

be MUSE



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2 | ISSN: 1793-5261 | APRIL - JUNE 2012

N°19



BeMUSE is published by
the Education and Outreach
Division of the National
Heritage Board.

If you have any feedback or
wish to contribute an article,
please email:
nhb_bemuse@nhb.gov.sg or
go to www.nhb.gov.sg



INSIDE

THE SEASON OF FUN!
» **pg.06**

ABOUT A BOY: 'THE
ADVENTURES OF TINTIN'
» **pg.14**

SUNKEN TREASURE:
A NINTH CENTURY
SHIPWRECK
» **pg.24**

A WANDERLUST
PLAYGROUND:
2 DICKSON ROAD
» **pg.30**

HERITAGE IS ALIVE AND
LIVING AMONGST US!
» **pg.44**

BRIDGE TO THE ANCESTORS:
DOCUMENTING TEXTILE
HISTORIES AMONG THE
TORAJA OF SULAWESI,
INDONESIA
» **pg.50**

GOLD RUSH:
TREASURES OF UKRAINE
» **pg.56**

BE 'IN THE MOOD FOR
CHEONGSAM'
» **pg.64**

COFFEE WITH LEE WEN
» **pg.72**

MUSELIFE
» **pg.03**

MUSESHOP
» **pg.38**

MUSECALENDAR
» **pg.41**

EDITOR'S MUSEINGS

Come May and June every year, many families in Singapore will pack their luggage, hop onto planes and spend the four-week school holidays exploring the culture and heritage in other parts of the world. I suppose the feeling that our little island offers limited options for leisure activities – apart from eating and shopping – is one reason for this need to get away. However, by doing a bit of researching, one could be pleasantly surprised by the many events that have already been lined up this May and June throughout our island for families to bond and have fun together.

For a start, more than 20 museums in Singapore will be buzzing with activity as they take part in this year's *Children's Season*. *Art Garden*, the only exhibition in Singapore dedicated to showcasing art for children, will be an excellent opportunity for parents to engage in activities with their kids. Also, lively programmes and specially designed interactive showcases at *Children's Season 2012 – Island Adventures* will serve as a starting point for children to understand Singapore's history and heritage.

At the same time, a series of exhibitions featuring treasures from the past will be held at the National Heritage Board (NHB) museums. These include the extraordinary finds from the ninth century Belitung shipwreck, as well as treasures of Ukraine excavated from regions north of the Black Sea. In addition, over 150 pieces of *cheongsam* are on display as a tribute to this iconic style of dress and its evolution with the changing roles of women in Singapore society since the 1920s.

Besides visiting museums, stepping outdoors can also be an exciting and enriching experience as one explores the heritage trails, as well as heritage roads and trees in Singapore. NHB has introduced over 10 heritage trails in different parts of Singapore, including a World War Two trail launched earlier this year. Heritage roads and trees, which are initiatives by the National Parks Board, seek to conserve scenic tree-lined roads and magnificent mature trees in the Singapore landscape.

Hence, for those who are still making plans for the month-long school holidays, we would like to invite you to spend time at our museums or venture outdoors to explore the many heritage trails, heritage roads and trees. And for those with children from 3 to 12 years old, it will be a great idea to take part in the wide range of *Children's Season* activities lined up in May and June. So, until the next issue in July, all of us at BeMUSE hope you have a good time and an enriching experience discovering our heritage!

THANGAMMA KARTHIGESU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ELECTRICITY
BY PHUNK

ELECTRICITY
2010, 300 X 830 CM,
MIXED MEDIA,
SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM
COLLECTION

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

MUSEGALLERY.



Electricity pays homage to the contemporary city and PHUNK's longstanding fascination with the architecture and energy that pulses through modern metropolises such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo.

Created from a wide collection of urban motifs and distinctive architectural elements from cities all over the world, *Electricity* celebrates the global cosmopolitan city by detailing its diversity, which is lit up and brought to life by the power of electricity — a reminder of how dependent we are on this essential power source that fuels our contemporary urban lifestyles.

