awarded the Urban Redevelopment Authority's Architectural Heritage Award, which honours owners, architects, engineers and contractors who take special care to restore buildings for modern use.

When presenting the award, the jury praised the team for giving the property "a new lease of life with a substantial new wing that is impressive, yet plays up the grandeur of the original".

Indeed, while No.5 Chatsworth Park today has changed significantly from its colonial self, its visitors are still treated to a rich slice of Singapore history whenever they step through the building's grand brick entrance. ❀

*» Tan Shin Bin is Writer, BeMuse*



Singapore. Group of Natives.

A postcard of a group photograph of affluent Baweanese in traditional dress. Singapore, early 20th century. Courtesy of the National Museum of Singapore

By **Suhaili Osman**  
& **Muhammad Qazim Abdul Karim**

SINGAPORE PRIDES ITSELF ON ITS MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND THE RESULTANT CULTURAL DIVERSITY THAT SUCH A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIAL LANDSCAPE PRODUCES. NONETHELESS, HISTORICAL OFFICIAL CATEGORIES OF 'RACE' AND 'ETHNICITY' IN SINGAPORE HAVE TENDED TO GLOSS OVER THE RICH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES UNIQUE TO SUB-ETHNIC GROUPS WITHIN THE LARGER ETHNIC 'WHOLE'. HENCE ETHNIC CATEGORIES SUCH AS 'CHINESE', 'MALAY' AND 'INDIAN' MAY ONLY SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF CULTURAL COMMUNITIES THAT ARE IN FACT FAR MORE COMPLEX, WITH MYRIAD HISTORIES AND CUSTOMS, DESPITE SOME SHARED RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND LANGUAGES.

In that respect 'Malay' sometimes becomes a convenient administrative 'shorthand' – a catch-all term that belies the various origins and social histories of the Malayo-Polynesian communities of Southeast Asia, communities which include diverse groups such as the Baweanese, the Javanese, the Minang, the Bugis, the Banjarese and the Mandailings. For centuries, these peoples voyaged back and forth across what historian Leonard Andaya has termed the 'Sea of Melayu' and many of them, especially the Baweanese, came to settle in Singapore during the period of European colonialism in the 19th -20th centuries.

On 15 March 2014, the Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) launched its first-ever community co-curated exhibition, *Laaobe/Changing Times: Baweanese Heritage & Culture in Singapore* (*Laaobe: Warisan & Budaya Bawean di Singapura*). The exhibition, which features the Baweanese community in Singapore, also marks the launch of the *Se-Nusantara* series. This is another exhibition put up annually that features a different sub-ethnic group of the Malays in Singapore. Each partner sub-ethnic cultural group will get to work together with MHC's curatorial experts to showcase their unique cultures and tell their diasporic histories of *merantau* (voyaging) across Southeast Asia, and how they ultimately came to compose the mosaic of Malay identities in Singapore.

*Laaobe* highlights the Baweanese community in Singapore, whose forefathers hailed from Pulau Bawean, a small island located off the northeastern coast of Java. *Laaobe*, which means "changed", showcases the heritage and transformation of the local Baweanese community over the years, as shaped through various historical and socio-economic events.

The exhibition presents the history and development of Singapore's Baweanese people through over 40 objects and archival materials contributed by the community. Exhibits include rarely-seen personal collections of pictures of *pontbuk* life and daily objects found in Baweanese households, such as hand-woven pandan mats and bags, and a high-footed bed frame popular with Malay families in the past.

#### WHO ARE THE BAWEANESE?

Narratives of diasporic communities usually revolve around several themes and milestones in their journey and experiences in their new homeland. They usually elaborate on the reasons the Baweanese migrated to Singapore, factors that contributed to their migration patterns, and the impact of their migration on Singapore's cultural landscape. The exhibition seeks to provide an insight to these topics and introduce both local and foreign visitors to the MHC to the vibrant Baweanese community in Singapore. The Baweanese originated from a small island called Pulau Bawean, which is located off the northeastern coast of Java in modern-day Indonesia. The inhabitants call themselves '*orang Phebiyen*' or '*orang Bawean*', speak 'Baweanese' and profess Islam as their faith. Here, they are more familiarly known as *Orang Boyan* ('Bawean people', although '*Boyan*' is a mispronunciation of 'Bawean').

# Laaobe

Changing Times:  
Baweanese Heritage &  
Culture in Singapore

/ community



Clockwise, from far left:  
A group of Baweanese women pounding a *dungkab* to produce rhythmic beats for the *tarian dulang*, Bawean, 2012. Courtesy of Hj Asmawi Bin Majid

Ponthuk inhabitants of Kalompang Gubuk at 35 Upper Weld Road, Singapore in Kampong Kapur area. Circa 1963. Courtesy of Hj Junaidah Bte Junit

An *ambin* in the living area of Ponthuk Kalompang Gubuk, 1975. Courtesy of Hj Junaidah Bte Junit

Kassim Selamat and 'The Swallows' Jacket. Courtesy of the Baweanese Association of Singapore and the National Heritage Board of Singapore

## MERANTAU AND THE MALAY DIASPORA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

*Merantau*, the Baweanese cultural practice of temporarily migrating to distant lands in search of work opportunities and to better oneself, was one of the key factors that led to scores of young Baweanese men leaving their ancestral *desa* (villages) in search of their fate and fortunes. The majority did not have the intention to settle down permanently in the countries they visited. Their main motive was to make sufficient money to buy gold and other consumer goods, and ultimately to build a house in Bawean when they returned.

The Baweanese started migrating to Singapore in the 19th century and this movement further intensified in the early 20th century due to the vast economic opportunities available here. Colonial records show that Baweanese migrants were a formal ethnic category of Singapore's population in 1849, but given the active maritime movements criss-crossing Southeast Asia, it is highly likely that Baweanese were already part of Singapore's social milieu as early as the turn of the 19th century. These early settlers pro-

vided much-needed services in the port areas, town centres and even recreational arenas. At the time, Bawean men were known for their horse-handling and motoring skills and many worked as horse syces, drivers and water-boat workers. Even though many of these Baweanese saw themselves as sojourners, most of them settled permanently due to the higher wages they could earn here as well as the increasingly restrictive colonial policies that prevented them from easily returning to Bawean.

### PONTHUK LIVING

The Baweanese community of Singapore grew out of successive waves of migrants settling permanently here from the mid-19th century onwards. Many Baweanese settled at the bank of the Rochor River between Jalan Besar and Syed Alwi Road. Pre-war shophouses located around Kampong Kapur Road near Jalan Besar were turned into *ponthuks*, such as Pondok Diponggo, Pondok Kalompang Gubuk and Pondok Gelam.

The *ponthuk* (Malay: *pondok*), a communal residence based on village affiliations back on Bawean, became

an important social institution for the Baweanese community in Singapore until the end of the 20th century. These *ponthuks*, in effect shophouse residences set in urban locations around Singapore, initially served as temporary homes for the Baweanese newcomers and provided them with safety and other welfare services – a practice similar to the *kongsi* concept of Chinese clans. A newcomer lodged in the *ponthuk* until he had found employment and a permanent home usually provided by his employer.

As more Baweanese came to settle in Singapore and married locals or brought over their families, the *ponthuk* came to grow as a social institution that ensured the communal welfare of the Baweanese until they were financially able to set up their own home. It served not only as an institution that gave them a sense of socio-economic security but was also a micro-economic reflection of village relationships back on Bawean.

One of the highlights of the *Laaobe* exhibition is the depiction of life in a *ponthuk* during the mid-19th to late 20th century and the vivid presentation of community-contributed artefacts. The *ponthuk* representation gives visitors an insight into the living conditions of the Baweanese settlers and the communal activities that contributed to the beginnings of a community group known for being close-knit.

A *Pak Lurah* or residence master would head each *ponthuk* and serve as the leader of that household. The Baweanese are known for making group decisions by consensus, and general assemblies and other meetings usually took place in the living room of a *ponthuk*. Generally, this area was restricted to male *ponthuk* residents and guests only. A typical living room in a *ponthuk* had a huge multi-purpose *ambin* (a low raised platform) and a communal dining table. The *ambin*, which usually covered one-third of the floor area, served several purposes – it could be used as a huge yet spartan bed for *ponthuk* bachelors, for daily *solat* (prayers) or even as a place where Qur'an recitations were performed.





Space on the second storey of the *ponthuk*. The room was turned into a wedding hall for the *bersanding* (presenting the newly weds) ceremony as seen in this photograph. Courtesy of the National Museum of Singapore

*Laaobe/Changing Times: Baweanese Heritage and Culture in Singapore* runs from 15 March 2014 – 3 August 2014 at the Malay Heritage Centre. Some of the key activities conducted in partnership with PBS include Baweanese food demonstrations, Bawean language classes as well as forums and lectures conducted by representatives from the Baweanese community in Singapore.

Admission is free for all Singaporeans and PRs. Tickets can be purchased at \$4 for all other groups. If you have any queries, please contact us at 6391 0450 during museum opening hours (Tues-Sun, 10am-6pm).

#### BAWEANESE CULTURAL NORMS AND PRACTICES

Living in a close-knit *ponthuk* environment contributed to the formulation of cultural norms and practices within the Baweanese community in Singapore. These cultural norms, which are still practised today, include the concept of *gotong-royong*, or 'mutual aid'. *Gotong-royong* is a shared cultural value across the different Malay communities and the

spirit of 'mutual aid' was embodied in *ponthuk* life. *Ponthuk* residents were expected to assist one another in good and bad times, and contribute financially to the household. Weddings, thanks-giving customs, newborn baby celebrations and funerals were affairs that concerned the entire *ponthuk* community. *Ponthuk* living also contributed to the formation of social groups such as the *kendarat* (a voluntary service during wedding occasions), *kompang* (a handheld drum ensemble), *berzanji* (a religious recitation group) and *kercengan*, a quintessential traditional Baweanese group performance that blends Quranic verses and Baweanese chorale music.

