



SINGAPORE PORTRAITS

Let The Photos Tell The Story

Singapore Portraits is a tribute to some of Singapore's most creative personalities. It features the works of and interviews with local artists which together tell the story of Singapore through their words and images. Besides the paintings and photographs, write-ups detailing the background of the artwork, social and historical contexts and artist biographies are also included.

< for Primary School Students >

Educators' Guide



Education and
Community Outreach Division




About The Exhibition

Generations of Singapore artists and photographers have expressed themselves through art, telling stories of our nation, our history, people and their ways of lives. This exhibition looks at how Singapore has inspired art-making and what stories art tells about Singapore.

Art in Singapore

Drawn by the prospect of work in the region's new European settlements, artists began to arrive here as early as the late 18th century. By the early 20th century, immigrant artists were forming art societies and the first school in Singapore, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, was established in 1938.

Among the most significant artists from the pioneering generation were Cheong Soo Pieng, Chen Chong Swee, Liu Kang, Chen Wen His, Georgette Chen and Lim Cheng Hoe. They were instrumental in establishing the Nanyang Style, the first local art style that emerged in the 1950s. Their work influenced younger generations of artists who followed in their footsteps to explore fresh ways of expressing local identity and local relevancy through their art.

 Take some time to share with students the importance of appreciating **Art and the Arts** that can help in their overall development.

Self expression is crucial for the development of students' identity and personhood, and Art can help to promote that.

When students can freely express themselves, they can then begin to **explore their interests and strengths**. This helps them **think about who they are** and **who they want to be when they grow up**.

"Education serves to help students develop a keen awareness of their personal, social and cultural identity as well as deepen their appreciation of the diversity of cultures across their community and the world. Art and music are particularly suitable to nurture such qualities in our students."

Speech by Mr Heng Swee Keat, at the Art and Music Education Conference 2011

Art can enhance our sensitivities, enrich our lives, strengthen community bonding and move the society forward.



You can connect *Singapore Portraits* to your curriculum using these Key Concepts. The *Pulse, Places and People* sections of the exhibition contain insightful educational themes that are beneficial for students.



Key Concepts

1

The exhibition provides a platform for students to understand the importance of respect and acceptance for members of other races, religions or nationalities. Students should learn to fight against racial prejudice and stereotypes in order to avoid such racial riots in the 1950s from happening again. The diversity of ethnic cultures we enjoy today is the result of how ethnic traditions continue to be part of our everyday lives. The part that migrant workers played in Singapore also deserve acknowledgement. Of those who put down roots in Singapore, they have contributed towards shaping Singapore as the multi-racial and multi-cultural society we know today. Thus it is important for us to learn to accept one another and recognise each other's contribution to our nation. Educators can also explore with students on their personal stories about living in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society like Singapore.

2

Going through the stories of Places and People will also cultivate the sense of appreciation for our heritage. Students would feel a sense of pride learning about Singapore's heritage and better understand what is so special about our young nation.

3

The exhibition serves as a platform for students to appreciate and understand the concept of nation-building. Stories featured in this exhibition aim to show that Singapore has been through various stages of development to be what she is today. Educators can encourage students to share stories of what they know about kampong life or what they have heard from their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents. The stories in the exhibition portray the hard work that was involved in building a nation and the struggles our pioneer generation had to go through. Indirectly, students can learn about the values of resilience and perseverance to overcome challenges. Students can also think of what roles can they play in future development of Singapore.



SQ Portraits

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These stories about traditions encourage students to talk to the older generation in earnest conversations. These stories on traditions can also spur conversation topics between the old and the young. This will provide educators with the opportunity to integrate knowledge sharing into the lesson to educate students on the importance of conversations with those who have lived through times different from us, to understand that they have a story to tell too!

5

From the exhibition, students can inculcate the habit of being responsible individuals and learn to care for the environment. The exhibition tells us the story of The Singapore River that was not always the clean and scenic waterway we know today. The busy waterway was smelly and polluted due to heavy river traffic and years of accumulated wastes dumped in the river. It took more than ten years to transform the waterway into a pollution-free river. From this story, students can help to think of ways to keep the environment clean and green. Educators can also expound on the idea of being thankful for the clean and green Singapore that we have today and to continue showing care for our environment.