PHUNK is known for their design capabilities, which heavily influence their aesthetics in art-making. Their works draw on myriad aspects of popular and youth culture, from Japanese *manga* and anime to British indie music.

MUSELIFE.

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY, KRANJI WAR MEMORIAL



Top: Religious representatives from the Inter-Religious Organisation saying a prayer for the war dead. **Above:** World War Two veterans and their families recalling the sacrifices of their loved ones. **Right:** Naval Base Secondary School student Koo Yi Tian reading a poem entitled "Peace".



At 6.10pm on 15 February 1942, British Commander Lieutenant-General Arthur Ernest Percival formally surrendered Singapore to the Japanese Commander of the 25th Army, General Tomoyuki Yamashita. The surrender marked the beginning of 44 tumultuous months under the Japanese Occupation, with Singapore renamed "Syonan-to" or "Southern Light".

Seventy years later, there are barely traces of war-torn scars in Singapore's landscape. However, for the survivors and families of veterans and civilians who went through the horrors of the Japanese Occupation, 15 February is testament to the courage, perseverance and tenacity displayed by the human spirit in the face of adversity.

This year, the National Archives of Singapore and the Changi Museum jointly organised a Remembrance Ceremony at the Kranji War Memorial on 15 February from 5.15pm to 7.15pm. The ceremony commemorated the contributions made by World War Two veterans and honoured the memory of those who lost their lives in the defence of Singapore. Some war veterans had travelled from abroad to Singapore specially to attend the ceremony.

The wreath-laying sequence and the two minutes of silence were especially meaningful during the ceremony proceedings. Poppy wreaths were laid in memory of the fallen men and women, while the two minutes of silence allowed everyone to reflect on the events 70 years ago. For this anniversary, a Remembrance bell was rung five times to mark the five years of the Pacific War.

The Remembrance Ceremony also provided the opportunity for the young to learn more about Singapore's dark past. It was indeed a rare opportunity as it could possibly be one of the last few times for them to listen to firsthand accounts directly from the wartime generation.

The ceremony ended at dusk with a poem for peace read by a Naval Base Secondary School student, to serve as a reminder to all that war is something that should never be repeated.

VISIT TO SINGAPORE BY OFFICIALS FROM THAILAND POST



Thailand Post officials posing at the Elephant Statue, bronze monument, which stands outside old Parliament House (now The Arts House). The statue was given to Singapore by Thailand's King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) to commemorate his visit to Singapore in 1871.

The Singapore Philatelic Museum (SPM) played host to six officials from Thailand Post from 7 to 10 March 2012. Mr Wiboon Sereechaiporn, Vice-President of the Philatelic Market Department at Thailand Post, led a delegation from his department to study the operation and management of museums in Singapore.

The delegates toured SPM and observed two primary school programmes of different levels: *Colourful World of Stamps* and *Heritage Mix*. They also visited the National Heritage Board's museums, the Maritime Experiential Museum and The Fullerton Heritage Gallery. Highlights of the trip included a tour at the Philatelic & Stamps Department at Singapore Post Limited and the conservation laboratory at the National Archives of Singapore.

As commented by Mr Wiboon Sereechaiporn:

"All of us gained much knowledge and inspiration from every place we have visited, particularly Singapore Philatelic Museum from which we obtained many good examples of exhibitions, activities and so on. The other museums we visited were very breathtaking as well. Actually, I feel that our visit was too short for us to learn thoroughly. I expect to visit Singapore again sometime in the future."

National Heritage Board Chairman at the The Collectors Show: Chimera and The Singapore Show: Future Proof

The Singapore Art Museum kicked off 2012 with a double bang! Two highly anticipated exhibitions, *The Collectors Show: Chimera* and *The Singapore Show: Future Proof*, were officially launched on 13 January 2012. While *Chimera* was a rare showcase of extraordinary contemporary Asian art pieces from 21 private

collections, *Future Proof* was an appreciation of the brilliant artworks from 25 of Singapore's brightest young talents.