#### PERSATUAN BAWEAN SINGAPURA (PBS)

*Laaobe* is produced in partnership with *Persatuan Bawean Singapore* (PBS - Singapore Baweanese Association), a social organisation formed in 1934 to assist and supervise all the *ponthuks* scattered all over the island at that time. Back then, PBS worked closely with the various *ponthuks* to help Singapore's newly arrived Baweanese migrants by providing shelter and sustenance as well as aid to secure employment.

After 1962, *ponthuks* started closing down as families began to move out into single-family residences. Although the *ponthuk* has disappeared from Singapore's urban landscape, PBS continues to play an important role in the context of Singapore's multi-ethnic cultural milieu by promoting the language and culture of the Baweanese community. The group also organises charity and community events nationally that involve the larger multi-ethnic Singapore community.

#### THE BAWEANES COMMUNITY IN SINGAPORE TODAY

The Baweanese today no longer live in *ponthuks*, but that has not diminished the community spirit of the people. The Baweanese word "*laaobe*" means "changed" and while transformation aptly describes the history of the Singapore Baweanese community over the decades, many aspects of Baweanese culture, heritage and values are still very much alive today.

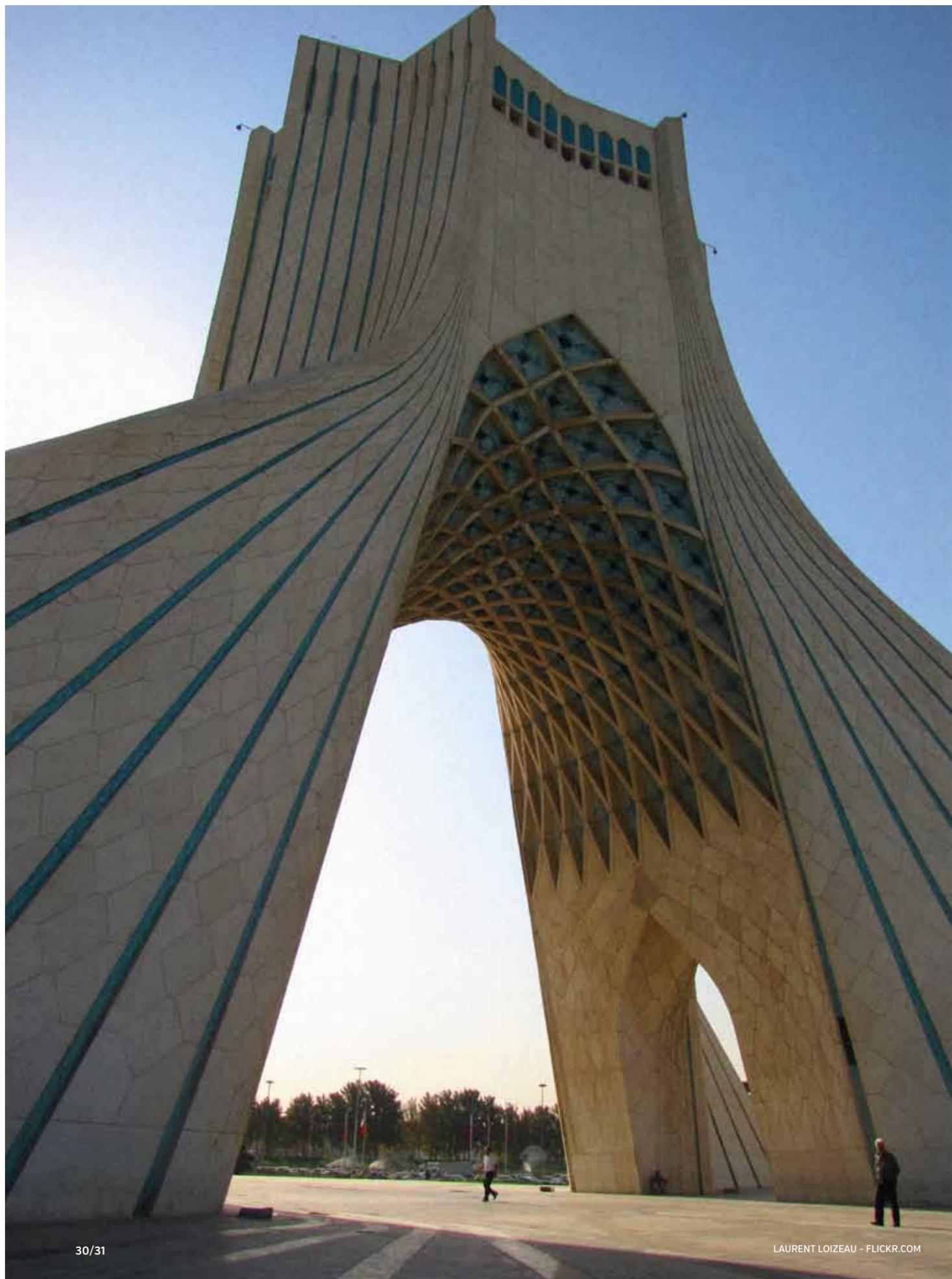
The many programmes supporting the exhibition are also opportunities for both Singaporean and foreign visitors to learn more about the Baweanese culture as well as its delicious cuisine, and about how the community has enriched the extraordinary cultural landscape that we enjoy in Singapore. ❀

» Subaili Osman is Curator, Malay Heritage Centre & Muhammad Qazim Abdul Karim is Assistant Manager (Outreach), Malay Heritage Centre

# INCREDIBLE Iran

By Sandeep Singh

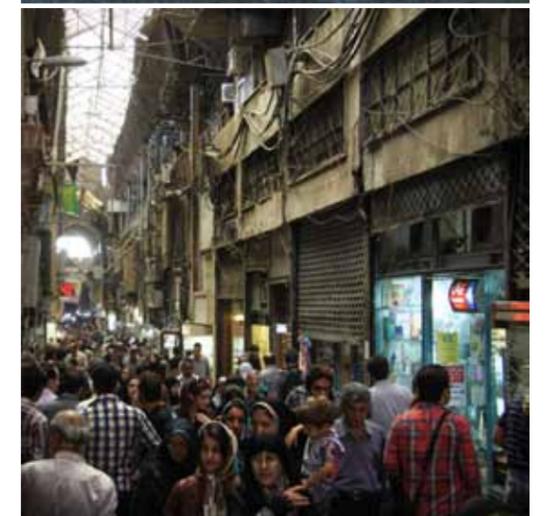
/ travel



MENTION IRAN AND MANY NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS, FED BY THE COMPLEX STRATEGIC ISSUES IN THE REGION, FLOAT TO MIND. HAVING VISITED THE COUNTRY FOR 15 DAYS IN APRIL, I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE A MORE POSITIVE VIEW, ONE OF A PROGRESSIVE, SOPHISTICATED, MAGNIFICENT AND RESPLENDENT NATION.

IRAN, ALSO KNOWN AS PERSIA AND OFFICIALLY THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN SINCE 1980, LIES BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAQ. IT IS THE SECOND-LARGEST NATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST (THE LARGEST IS EGYPT) AND IS HOME TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST CIVILISATIONS, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE FORMATION OF THE *PROTO-ELAMITE* AND *ELAMITE* KINGDOM IN 3200–2800 BCE.

ZOROASTRIANISM WAS WIDELY PRACTISED IN THE COUNTRY BEFORE THE RISE OF ISLAM AND TODAY THE MAJORITY OF ITS POPULATION ARE SHIA MUSLIMS.



## YOU'RE GOING WHERE?

For all my excitement about this unlikely and off-the-beaten-path adventure that I was to embark on, my journey did not have a promising start. After a missed flight, three transfers, unregistered boarding passes and my unceremonious declaration that I would never step into the Middle East again – you'd lose it too, after 17 hours on the road – I found myself in Shiraz, located in south-west Iran.

"Welcome to Iran," the immigration officer said with a smile as he handed me my stamped passport. Maybe I will return to the Middle East after all, I thought to myself, more lucid now that I was finally there.

Popularly known as the city of poets, literature and gardens, Shiraz is one of the oldest cities of ancient Persia. The city has also earned the unflattering reputation of having the "laziest" people in Iran, supposedly because of its inhabitants' laid-back and easy-going personalities.

Arriving shortly after lunch time, I was initially inclined to agree with this stereotype. Many shops and establishments around my hotel were closed and only a handful of people walked the streets. Sidewalk benches were peppered with young Iranian men blissfully puffing away on the *qaylan* or waterpipe. The city certainly did not match my naïve perception of a bustling marketplace teeming with donkey carts, snake-charmers and food vendors.

Over the next few days, however, I began to appreciate this atmosphere. With temperatures soaring between noon and early evening, Shiraz shuts down for a siesta and turns into a ghost town during those few blistering hours. At dusk she stretches from her slumber and sends Shirazis spilling out onto the streets again – while the cooler nights away by dining, shopping and socialising among a labyrinth of bazaars.



RICARDO FERNANDEZ - FLICKR.COM



## HALF THE WORLD

Besides Shiraz, I also visited Esfahan and Yazd. Together, these three cities make up a golden triangle for travellers looking to experience the rich cultural fabric of central Iran.