Some examples of stories about the different races highlighted in the exhibition:

Uniquely Chinese

The Chinese believe that a dragon boat or a mask is animated when its eyes are dotted, or filled in with black paint. Eye-dotting thus breathes the essence of life into otherwise inanimate objects.

Goh Beng Kwan, *Dotting The Eye*

Uniquely Indian

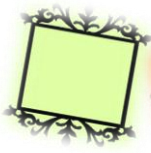
Hindu concept of creation and preservation through the perfect and indestructible union of two fundamental forces: the masculine and feminine principles traditionally embodies in the forms of the deity Shiva and his consort Sakti respectively. Unified in oneness, Shiva-Sakti manifests Visvayoni, the womb of the universe.

S. Chandrasekaran, *Visvayoni*

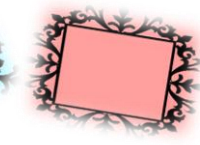
Uniquely Malay

Batik's wax-dye technique was first used in the 1950s to make modern batik paintings. Even though the process of making a batik painting is an elaborate and time consuming one, many artists quickly saw the medium's possibilities for creating works of modern art with a distinctively regional identity.

Jaafar Latiff, *Unspoken Dialogue*



SG Portraits



A pre-Visit



Come Prepared

Review this guide prior to your visit to the exhibition. You may research for more information about Singapore's Heritage in terms of our history, our people and our way of life.

Class Discussion

Before you visit the exhibition, let your students know that they will be able to learn about various Pulses, Places and People that influence the Singapore we see today. Read aloud the write up that can be found in the "About the Exhibition" page to your students and discuss the Key Concepts with your students.

Ask them to write down their thoughts in the **Pre-Exhibition Questions** space!
If you wish to discuss more, consider using these questions!

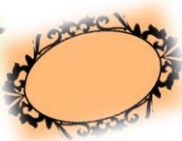
- What are some memories of Singapore that resonate with you?
- What is so unique about your race/ religion?
- Are you proud of the Singapore you see today?
- How has Singapore change from the past till today?

During the exhibition

Encouraging Students to Think!

Ask students to think about these questions:

- What can they do to preserve the historic places in Singapore?
- How can they forge better relationship with the diverse groups of people in Singapore?



SG Portraits



pre-Visit

Before visiting the exhibition, write down your thoughts here!

What do you think *Singapore Portraits Exhibition* is about?

I think it is about

What do you hope to learn from the exhibition?

I hope to learn about

How do you feel about visiting this exhibition? Why?

Let's continue with the rest of the activity sheet!





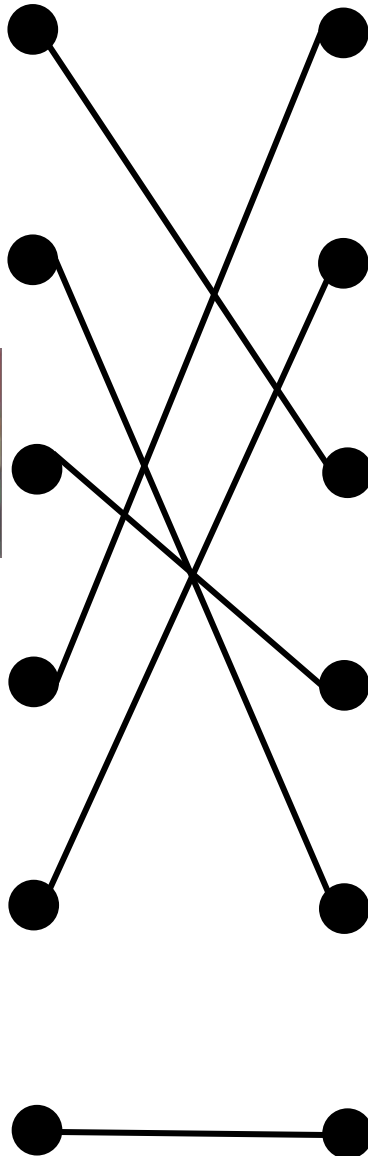
SG Portraits



B Whose Artworks Are These?