Chairman of National Heritage Board, Mr Ong Yew Huat, was Guest-of-Honour who officiated the two exhibitions' joint-opening. Mr Ong mingled with local

artists such as Ruben Pang, Dawn Ng and Robert Zhao during the tour of exhibits. Guests were also entertained by a live performance by Rizman Putra, together with Max Lane from Syndicate; as well as an interesting item involving numerous mousetraps and ping-pong balls by Robert Zhao.

MUSELIFE.

MUSELIFE.



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE WORLD WAR TWO TRAIL AND RESILIENCE TRAILS

Year 2012 marks the 70th anniversary of the beginning of World War Two (WWII) in Southeast Asia and the Fall of Singapore to the Japanese. While this represents one of the darkest chapters in Singapore's history, it also speaks of how Singaporeans of all colours and creeds survived extreme hardship and emerged stronger as a nation and a people. As part of the activities to commemorate this significant event, the National Heritage Board (NHB) launched on 14 February 2012 a WWII Trail and, together with the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA), five Resilience Trails. The WWII Trail features 20 WWII historical markers presenting information and archival images related to the war. The Resilience Trails, based on the main WWII Trail, consist of five different modules revealing Singapore's history and showcasing how our forefathers, despite the odds, together built this nation we call Singapore.

More than 300 teachers and students from Woodgrove Secondary School gathered at Fort Canning to participate in a modified Resilience Trail led by Singapore History Consultants' guides. The trail, titled the Temasek Trail, was flagged off by NHB's Chief Executive Officer Mr Michael Koh at the Fort Canning Gate. It brought them through historic sites at Fort Canning Hill, down to the MICA building where they were joined by Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Dr Yaacob Ibrahim. From there, the groups continued the trail, which ended at the Cenotaph where the WWII Trail and Resilience Trails were launched with a simple but meaningful ceremony.

After the ceremony, the students engaged in a simple reflections session around the Esplanade Park, before partaking in a reception of specially catered WWII themed food.



Be captivated by Alexandre Dang's *Dancing Solar Flowers* at the Singapore Art Museum's *Art Garden 2012*.

THE SEASON OF FUN!



CHILDREN'S SEASON,
18 MAY TO 24 JUNE 2012

BLOGGER JAYNE has been faithfully bringing her kids to the annual *Children's Season* ever since it first commenced in 2008. After visiting the event for four consecutive years in 2011, she blogged:

*"One of the things I am very thankful and appreciative of is the annual Children's Season. We have always been a fan, and this year is no exception."*¹

Fellow blogger Maryann Koh first brought her kids to the *Children's Season* in 2010, and was delighted by the "kiddy" activities lined up for young visitors. This annual event became an item on her "Things I Die Die Must Do with the Kids" list thereafter, and she brought her kids to participate in the season's activities again the following year. She blogged about *Children's Season 2011* after the visit:

*"We certainly enjoyed the exhibits and interactive installations and can't wait for what they will have lined up for us next year!"*²

TEXT BY CHERYL SIM AND THE
MARKETING & CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
TEAM AT THE NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD



Learn more about Peranakan culture with your little ones at the Peranakan Museum – This is just one of the ways to bond with your kids through colourful cultural experiences at *Children's Season*.

CHILDREN'S SEASON RETURNS FOR THE FIFTH YEAR IN 2012

Children's Season, jointly organised by the National Heritage Board (NHB) and the Museum Roundtable³, returns for the fifth year in 2012.

Over 20 museums are participating in *Children's Season 2012*, offering a wide range of fun-filled activities island-wide to inspire, engage and educate children aged three to twelve years old. The annual event is part of NHB's continuing efforts to make heritage appreciation a fun and intuitive part of the young ones' growing years.