Esfahan is colloquially known as *neşf-e-jahan* or "half the world". After seeing its Italian restaurants, flashing neon signs advertising Western brands and tree-lined boulevards that rival any European city, I am inclined to agree. The focal point of this city is undoubtedly Imam Square, the world's second-largest public square, behind only Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Surrounded by a bazaar, two stunning mosques and a palace, the Square is a festive place teeming with families picnicking, young boys practicing stunts on their BMXs and the canter of horse-drawn carriages transporting ecstatic toddlers and young couples along the perimeter. After sundown, the Square is illuminated by multicoloured lights, musical fountains and live performances. Strolling along in the gentle evening breeze, I found the atmosphere intoxicatingly romantic.



RICARDO FERNANDEZ - FLICKR.COM SERGI HILL - FLICKR.COM



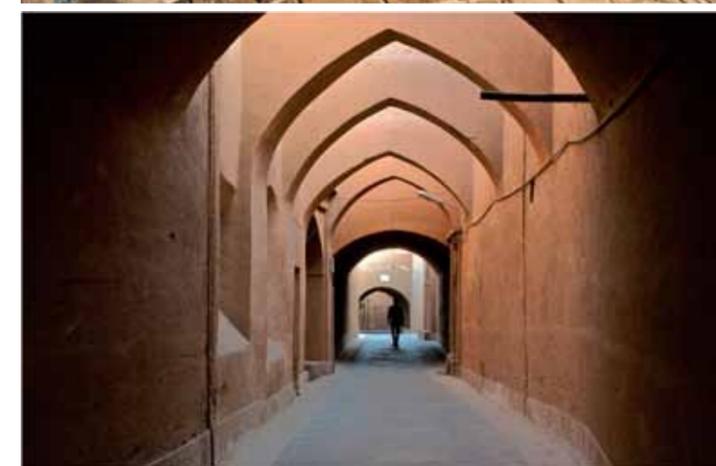
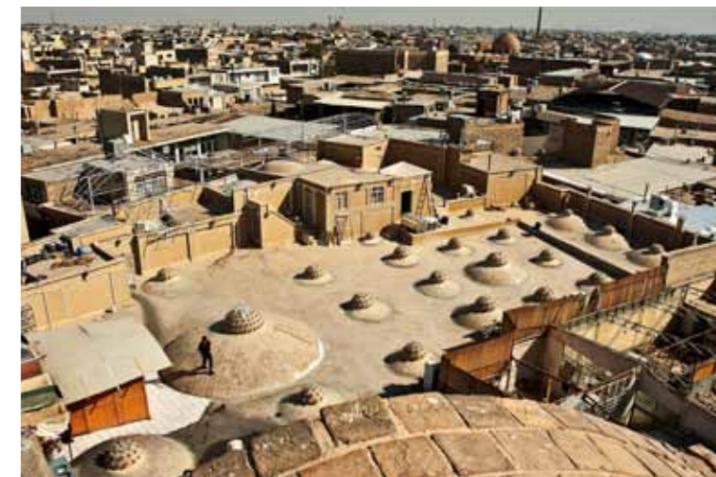
Of the three cities I visited, the desert city of Yazd was my favourite. The centre of Zoroastrian culture, the city was once described by Marco Polo as “good and noble, with a great amount of trade”.

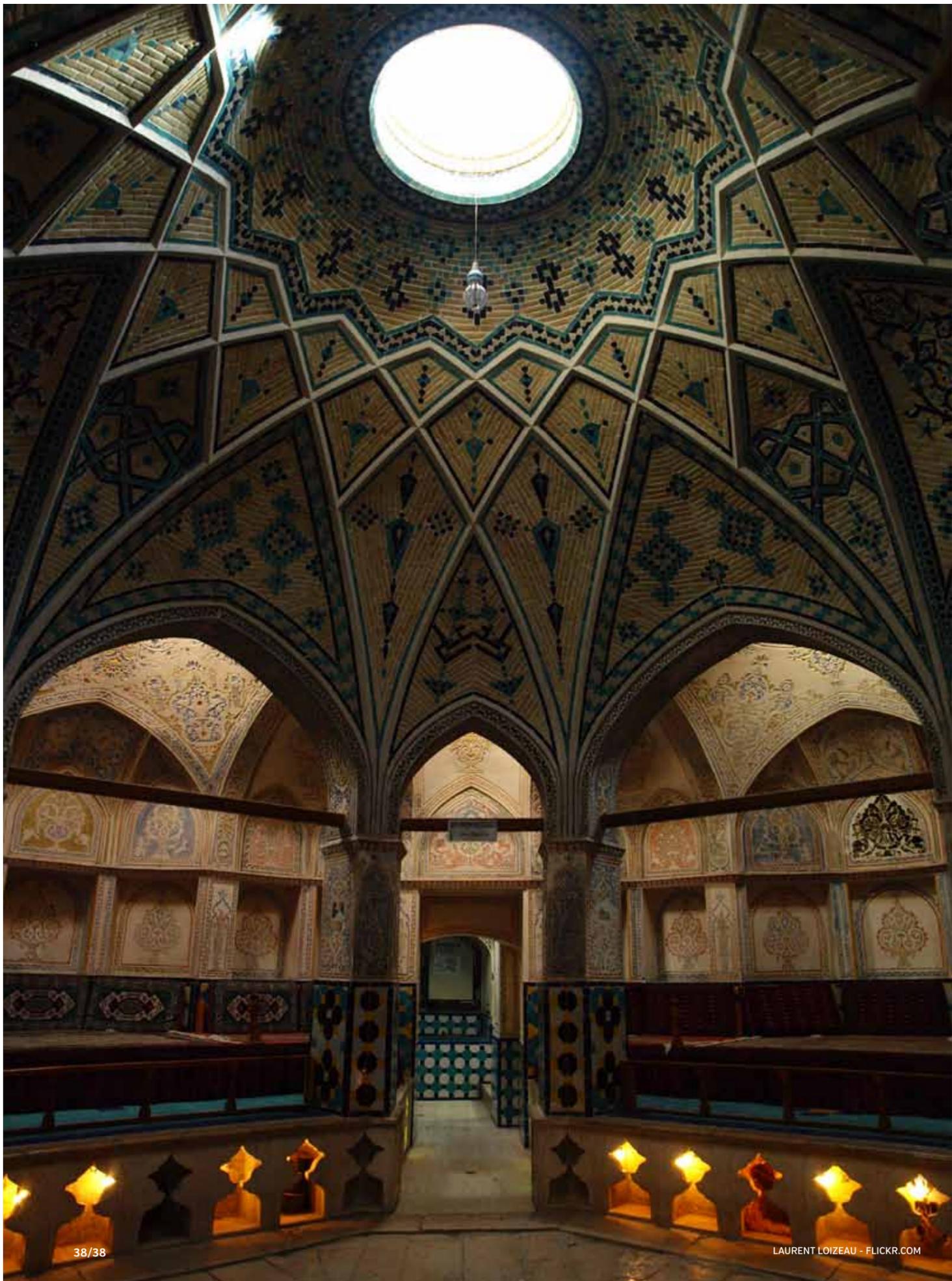
Climbing atop the numerous roof terraces dotting the city, I discerned high sandstone walls designed to block out the sun’s rays, gleaming domed roofs and distant minarets illuminated in blues and greens. The scene was further enriched by the distinctive echoes of the daily call to prayer. I felt like I was in the middle of a magical landscape inspired by Arabian Nights.

At dusk, desert winds stirred up the air and mini sandstorms were common, sending people scurrying down the narrow streets with their faces bent low into their necks.

It was fascinating to see how the buildings in Yazd are constructed to adapt to the desert environment. At every corner there are *badgirs* or wind catchers, which funnel cool air down into the lower sections of a home. We also visited ‘ice houses’ – curious egg-shaped structures that are hollow inside and ingeniously constructed using insulating materials such as mud and brick, which drastically lower the temperature indoors. This allows ice and other perishables obtained during winter to be stored throughout the hot summer months, when temperatures are known to hit 50 to 60 degrees Celsius. *Qanats* or underground water channels provide a reliable source of water for human use and irrigation.

One of the most distinctive features of Yazd is the *nakhl*, which means to carry or transfer. Bearing close resemblance to the Cypress tree (Iran’s national tree and revered for its representation of beauty, freedom and endurance) the *nakhl* is a wooden structure symbolising a stretcher, which was used to carry one of the martyrs in Shia Islam. During the Iranian New Year of *Ashura*, several such *nakbls* are heavily decorated with black fabrics, daggers, swords and mirrors and carried on the shoulders of hundreds of men. Depending on size, these *nakbls* can go up to several feet in height and weigh several tonnes. The *nakbl* is also a symbol of pride and social unity, and is usually found in town squares or places of honour.





## IN THE HEART OF PERSIA

Iran is truly an amazing travel destination. The Iranians are immensely proud of their heritage and are genuinely pleased to share their love for music, food, beauty and history. Schoolchildren peek at you shyly beneath heavily lashed eyes and wait for you to pass before letting out a loud “hello” or “nice to meet you” and bursting into peals of laughter. Sweet elderly ladies fish out sweets from beneath their black *chadors* and press them into your hands, their faces glowing with excitement. Taxi drivers and shop owners return large notes that you mistakenly pass them in your frenzy to recognise different currency denominations. Groups of young men and women suddenly accost you with a slew of questions about your origins and what you think of Iran, and request to take photos with you.

The streets are mostly dominated by white Datsuns and Fords, and reminded me of Singapore in the 1980s and early 1990s. Throughout the homes in Iran you will see two knockers on the doors; a long one for men and a round one for women. Each lets out a characteristic sound and allows the women at home to know if they should be veiled when they open the door.