In the **Pulse Section** of the exhibition, you will learn more about 6 beautiful artworks.

- Match the artwork(s) with the name of the artist that produced them.



Iskandar Jalil

Goh Beng Kwan

Wong Keen

Jaafar Latiff

Tay Kay Chin

S. Chandrasekaran



Beautiful places in the past

In the **Place Section** of the exhibition, Chen Chong Swee's painting, *the Village Landscape* features some landscapes around the Malay village.



M	S	S	T	R	E	A	M	S
C	D	D	C	D	C	G	C	H
S	S	L	L	I	H	C	A	O
E	A	E	C	S	C	A	A	H
E	N	I	P	C	H	N	S	G
R	L	F	L	H	G	M	I	H
T	P	I	C	U	H	P	O	K
T	C	D	O	T	I	C	C	P
U	I	A	C	S	P	D	F	L
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O	K	K	L	H	G	D	S	C
C	H	T	A	P	T	R	I	D
O	L	H	C	H	K	L	U	I
C	C	G	D	C	S	A	C	O

Locate these landscapes in the Word Search Puzzle.

- PADI FIELDS
- STREAMS
- HILLS
- COCONUT TREES
- HUTS
- DIRT PATH

Then...

- Street hawkers
- "Mamak" shop, proficient store
- Classic playgrounds
- Rural villages
- Plantations
- Dirty

Walk Down the Memory Lane...

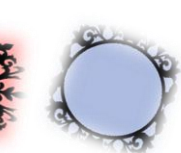
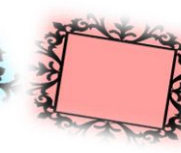
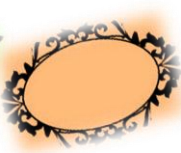
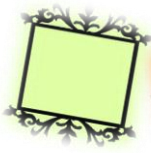
Think of your neighbourhood and identify the changes that have occurred over time.

What do you see **then** and what do you see **now**?

Pen down your thoughts in the spaces provided.

Now...

- Shopping malls
- Bus interchange/MRT stations
- Community centres
- High-rise flats
- Hawker centres
- Clean and green
- Proper crossings, overhead bridge

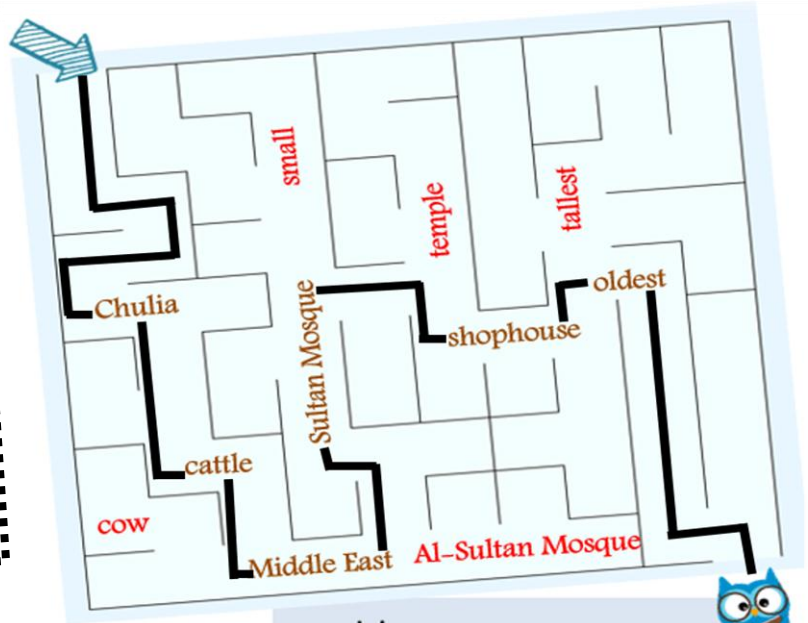


Complete the Story!

Some places in Singapore remain as living legacies of our multi-racial heritage.

Do you know their stories?