With a host of colourful programmes and interactive features designed to capture children's imaginations, educators can expect the creative platforms to inspire students through experiential learning, while parents can look forward to exciting parent-child programmes. From interactive installations and unique hands-on activities to storytelling sessions and performances to craft workshops, exciting games and other events, parents and kids can bond over the joy of heritage and go on a journey together through playful learning experiences.

THE MUCH-LOVED ART GARDEN IS BACK!

In 2011, blogger Maryann² brought her two boys to the *Art Garden* at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) after hearing positive reviews from her friends, and it certainly did not disappoint!

First started in 2010, *Art Garden* is the only exhibition in Singapore dedicated to showcasing art for children. For the museum, *Art Garden 2012* is an opportunity to commission Singapore artists to create works for its next generation of art audiences and to try to develop an affinity between young people, artists and the museum.

This immensely popular exhibition will kick off *Children's Season 2012* on 18 May 2012 at SAM at 8Q. For the third year running, contemporary artworks by Singaporean and international artists will be on display at *Art Garden 2012* to unleash the little ones' imaginations. For instance, new artworks by Singaporean artists, Loh Sau Kuen and Justin Lee, will bring out the creativity in children through artistic play. Loh Sau Kuen's *Everyday Wonders* turns simple everyday objects into meaning-



ful expressions of art through hands-on pattern-making, while Justin Lee invites children to explore popular local images, drawings and texts, and to add their interpretations to his interactive cardboard box installation, *The Art of Imagination*. Families can also take a stroll through the beautiful flower garden, *Echoes-Infinity*, created by artist Shinji Ohmaki.

Look out for familiar friends who will once again return to celebrate *Children's Season 2012*. Say hello again to Dawn Ng's ever-popular curious colossal bunny, *Walter*, as he hops to SAM at 8Q, and be greeted by the *Dancing Solar Flowers* of Alexandre Dang which are sure to bring smiles to the faces of both adults and children. Besides interactive installations, a series of inspiring short films and animations will also be screened at *Art Garden 2012*, including animated shorts by young Singaporean students for the *N.E.mation!* competition series.

Thus, a visit to *Art Garden 2012* can be a fascinating, inspiring and educational experience for the young and a great way for families to bond and have fun. For parents intending to visit *Art Garden 2012* with their children, here are some tips by Ms Geraldine Cheang, Manager (Programmes)



Fascinate the young with Singapore's heritage, art and culture, during *Children's Season* at museums island-wide.

at SAM:

"Art Garden offers lots of fun opportunities for hands-on art-making for both parent and child. When it comes to contemporary art, do encourage children to respond and form their own ideas and opinions about the works. An active discussion between the parent and child about the artworks is the best way to go, because the nature of contemporary art allows for multiple viewpoints and responses."

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Children's Season 2012 definitely does not stop at the *Art Garden*!

Another anchor event will take place at the National Museum of Singapore, the pioneer of this iconic festival since 2008. It will be bringing *Children's Season 2012 - Island Adventures* to excite kids from 26 May to 22 July 2012. This brand new programme serves as a starting point for the young ones to understand Singapore's history and heritage by offering lively programmes and specially designed interactive showcases to make Singapore's history come alive. For instance, kids will have the opportunity to find out what it was like to travel on a ship 200 years ago to an island called *Singapura*. They will also

get a chance to explore how Singapore has changed and developed over the years into today's modern city, and make use of the many interactive showcases to incorporate their own creativity and aspirations into a collective historical narrative.

At the Asian Civilisations Museum, storytellers will bring visitors on a magical journey through the galleries, and kids can go on a gallery trail to explore beautiful hidden treasures. For more treasure-hunting, *ter-ba-BOM!* returns for the second year at the Malay Heritage Centre with a new heritage hunt around Kampong Gelam. With the help of map, clues and trusty guide, young heritage hunters will navigate around the streets and back alleys of Kampong Gelam to search for ancient treasures.