I recall fondly the intricately-patterned mosaic-tiled mosques, whose domed ceilings seem to touch the sky. Late afternoons spent meandering through the organised chaos of bazaars, whose operations have remain unchanged for hundreds of years, selling everything from jewellery to copperware to toys and scarves. Visiting sprawling gardens that are oases in the heat, exhibiting flowers so fragrant they make your head spin. Most interestingly, observing the womenfolk go about their daily lives – heavily made-up faces with their colourful shawls framing dyed hair, juxtaposed against bare faces enveloped in austere black or flower-patterned *chadors* that billow resolutely behind them.

It was pleasantly surprising to see how modern and “normal” everything was. With all the negative press surrounding the country, one is inclined to be wary of travelling without a trusted guide for fear of having to deal with over-enthusiastic touts or shrewd hotel managers, or being intimidated by a strong military presence. However, we faced no such issues. In fact, a few solo female travellers we met on the trip told us that Iran was one of the safest places they had been to. Iran was also not as isolated from the outside world as I had thought. Throughout our fortnight, we met many other travellers and tourists from countries such as Spain, China, Australia and the United States, and the trip felt like any other holiday destination with its usual flurry of tourists. For those of you toying with the possibility of visiting Iran, do go! It is a beautiful country filled with even more beautiful people; a vast landscape with a superb history and something for everyone. You will not be disappointed. ❁

» Sandeep Singh is Manager, Policy, National Heritage Board





# Auspicious Designs

## BATIK FOR PERANAKAN ALTARS

by Maria Khoo Joseph

/ culture

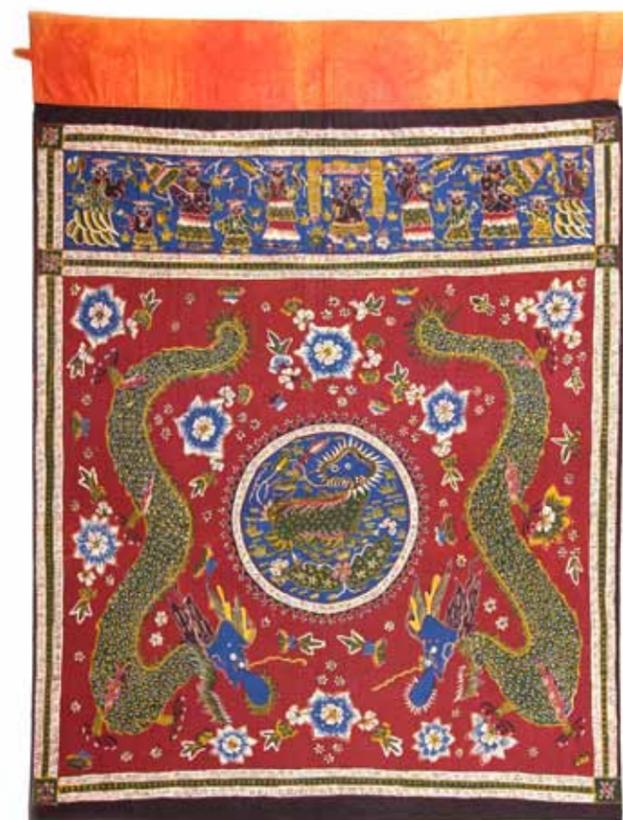
For many Peranakan Chinese of Southeast Asia, religion and ritual play a central role in their daily lives. Many ceremonies, from Chinese New Year to the annual tomb cleaning (*cheng beng*) festival, involve setting up altars and invoking deities and ancestors. Altars usually hold religious paraphernalia and offerings. On special occasions, textiles are draped in front.

Altar cloths, called *tok wi* 桌帟 in Hokkien (*zhuowei* in Mandarin), are usually made of silk with embroidered designs and were originally imported from Southern China. Common motifs included dragons, phoenix, *qilin*, *ruyi sceptre*, swastika, and other auspicious symbols. The cloths are almost uniformly rectangular – to cover the shape of the front of a typical altar. An extra piece of fabric, also decorated, hangs as a flap over the upper section. Fragments of such hangings and altar frontals have been discovered in excavations of Tang-dynasty (618–907) monasteries near the Dunhuang Caves, in present day Gansu province, demonstrating that the tradition has been long-held.

By the early twentieth century, Peranakans on Java began using altar cloths made of local batik. These batik altar cloths maintained the form of the embroidered versions, though they adapted established Chinese symbols in imaginative renderings and introduced motifs and designs from Southeast Asian and European cultures. Most batik altar cloths are designed on a single piece of cotton cloth, with depicted, rather than actual, upper panels. It is unclear why Peranakans of Java began using batik altar cloths, but perhaps it was due in part to the already thriving batik industry on the island. Another theory could be that the tropical climate of the East Indies was more suited to textiles made of cotton than of silk. Batik altar cloths show the distinct cross-cultural identity of the Peranakan communities of the region. They are fascinating examples of a community's adaptation to its new surroundings.



Altar cloth: pair of dragons  
Java, mid-20th century  
Cotton (drawn batik)  
Gift of Matthew and Alice Yapp



Facing page:  
Funeral altar cloth: crane and deer  
China, early 20th century  
Embroidered damask silk,  
cotton liner and tassels

## THE EXHIBITION

The Peranakan Museum received a donation of seventy-two batik altar cloths from Matthew and Alice Yapp in 2012. The cloths were collected by their son Alvin over a period of ten years. On 11 April 2014, the museum opened the exhibition *Auspicious Designs: Batik for Peranakan Altars*, which features several highlights from the collection. The exhibition is divided into five sections over two floors of the museum's special exhibition gallery.

The first section is a contextual display featuring a deity altar and a set of furnishings that might be found in a typical Peranakan home. An altar cloth is draped over the front of the altar table, embroidered hangings adorn the doorways, and chairs flanking the altar are also covered in embroideries. This dis-

play emphasises the importance of textiles in demarcating sacred space during special occasions.

The second section focuses on the embroidered silk altar cloths made in China. These cloths were imported into Southeast Asia and used by Peranakans. An example on display is a full gold thread altar cloth depicting the Three Star Gods that once belonged to the Chee family, one of the oldest families from Malacca. This section shows examples of cloths that were forerunners to the batik versions produced later in Java.

The third and fourth sections of the exhibition examine the stylistic diversity found in the designs on batik altar cloths. Batik cloths in these two sections are decorated with designs that mix Chinese, Southeast Asian, and European influences.

One of the cloths prominently displays the coat of arms of the Dutch East Indies at the centre, with Chinese cloud collar motifs at the sides. A selection of Chinese objects, from what are known as the Hundred Antiques, decorate the upper panel. This cloth is possibly one of the oldest batik altar cloths in the museum's collection: it is made using natural dyes.

Another cloth shows the influence of designs popular on batik sarongs. The blue and white cloth with the floral bouquet motif (called *buketan* in batik terminology) – a sarong design that was made popular by Dutch-Eurasian batik maker Eliza Van Zuylen – is an example of this. Another altar cloth in this section worth highlighting is the only cloth in the collection that is decorated with Roman letters – Chinese characters are much more common. The

letters appear to spell the surnames “Hoe” (or “Koe”) and “Sioe”, if read from the centre along the border. The middle line reads “hong” and “leng”. In Hokkien, *hong* is phoenix and *leng* means dragon; both are depicted on this cloth. The creatures are often used as symbols of a bridal couple, which suggests this cloth may have been used in a wedding. Altar cloths could also be a means of declaring political affiliation: a cloth from Yogyakarta shows human figures waving the flag of Nationalist China.

Another aspect of batik altar cloths highlighted in the exhibition is the varied interpretations of common Chinese symbols. Batik cloths featuring dragons and *qilins*, for example, are used to show the physical differences between the two creatures. Other objects featuring these two creatures from the collections of the Asian Civilisations Museum and the



Altar cloth: phoenixes, dragons, and letters  
Java, mid-20th century  
Cotton (drawn batik)  
Gift of Matthew and Alice Yapp

Facing page:  
Altar cloth: figures with flag of the Republic of China  
Java, Yogyakarta, mid-20th century  
Cotton (drawn batik), 86 x 134.5 cm  
Stamped: Batikkeru Tjie Tjing Ing, Djogja  
Gift of Matthew and Alice Yapp



Peranakan Museum are displayed alongside these cloths, so that viewers may discuss similarities, and their possible sources.

One interesting comparison worth mentioning is a Balinese palanquin with *nagas* – a group of serpent deities – depicted on its sides, juxtaposed with a batik altar cloth that show elongated dragons that more closely resemble the *naga* than the typical coiled or front-facing Chinese dragons found on embroidered altar cloths.

The fifth and last section provides visitors with the opportunity to learn more about the rituals performed by Peranakans, and how different altar cloths were used for different occasions. Cloths used during Chinese New Year and other celebratory events, for example, were coloured in strong auspicious reds and generally bright hues. For funerals, altar cloths with more sombre tones were selected.

These were colours often associated with mourning in the Peranakan world – blues, purples, and greens. An example of this on display is a dark blue cloth from Singapore, which features crane and deer motifs – symbolic of longevity – as well as the cicada, a symbol of immortality.