Help *Our Lost Owl* go through the maze and retrieve the right words accordingly in order to complete **The Story!**
Ps. Be careful, there are planted words to confuse you!



The Maze Has Told The Story!



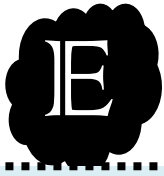
“The Little India, Kampong Glam and Chinatown Story”

Little India was originally known as (1) Chulia Kampong in Cross Street, Chinatown. The area surrounding Serangoon Road grew into an ethnic Indian area from the mid-1800s as (2) cattle trading businesses around the Serangoon River employed large numbers of workers from India.

Originally assigned as the official residence of the Sultan of Johore and Singapore, Kampong Glam grew into a Malay-Muslim enclave with settlements of immigrants from the Malay Archipelago and the (3) Middle East. Built in 1928, (4) Sultan Mosque stands on the site of the original mosque built for the Sultan in 1824.

Chinatown was put aside for Chinese immigrants under Raffles; 1823 Town Plan. Choo Keng Kwang’s painting of Chinatown’s Temple Street shows the street life and details of living conditions on Temple Street. From (5) shophouse living quarters, laundry hangs to dry on bamboo poles as hawkers and customers mill around the market and food stalls. Temple Street was named in 1908 after the Sri Mariamman Temple which is the (6) oldest Hindu temple in Singapore.

Do Help Facilitate Your Students in Reading!
Once completed, ask students to **read out loud** the whole story to a buddy!



I Accept, I Respect, I Honour...

In the **People Section** of the exhibition, you will notice a painting by Chua Mia Tee entitled *Road Construction Worker*.

The man in the painting is a road construction worker. He looks thin, sad and lonely. The veins in his arms are visible, suggesting the physical nature of his work.

Sometimes, we do not notice the people around us who have contributed much to our lives. The aunties who help to clear our dirty plates, the construction workers who help to build our schools, or even the school's security guards who help to ensure our safety.



2 Values I can learn from the story above...

- In life, we must have the spirit of **resilience** and **perseverance** to overcome challenges such as overcoming the physical nature of our work.
- **Acceptance** of everyone. Never look down on construction workers as they have helped to build our nation.
- Show **respect** for people and respect any job. Every job has its challenges.
- We need to live in **harmony**.
- We must **care** for others.

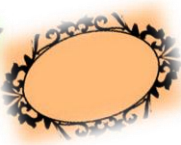
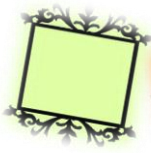
I Accept, I Respect, I Honour

_____ (insert name)

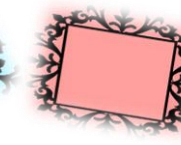
I choose to honour him/her because...

To live harmoniously, we need to learn to accept, respect and honour the people around us.

- Choose someone you wish recognise for his/her contribution to your life.
- Share with us why you choose to honour this person.



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My Reflections

Learning Point

Racial riots in the 1950s and 1960s have taught us the value of harmonious co-existence and equality for all Singaporeans.

**What are your 2 favourite artworks from the *Singapore Portraits* exhibition?
Draw and write in the space below!**

Name of artwork:

I like the artwork because....

Name of artwork:

I like the artwork because....

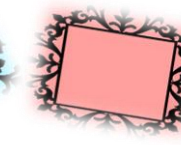


Congratulations for completing this Activity Sheet.

Great Work!



SG Portraits



IF My Reflections

Post-Exhibition Activities

Discuss these questions with the students!

Take some time in class to do either group discussions or as a mass class discussion to sum up the experience!

1. What were some of the things that you have learned from reading the panels? Try listing as many positive ideas as possible in the space given below.
2. Why do you think Singaporeans should remember our unique places from the past even though they have evolved over time?

Further Reading

In addition, you may wish to consider asking students to explore these websites to find out more! Do give students encouragement after they have completed the Activity Sheet!

To read up about other Singapore' Culture Heritage.

<http://www.yoursingapore.com/see-do-singapore/culture-heritage.html>

To read up about other Singapore's well remembered places that Singaporeans will enjoy:

<http://www.iremember.sg/>