For a perfect child-at-heart experience, the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall will be offering games and quizzes to help participants learn about Dr Sun Yat Sen and how he changed China. Young visitors can take part in a drawing competition and sketch an image of *Wan Qing Yuan*, the local villa Dr Sun Yat Sen stayed in on three occasions. Children can discover how stamps are communication tools when they create art pieces with stamps and paints



Get creative at various hands-on activities and bring home your unique creations.



Be inspired and learn stories about special objects at the Asian Civilisations Museum as storytellers bring you on a magical journey through the galleries.

at the Singapore Philatelic Museum's *Be 'A Peace of Art'* workshop. These creative art pieces, which will be put on display, will form a large artwork linked together by dots and lines to be painted by local renowned painter and sculptor, Mr Sun Yu-li. The dots represent people or places, which link together to form a larger world.

A new special exhibition on the Singaporean play *Emily of Emerald Hill* will be held at the Peranakan Museum. The museum will also be organising colourful performances, interactive demonstrations and hands-on craft activities to connect children with Peranakan culture, allowing them to learn more about the Peranakan community's contribution to Singapore and the region.

The chance to take a journey back in time to the period of World War Two (WWII) and the Japanese Occupation is also available during *Children's Season 2012*. At Reflections at Bukit Chandu and Memories at Old Ford Factory, stories by

Dolly Leow, the "Godmother of Storytelling", will allow one to "sample" the range of emotions felt by children during WWII as they grappled with the realities of war and its impact on their young lives. Guided tours will also be organised by The Changi Museum to allow today's young ones to learn how the hardships of war affected children in Singapore during WWII. In addition, participants can sample authentic WWII food, as well as take part in fun and challenging activities, including quizzes, games and craft making.

Combat Skirmish LIVE brings combat laser shooting to Fort Siloso for those who love to jump into the thick of the action. Participants will be trained under Fort Siloso's Battery Sergeant Major Cooper in the challenging Indoor Maze, and help him battle against enemy invasions within the tunnels in the historical fortress of Fort Siloso.

At the Army Museum of Singapore's *Style it the Army way*, young visitors will

get to change into child-sized army uniforms, engage in battlefield fighting and test the mini armouries; while those who aspire to become policemen can put on mini police uniforms and have their photographs taken at the Police Heritage Centre.

With the wide range of activities lined up from May to June 2012, parents and kids will indeed be spoilt for choice during the school holidays!

STEP INTO THE PLAY-LAND OF CHILDREN'S SEASON 2012

As part of *International Museum Day*, selected museums will offer free admissions to all visitors on 19 May 2012. Also, open house days are scheduled at various museums and planned across different weekends during *Children's Season 2012* to allow families more time to immerse themselves in deeper learning experiences at each venue.

Children's Season 2012's exhibits and activities are developed to engage children

and maximise their learning about Singapore's heritage and culture. At the same time, parents and educators can further enrich the little ones' experiences during the *Children's Season* programmes by being active participants themselves. Ms Vicky Wong, Manager (Education and Public Programmes) of the National Museum of Singapore, advises:

"Children's Season is the perfect platform for parents to bond with their children, and teachers with their students. We hope adults will come ready to get their hands dirty with their young ones, and participate in the exploration and discovery of Singapore's history in an engaging and interactive way. Although Children's Season is targeted at children, teenagers and adults alike can easily find something inspiring here that interests them to come again and again. We hope to make the museum experience richer and more meaningful with such an interactive platform."

Homemaker Mrs SL Lim, a mother of two, is among the many parents who view *Children's Season* as a great learning platform for children. Her elder son had a good time at *Children's Season 2011*, and she recently contacted NHB to enquire about *Children's Season 2012*. Mrs Lim commented:

"Last year's Children's Season offered creative programmes that introduced my five-year-old son to our heritage, art and culture. The learning process was so fun and memorable for both of us that we will be introducing this year's upcoming edition to my younger son as well!"