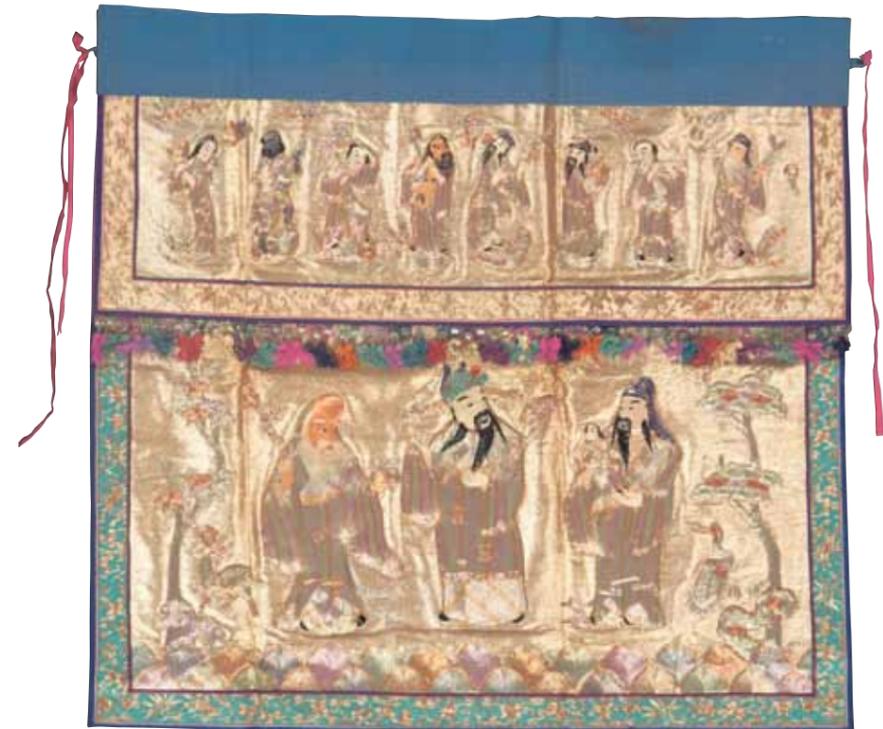
As with the diverse designs found on them, batik altar cloths are distinctive examples of the cross-cultural interaction inherent in the hybrid identities of the Peranakans. Although these cloths – whether embroidered or batik – have long been a feature of Chinese altars, research into their past remains limited. This exhibition therefore aims to be a preliminary investigation of these culturally and historically rich textiles, and their multiple influences. ❖

» Maria Khoo Joseph is Assistant Curator, The Peranakan Museum



Altar cloth:  
Dutch East Indies coat of arms  
Java, early 20th century  
Cotton (drawn batik),  
102.8 x 103.8 cm  
Gift of Matthew and Alice Yapp

Facing page:  
Altar cloth: three figures  
China, early or mid-20th century  
Silk with gold embroidery



# The League Against Evil

A DC Super Heroes Exhibition

5 June 2014 – 30 November 2014



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WB SHIELD: TM & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.  
(s14)

/ culture



Bust of SUPERMAN  
Limited Edition, 1/30  
Collection of DC Comics Super Heroes Store (J.T. Network)

Photo by BH OLIM Pte Ltd

By Lucille Yap

This exhibition is the first and only DC Comics Super Heroes exhibition in Asia held in conjunction with Warner Bros.' celebration of the 75th anniversary of DC Comics Super Hero BATMAN.

Stamps, artworks of comic pages, collectible figurines and models tell the history of how comic super heroes, in particular the DC Comics Super Heroes, were born and how they have impacted the world.

During the 1930s, the world was beset by economic hardship from the Great Depression and the threat of world war. The public in America looked for distraction, for entertainment, and for amusement through motion pictures, magazines, comics, and science fiction. Responding to this need, DC Comics was established in 1934, and after surviving several stumbles, it gave birth to the twin legends of SUPERMAN and BATMAN at the close of the decade. Their creation heralded the Golden Age of Comics; after the 1930s, comics were here to stay.

**LOOK! UP IN THE SKY! IT'S A BIRD!  
IT'S A PLANE! IT'S SUPERMAN!**

In 1938, the struggling comic industry needed a hero, and SUPERMAN came to the rescue. The brainchild of Jerry Siegel [writer] and Joe Shuster [artist], SUPERMAN was launched in *Action Comics #1* (June 1938). Readers responded with rave reviews and SUPERMAN became the first comic book mega-star. SUPERMAN's runaway popularity earned him his own comic in June 1939. This was a real breakthrough for the time, as characters introduced in comic books had never before been so successful as to warrant their own titles.



Top, from left: *Action Comics #1* (June 1938)  
*SUPERMAN'S* own comic title, *Superman #1* (June 1939)



The Origins of SUPERMAN  
Source: DC Super Heroes MyStamp, 2014

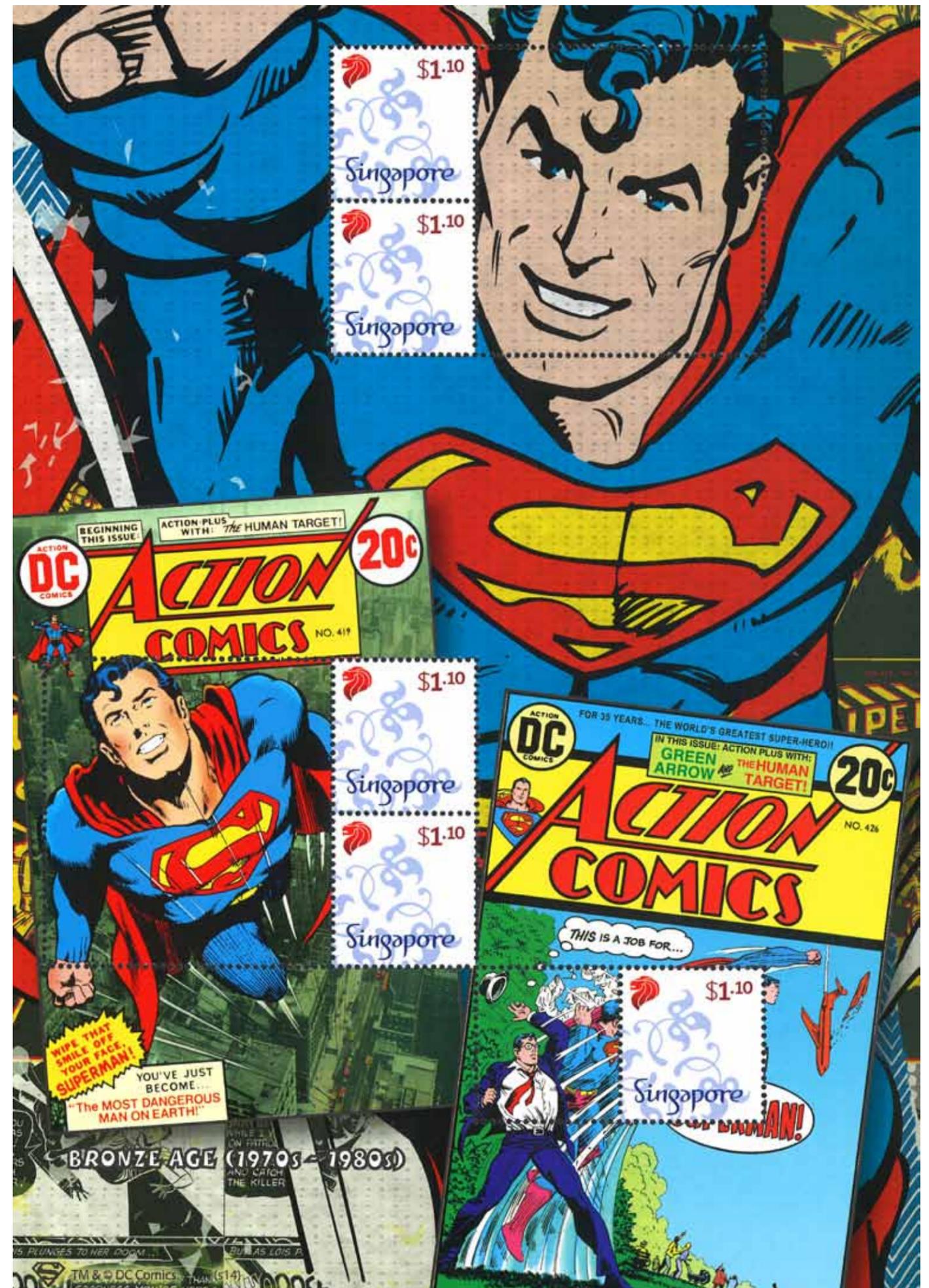
- Right: The Jersey Post – UK revealed a set of SUPERMAN (The Man of Steel) Stamps Set on 7 June, 2013:
- 45p - Smartsy (augmented reality app) that provides exclusive bonus material
  - 55p - Transparent material to show his ability to fly and his X-ray vision
  - 60p - Silver foil material reflecting his incredible strength
  - 68p - Heat sensitive monochromatic ink to reveal the earth behind Superman when the stamp is warmed
  - 80p - Crushed granite to give a rough, tactile finish which acknowledges his strength
  - 88p - Glow in the dark invisible ink to reveal a hidden message from Superman's father Jor-El



Photo by BH OLIM Pte Ltd

Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection

Facing page:  
Limited edition Singapore Post SUPERMAN  
MyStamp Collection, Singapore, 2014  
Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection



**THE DARK KNIGHT. THE CAPED CRUSADER. THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE.**

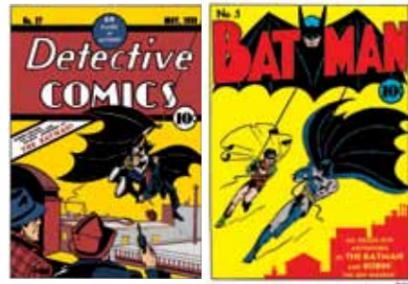
Hot on the heels of the runaway success of SUPERMAN, BATMAN debuted in the lead story of *Detective Comics* #27 [May 1939]. It was written by Bill Finger and drawn by Bob Kane. The masked vigilante – unlike SUPERMAN – has no super power. He fights crimes using his intellect, brilliant deductive skill, exceptional martial art skill and combat strategy. He is also equipped with an arsenal of gadgets, weapons, and vehicles, including his Batmobile.