Indeed, parents can be just as engrossed as their kids in the child-centric activities offered during the *Children's Season*. Hence, plan your calendar in advance, and step into this season of fun come May and June 2012!

1. <http://rawafish.blogspot.com/2011/06/singapore-arts-museum-childrens-season.html>
2. <http://maryannkoh.blogspot.com/2011/07/childrens-season-sam.html>
3. The Museum Roundtable is an initiative led by the NHB since 1996, comprising public and private museums, heritage galleries and attractions of science and discovery in Singapore.

CHILDREN'S SEASON 2012 AT A GLANCE

Please visit www.museums.com.sg for more information on each activity, including whether appointments are necessary, registration details, recommended age, etc.)

MUSEUM	EVENT/ACTIVITY	DATE/TIMING
Army Museum of Singapore	Style it the Army way	18 May - 24 June (Activity timings vary)
ArtScience Museum	Silkscreen Printing Workshop	Saturdays and Sundays only » 19 May - 24 June (2pm to 3pm)
	Andy Warhol: 15 Minutes Eternal "Riddles Tour" for Children	Fridays » 25 May; 1, 8, 15 & 22 June (2pm to 3pm) Saturdays » 19 & 26 May; 2, 9, 16 & 23 June (5.30pm to 6.30pm)
Asian Civilisations Museum	Children's Season Open House at Asian Civilisations Museum	9 & 10 June (Activities from 1pm to 6pm)
Fort Siloso, Sentosa	Fort Siloso - Combat Skirmish LIVE	18 May - 24 June (10am to 6pm)
HealthZone	School's Out! Fun Art Classes for Your Children!	15 June
Images of Singapore Forecourt	Sentosa Storytelling Comes Alive	Wednesdays - Sundays only » 2 - 24 June (11am to 7pm - 3 sessions per day)
Infocomm Experience Centre (iExperience)	Children's Workshop	Weekdays » 14 - 27 May (10am to 12 noon, 2pm to 4pm) Weekends » 14 - 27 May (10am to 12 noon, 1pm to 3pm, 3:30pm to 5.30pm)
	Children's Fiesta	19, 20, 26 & 27 May (10am to 6pm)
Malay Heritage Centre	ter-ba-BOM! - A Heritage Hunt	Fridays » 26 May - 24 June (3pm to 6pm) Saturdays » 26 May - 24 June (11am to 2pm & 3pm to 6pm)
Memories at Old Ford Factory & Reflections at Bukit Chandu	Story Telling with Dolly Leow!	Reflections at Bukit Chandu » 26 May (10.30am, 12.30pm & 3.30pm) Memories at Old Ford Factory » 23 June (10.30am, 12.30pm & 3.30pm)
	Design Your Own Drama!	Reflections at Bukit Chandu » 26 May (10am to 5pm) Memories at Old Ford Factory » 23 June (10am to 5pm)
National Museum of Singapore	Children's Season 2012 - Island Adventures	26 May - 22 July (10am to 6pm daily - last entry 5.30pm)
	Children's Season Open House at National Museum of Singapore	26 & 27 May, 23 & 24 June, 21 & 22 July
Peranakan Museum	Children's Season Open House at Peranakan Museum	16 & 17 June (Activities from 12 noon to 5pm)
Police Heritage Centre	Who Wants To Be A Policeman?	Fridays » 18 & 25 May; 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 June (10.30am, 2.30pm & 4.30pm) Saturdays » 19 May; 2, 16, 23 & 30 June (9am & 11am)

Enjoy exciting activities, including a slumber party among stamps at the Singapore Philatelic Museum.