The character was so successful that one year later the first comic book devoted exclusively to the Caped Crusader's adventures, *Batman* #1, hit newsstands. In that issue, BATMAN and his sidekick ROBIN battled THE JOKER and CATWOMAN for the first time.

**BAT-SUIT**

Popularly known as the Bat-suit, BATMAN's outfit is not just a costume. Its main purpose is to act as camouflage and to instil fear. Over the years, its basic design has remained virtually unchanged; however, it has been frequently updated to advance the Dark Knight's war on crime.

The key features of the suit are stealthy black and gray body armour; scalloped cape; cowl with bat-ears; bat logo across his chest, bladed gloves, boots, and utility belt.



Top, from left:  
*Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939)  
Self-titled comic *Batman* #1 (Apr 1940)



The Origins of BATMAN  
Source: DC Super Heroes MyStamp, 2014



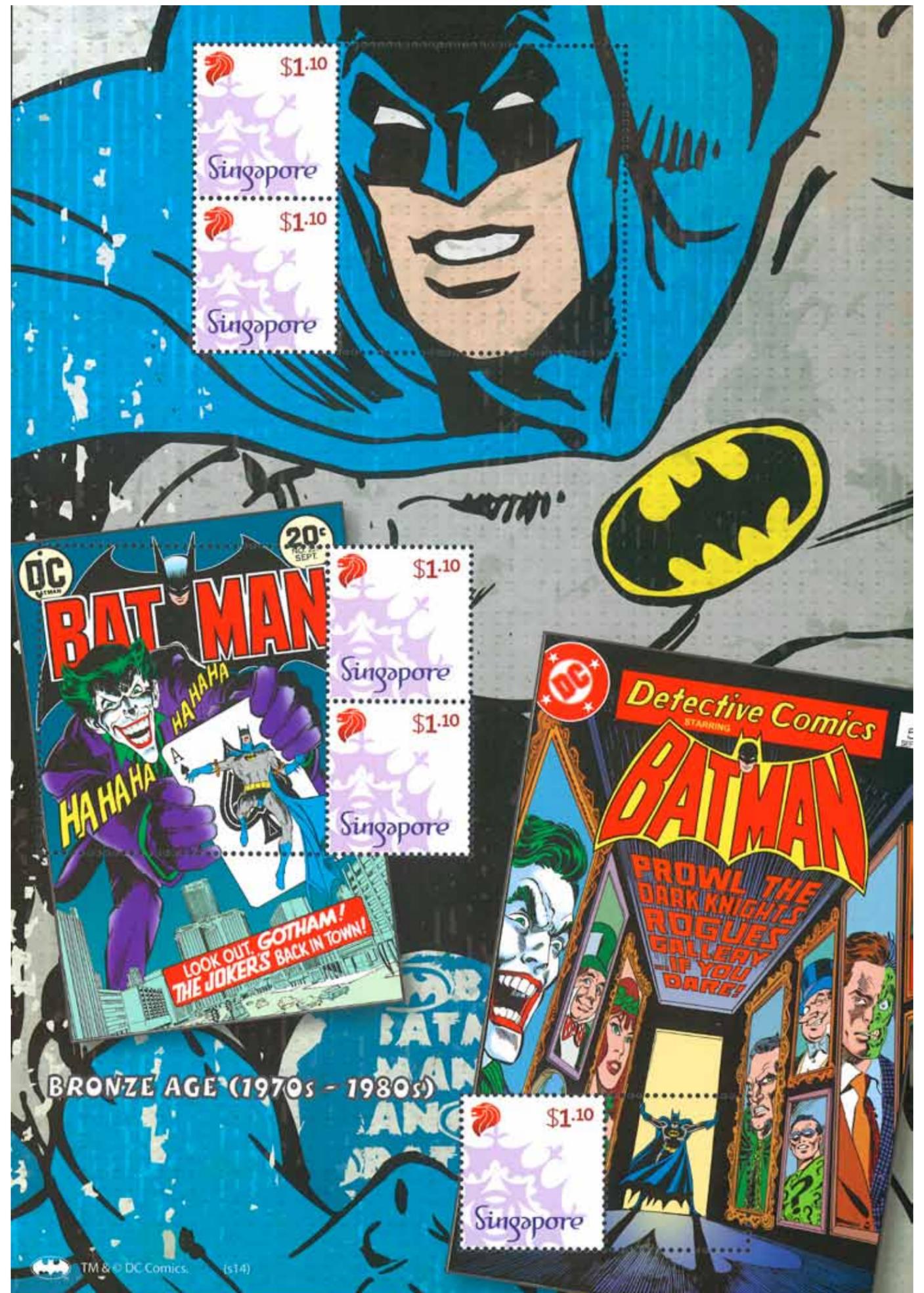
A3-size Stamp Sheet featuring 75 BATMAN Comic Covers  
Limited edition Singapore Post BATMAN 75, MyStamp Collection  
Singapore, 2014.  
Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection

Facing page:  
Limited edition Singapore Post BATMAN MyStamp Collection  
Singapore, 2014.  
Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection



Photo by BH OLIM Pte Ltd

Bust of BATMAN  
Limited Edition, 1/30  
Collection of DC Comics Super Heroes Store  
[J.T. Network]





In 1989, BATMAN came back to the big screen after a hiatus of 23 years. The car he used was designed and produced by Tim Burton and Anton Furst. It was created from two Impala chassis and had a Chevy V8 engine.  
Collection of G&B Comics

The Batmobile Tumbler was designed by Nathan Crowley and Christopher Nolan for the movie *Batman Begins* in 2005. The Tumbler also made appearances in the subsequent movies *The Dark Knight* in 2008 and *The Dark Knight Rises* in 2012.  
Collection of G&B Comics

**BATMOBILES**

The first car that BATMAN used was not the Batmobile. It was referred to as a "high-powered" car. The first Batmobile roared into action sporting its own bat-headed battering ram in *Batman #5* in 1941.

Since then, BATMAN has utilised more than one Batmobile to speed into the fray. The first life-size and fully operational Batmobile was built for the television show *Batman* in the 1960s. Nearly two decades later, the Batmobile appeared again on the big screen in a series of BATMAN movies.

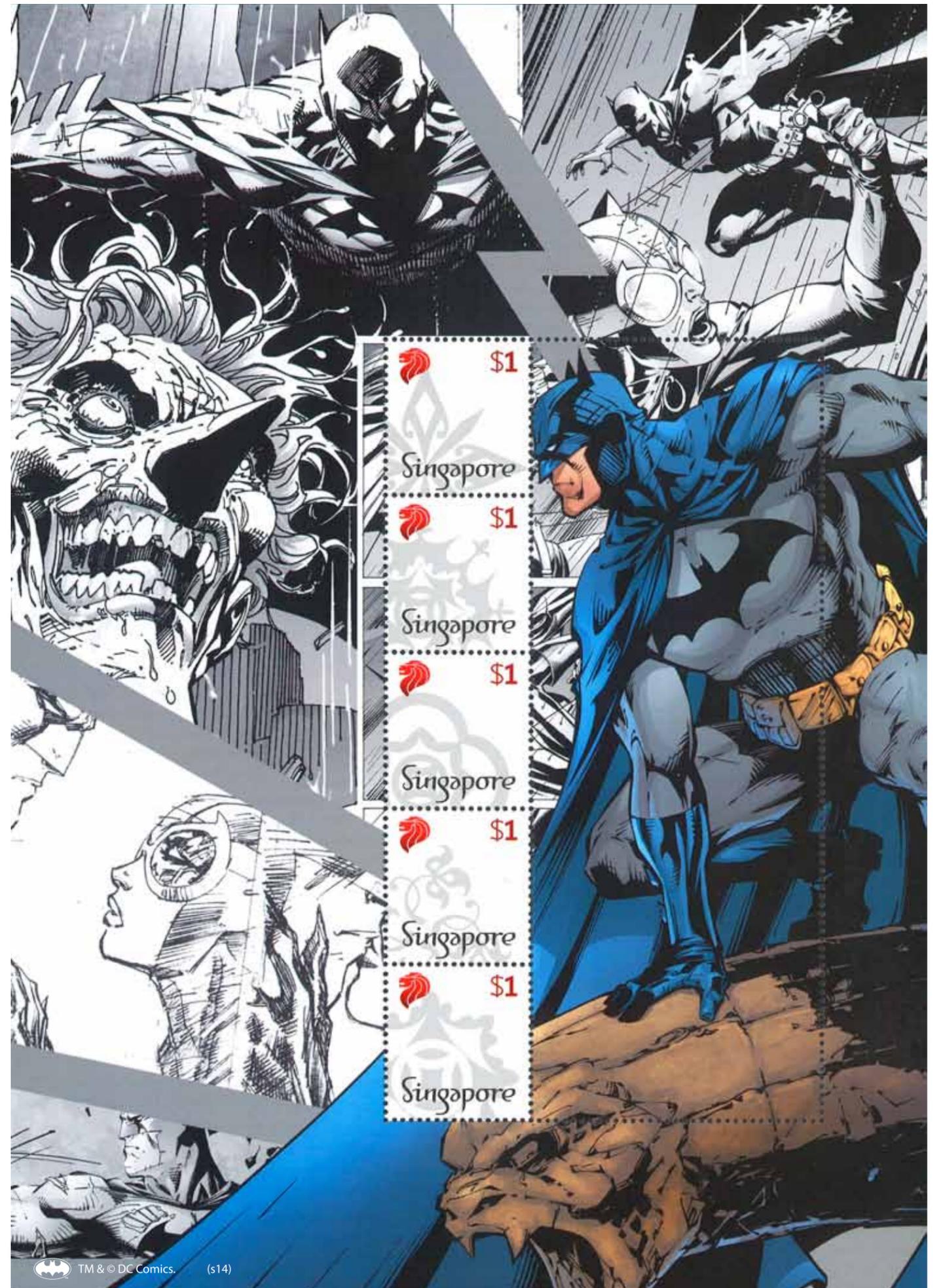


Left & facing page: Limited edition Singapore Post BATMAN 75 MyStamp Collection Singapore, 2014. Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection



**BAT LOGOS**

Unlike other super heroes' emblems, which are used mainly for identity and branding, the Bat logo has a vital function. It is used as a Bat-Signal when projected onto the skies of Gotham city to summon BATMAN. The Bat logo, however, changed its design over the years. To date, there are more than 30 different versions.



**A PRINCESS, AN AMBASSADOR OF PEACE AND A WARRIOR.**

WONDER WOMAN was created by psychologist William Moulton. Readers had a sneak preview of his creation in *All Star Comic #8* in Dec 1941; in January the following year, the character took the lead in *Sensation Comics #1*. By the end of that year, WONDER WOMAN had earned her own title comic. She was the first-ever female super hero in the comic world and was an unusual sight in a male super heroes-dominated industry.



From left to right:  
*All-Star Comics #8* (December 1941)  
*Sensation Comics #1* (January 1942)  
*Wonder Woman #1* (June 1942)

Facing page:  
 Limited edition WONDER WOMAN  
 MyStamp Collection  
 Singapore, 2014  
 Singapore Philatelic Museum Collection



The Origins of WONDER WOMAN  
 Source: DC Super Heroes MyStamp, 2014



## JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA (JLA)

The Justice League was not the first super heroes team. That was the Justice Society of America. This first league of super heroes in comics history was assembled for the first time in 1940 in *All-Stars Comics Winter Issue #3* [1940]. In early 1960, DC Comics realised that the super heroes archetype was due for revitalisation. Gardner Fox joined with artist Mike Sekowsky to unite the super heroes as *The Justice League of America* against the forces of evil.

JLA made their first appearance in *The Brave and the Bold* #28 in 1960. The founding members of the League were SUPERMAN, BATMAN, WONDER WOMAN, THE FLASH, GREEN LANTERN, AQUAMAN, and MARTIAN MANHUNTER. In less than a year, JLA had their own comic book title. Over the decades, the members of the JLA may have changed, but the team continues to put up good fights and uphold justice.



Top, from left:  
The Justice Society of America in *All-Stars Comics Winter Issue #3* (1940)  
Justice League of America first appearance in *The Brave & the Bold Vol #28* (Feb-Mar, 1960)  
*Justice League of America Vol 1 #1* (Oct - Nov 1960)



Left:  
DC Comics Super Heroes  
USA, 2007  
Singapore Philatelic  
Museum Collection

This sheet includes 20 self-adhesive 39c collectible stamps. Characters include: SUPERMAN, BATMAN, ROBIN, WONDER WOMAN, GREEN LANTERN, GREEN ARROW, AQUAMAN, THE FLASH, PLASTIC MAN, HAWKMAN, HAWKGIRL, and SUPERGIRL. Short bios for the Super Heroes can be found on the backside of the sheet.

Facing page:  
Limited edition THE FLASH  
and GREEN LANTERN  
MyStamp Collection  
Singapore, 2014  
Singapore Philatelic  
Museum Collection



THE  
LEAGUE  
AGAINST  
EVIL

### UNIQUE EXPERIENCES AT THE EXHIBITION

Visitors can be part of the DC universe while touring the exhibition. They can take interesting Augmented Reality PhotoShoots with their favourite DC Comics characters by using The League Against Evil@SPM mobile application.

Families can participate in comic drawing as well as 3D modelling workshops and open houses during the exhibition. For details of the programmes and activities, visit the museum website at [www.spm.org.sg](http://www.spm.org.sg).

*The League Against Evil: A DC Super Heroes Exhibition* is held in conjunction with Children's Season 2014. It is a collaborative effort with Singapore PoSt Limited, Warner Bros. and Pacific Licensing Studio Pte Ltd. Other partners are G&B Comics, Right Here Media, DC Comics Super Heroes Store (J.T. Network), and Toonami. ❁

» Lucille Yap is Senior Curator,  
Singapore Philatelic Museum

# WHAT'S ON

## JULY – SEPTEMBER 2014

### // ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM

**Beginning of the Becoming: Batak Sculpture From Northern Sumatra**  
Now till 29 Mar 2015

This exhibition explores the extraordinary sculptures of the Batak peoples of northern Sumatra. The Batak live in the mountain heartlands centred around Lake Toba, a striking environment that nurtured an intriguing culture rooted in ancient Southeast Asian traditions. The show asserts a rightful place for Batak sculpture in the global artistic canon. Over 80 works in wood, stone, and bronze have been lent by the Mandala Foundation, 20 of which have been donated to the Asian Civilisations Museum.

**Once Upon a Time in Asia: The Story Tree**  
**An Interactive Exhibition for Children and the Young at Heart**  
Now till 2 Nov

Come play with us under the story tree. Explore with all five senses. Have fun and make some art of your own to take home. Embark on an exciting trail through the museum to uncover more secrets about trees and arty facts! Also, look out for our storytellers as they spin Asian tales in the galleries. This specially-curated exhibition for children and the young at heart showcases original interactive ensembles inspired by objects in the collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum.

**CHINA MANIA! The Global Passion For Porcelain, 800-1900**  
2 Aug–14 Dec

For more than a thousand years, China provided the world with porcelain of the highest quality. Vastly superior to the ceramics made in other regions, Chinese porcelain of various sizes and colours was eagerly sought – and just as eagerly copied and imitated. This exhibition examines the global demand for porcelain, not only in Europe and America, but also within Asia – including Japan, Southeast Asia, and the Islamic world.

**Neighbourhood Sketches**  
9 & 30 Aug  
26 & 27 Sep  
8.30pm to 9.30pm  
Bussorah Mall, Kampong Gelam

Set along the vibrant esplanade of Bussorah Street, visitors will get a chance to sample the rich Malay culture presented in the style of street performances. From martial arts to songs of worship, *Neighbourhood Sketches* has something to offer every type of culture vulture.

Please call 6391 0450 or email [nhb\\_mhc\\_programmes@nhb.gov.sg](mailto:nhb_mhc_programmes@nhb.gov.sg).

**Laaobe: Warisan & Budaya Bawean di Singapura/Changing Times: Baweanese Heritage & Culture in Singapore**  
Now till 3 Aug  
Malay Heritage Centre, Gallery 2  
Tue–Sun, 10am to 6pm  
Free Admission

In partnership with Persatuan Bawean Singapura [Singapore Baweanese Association], *Laaobe* highlights the Baweanese community in Singapore whose forefathers hailed from Pulau Bawean, off the northern coasts of Java and Madura. Here, they are more familiarly known as Orang Boyan ["Bawean people", although boyan is a mispronunciation of Bawean]. The exhibition presents the history and development of the local Baweanese community. A key highlight is the *ponthuk* – an early form of communal housing that functioned as the core social institution that has come to characterise Baweanese culture and values.

**MOVIE NIGHTS @MHC**  
Fri & Sat, 19 & 20 Sep  
Malay Heritage Centre, Lawn  
8.30pm onwards

Calling all fans young and old! The Malay Heritage Centre's Movie Night is back. Whether you're a serious film buff or simply looking for a weekend activity, join us for a picnic under the stars as we screen classic favourites and new offerings right here on our lawn. So bring your picnic mat, family and friends and enjoy a magical movie experience at the Malay Heritage Centre.

• *Bunohan* [2012]  
Friday | 19 Sep  
• *Anak-Anak Borobudur* [2007]  
Saturday | 20 Sep

For more information about the sessions, please call 6391 0450 or email your contact details to [NHB\\_MHC\\_Programmes@nhb.gov.sg](mailto:NHB_MHC_Programmes@nhb.gov.sg)

**HARI RAYA OPEN HOUSE**  
Sat, 23 Aug  
10am–4.30pm

Celebrate Hari Raya at Malay Heritage Centre this August with your family, friends and loved ones! Immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere and enjoy a day of cultural performances at our Hari Raya Open House! Learn more about the various Hari Raya customs and practices and participate in fun craft activities like making *keuh* out of Play-Doh, creating your own kite and so much more! Join us this festive season and don't miss out!

For more information about the above programmes, please call 6391 0450 or email your contact details to [NHB\\_MHC\\_Programmes@nhb.gov.sg](mailto:NHB_MHC_Programmes@nhb.gov.sg)

### // NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

**We: Defining Stories**  
Now till 31 Aug  
10am – 6pm, daily  
Exhibition Gallery 1, Basement  
Free admission

*We: Defining Stories* presents a series of photojournalistic images of the iconic moments in Singapore's post-war years from the 1950s till 2013. A collaboration with The Straits Times, the exhibition is an opportunity for everyone to revisit some of the more significant events in our nation's history, and reflect upon our own experiences that were borne out of these moments. Come and discover how your stories have defined Singapore's present, and how they continue to define our future.

**PLAY @ National Museum of Singapore**  
National Museum of Singapore  
10am–6pm, daily  
Free admission

The National Museum of Singapore kicks off the school holidays with the opening of PLAY@NMS, the first dedicated area for young children to take their first steps towards museum-going with interactive exhibits and special activities that encourage learning through play. Inspired by the Museum's collection, your young ones will have the opportunity to express themselves through the various curated programmes that will stimulate their curious minds and tap their creativity.

**Children's Season 2014**  
**Masak Masak: My Childhood**  
Now till 3 Aug  
10am–6pm, daily  
Free admission

Children's Season at the National Museum of Singapore is back! Titled *Masak Masak*, the special exhibition centres around the theme, "My Childhood" and features familiar playgrounds and larger-than-life board games of yesteryear, interactive installations including new works by local and international contemporary artists such as Justin Lee, Anastassia Elias and Guixot De 8, engaging performances and a curated film screening. Suitable for ages three to seven.

**Balik Pulau: Stories from Singapore's Islands**  
Now till 10 Aug  
10am–6pm, daily  
Free admission

This exhibition, *Balik Pulau*, is a return to the islands, in memory and spirit, to recover the stories of those who lived, worked and played there. With new video interviews, archival images, historic boats, personal mementoes and specimens of marine life, the exhibition charts the changes that have taken place and how a new generation is rediscovering our islands and forging new links to them. Come and explore Singapore's offshore islands anew, and be inspired to even visit these places yourself.

**Genesis**  
Now till 31 Aug  
10am–6pm, daily  
Free admission

The National Museum of Singapore is proud to present *Genesis*, an exhibition showcasing 245 black and white images of our planet by world renowned photographer, Sebastião Salgado, designed and curated by Lélia Wanick Salgado. This exhibition is a culmination of Salgado's photographic works taken at over 30 different destinations from 2004 to 2011. Dramatic, moving and grand, Salgado's photographs present powerful images of our fragile planet and the intricate association between Man, animal and the environment that we all have a duty to protect.

**Singapore Night Festival 2014**  
22, 23, 29 & 30 Aug  
7pm–2am  
Bras Basah, Bugis Precinct

The seventh installation of the familiar and iconic night-time extravaganza of culture, revelry and fun returns to the Bras Basah, Bugis Precinct with spectacular performances, light art and diverse activities, offering an alternative night event for all to enjoy.

**11th Singapore Short Cuts**  
**In partnership with**  
**The Substation Moving Images**  
6, 7, 13 & 14 Sep, 3pm  
National Museum of Singapore, Basement, Gallery Theatre

Singapore Short Cuts returns with a blast! As one of the most popular and widely anticipated showcases of local short films in Singapore, audiences can look forward to a diverse selection of Singapore short films of different genres and styles. Some of the filmmakers whose films have been featured in Singapore Short Cuts include Anthony Chen, Victric Thng, Eva Tang, Boo Junfeng, Wee Li Lin, Tan Pin Pin and Eric Khoo. Please visit [www.nationalmuseum.sg/singapore-shortcuts](http://www.nationalmuseum.sg/singapore-shortcuts) for registration and ticketing information.

### // THE PERANAKAN MUSEUM

**Auspicious Designs: Batik for Peranakan Altars**  
Now till 28 Dec

Colourful and imaginative, batik altar cloths blend traditions and influences, showing how Peranakans adapted and improvised. Called *tok wi*, altar cloths decorate the fronts of Peranakan altars during important ceremonies, and reflect the strong ritual elements of Chinese Peranakan life in Southeast Asia.

**Straits Family Sundays - Supersized!**  
10 Aug, 12 Oct, 14 Dec (Sun),  
1pm–5pm

Join us on the second Sunday of every month for this drop-in programme. Craft something to take home with you based on the museum's collection, or go on a special, themed tour of the galleries. Dress up with the whole family in a batik shirt or sarong kebaya. See the collection up close, or relax with a good book in our reading corner. Enjoy a fun-filled Sunday for the whole family at the Peranakan Museum.

### // SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM

**Spice Is Nice**  
Now till 1 Dec

Touch, feel and smell spices that are commonly used in Singapore such as pepper, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg. This interactive exhibition traces the voyages of discovery, the history of the spice trade and its impact on Singapore, traditional cures and flavours of regional cuisine.

**Seeing is Believing: Unusual Stamps Exhibition**  
Now till 1 Jan 2015

Have you seen stamps that are made of materials other than paper? Come and view a display of unusual stamps from the museum's permanent collection from Singapore and overseas. Discover quirky features on these little treasures that tickle your five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch.

**Horses for Courses**  
Now till 26 Aug

*Horses for Courses* explores the history and development of horses from the wild early years to the highly selective breeds of today. The horse's path parallels human civilisation, marking the evolution of both through time.

With domestication, horses have partnered man in numerous cultures around the world for work and play. The horse's role is reflected in its importance in early construction, agriculture, transportation, war, competition; and later, mainly for sports and recreation. Harnessing the horse's strength, letters and parcels were delivered by men on horseback or in drawn carriages.

**The League Against Evil: A DC Super Heroes Exhibition**  
Now till 30 Nov

See the first and only DC Super Heroes exhibition in Asia to commemorate the milestone of Batman's 75th Anniversary. The exhibition showcases stamps from Singapore Philatelic Museum's permanent collection, Singapore Post MyStamps and the stamp artworks, as well as original comic artworks and collectibles on loan from collectors. This exhibition is held in conjunction with Warner Brothers' celebration of the 75th anniversary of DC Comics Super Hero Batman.

**National Stamp Collecting Competition**  
Fri, 29 Aug, 10am–8pm  
Sat, 30 Aug, 10am–8pm  
Sun, 31 Aug, 10am–6pm  
The Plaza, National Library

The National Stamp Collecting Competition (NSCC) is the annual philatelic event which appreciates the efforts and creativity of young stamp collectors from primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions in Singapore. The competition is organised by Singapore Philatelic Museum and supported by Ministry of Education and Singapore Post Limited. Visitors will be able to view winning entries from over 600

participants. Topics include Flora and Fauna from South-East Asia, The Magical Sea World, Competitive Sports, The Royals, UNESCO Sites Around the World and more!

**Our Postal Stories**  
Now till 27 Oct  
Our Museum @ Taman Jurong, Taman Jurong Community Club

Do you remember sending your first letter? Or waiting for the postman to deliver your parcel? And who can forget the postboxes and the post office of our neighbourhood? The post not only connects us, it links us to our past. Our history can be found in our country's postal development and its stamp issues. Designed for families with children, this educational and interactive exhibition invites you to rediscover yourself through postal stories. The exhibition is curated by Singapore Philatelic Museum.

### // SUN YAT SEN NANYANG MEMORIAL HALL

**Love and Revolution: Dr. Sun Yat Sen & Madam Soong Ching Ling**  
Tue–Sun,  
Now till 7 Sep  
10am–5pm

The "Love and Revolution" exhibition marks the first collaboration among the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall and Soong Ching Ling Memorial Residence in Shanghai, Soong Ching Ling Mausoleum of the PRC and Shanghai Archives Centre. Unlike our previous temporary exhibitions which focused on the revolutionary lives of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and his supporters, this exhibition will provide insights into Dr. Sun's wife, Madam Soong Ching Ling and her efforts in championing Dr. Sun's causes after his death.

**Wan Qing Mid-Autumn Festival 2014**  
Sat, 6 Sep  
10am–9pm

Celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival at Wan Qing Yuan with your family and friends. Check out the lantern riddles, Chinese arts and crafts demonstrations, lantern-making workshop and more! You may also want to visit the special exhibition "Love & Revolution: Madam Soong Ching Ling, Wife of Dr. Sun Yat Sen" where over 134 heritage objects are put on display to tell the story of Madam Soong. Many of these objects are on debut in Singapore for the first time.

## CHINA MANIA! THE GLOBAL PASSION FOR PORCELAIN, 800–1900

For more than a thousand years, China provided the world with porcelain of the highest quality. This exhibition examines the global demand for porcelain, not only in Europe and America, but also within Asia. *China Mania!* explores how international trade and cultural exchange gave rise to the spread of styles, forms, and manufacturing technologies. The objects created became prized heirlooms valued for their exotic origins, superior technology, and imaginative beauty.

*China Mania!* will run from 31 July to 14 December 2014

### / gallery



*Set of three bowls*

China, dated AH 1297(1879–1880) and AH 1301 [1883–4]  
Porcelain, painted enamels, diameter 36.6-40 cm each

» These bowls were part of a large service made in China for prince Zill al-Sultan [1850–1918], the powerful governor of Isfahan from 1866 to 1908 and the third son of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, sovereign of Iran. The inscriptions in Persian are identical: “Commissioned by His Excellency, the Auspicious, the most Glorious, the Most High, the Most Noble, the Eminent Sultan Mas’ud Mirza Yamin al-Dawla Zill al-Sultan”.

# Chinese Bronze

Bronze ritual food vessels (*gui*) were used in ancient China during ceremonies that honoured the ancestors and the gods. According to the inscriptions on this beautifully decorated original *gui*, it was made by a duke for the palace.

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

93 STAMFORD ROAD,  
SINGAPORE 178897.  
TEL: +65 6336 6387

OPENING HOURS  
MONDAYS TO SUNDAYS  
10AM-7.30PM

## ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM

1 EMPRESS PLACE,  
SINGAPORE 179555.

OPENING HOURS  
MONDAYS | 1PM-7PM  
TUESDAYS TO SUNDAYS | 10AM-7PM  
FRIDAYS | 10AM-9PM



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