CHILDREN'S SEASON 2012 AT A GLANCE

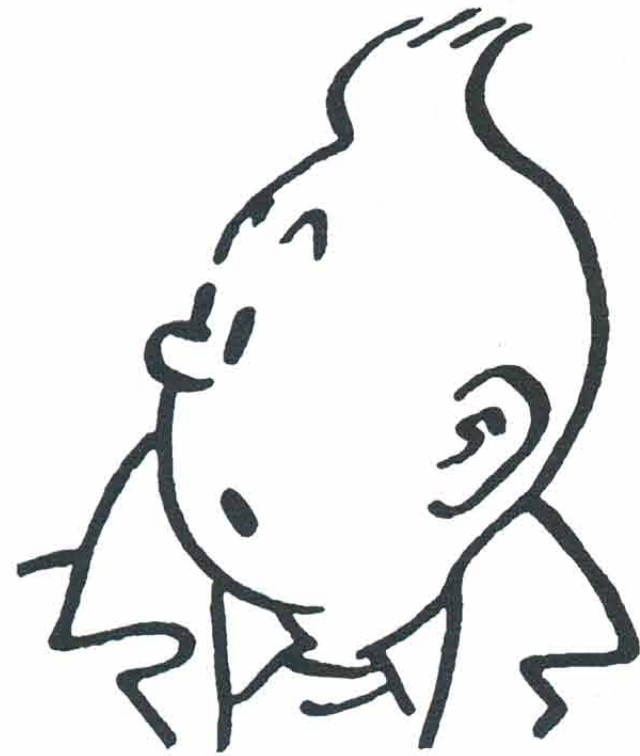
Please visit www.museums.com.sg for more information on each activity, including whether appointments are necessary, registration details, recommended age, etc.)

MUSEUM	EVENT/ACTIVITY	DATE/TIMING
Public Libraries Singapore	A Strange Place	Clementi Public Library » 31 May (2pm to 3pm) Queenstown Public Library » 9 June (2pm to 3pm) Bukit Batok Public Library » 16 June (2pm to 3pm)
	Ready, Set, Grow!	Yishun Public Library » 12 May (3pm to 4pm)
	Knowing More About Copper	Woodlands Regional Library » 8 June (3pm to 4pm)
	Point & Shoot! Photography for Kids	Bishan Public Library & Bedok Public Library » 2 & 16 June (11.30am to 1pm)
Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research	Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research Open House	19 May (9am to 5pm)
Science Centre Singapore, The Annexe	Sultans of Science: Islamic Science Rediscovered Exhibition	16 April - 16 July (10am to 6pm)
Singapore Art Museum (SAM), including SAM at 8Q	Art Garden 2012 at SAM at 8Q <i>Contemporary Art Fun for Children</i>	18 May - 12 August
	Children's Season Open House at SAM and SAM at 8Q	26 & 27 May
Singapore Philatelic Museum	Children's Season Open House at Singapore Philatelic Museum	2 & 3 June (9am to 7pm)
	Be 'A Peace of Art' at Singapore Philatelic Museum	30 May (2pm to 3.30pm) 31 May (10am to 11.30am & 2pm to 3.30pm) 1 June (10am to 11.30am) 2 June (10am to 11.30am) 3 June (2pm to 3.30pm) 11 June (2pm to 3.30pm) 14 June (10am to 11.30am)
	Fun Adventure Overnight Camp	7 June (6pm) to 8 June (9am) & 14 June (6pm) to 15 June (9am)
	The Amazing Stamps	29 May; 5, 6, 12 & 20 June (10am to 12 noon)
Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall	Learn about Dr Sun Yat Sen and Wan Qing Yuan through Games and Quizzes	26 May (11am to 12 noon)
	Children's Outdoor Water-colour Painting Competition at Wan Qing Yuan	26 May (3pm to 5pm)
	Creative Hands-on Storytelling Workshop at Wan Qing Yuan	27 May (2pm to 2.30pm & 3pm to 3.30pm)
The Changi Museum	A Child's War	18 May - 24 June (10am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm)
YOG Gallery @ Sports Museum	The Olympic Games (London 2012)	18 May - 24 June

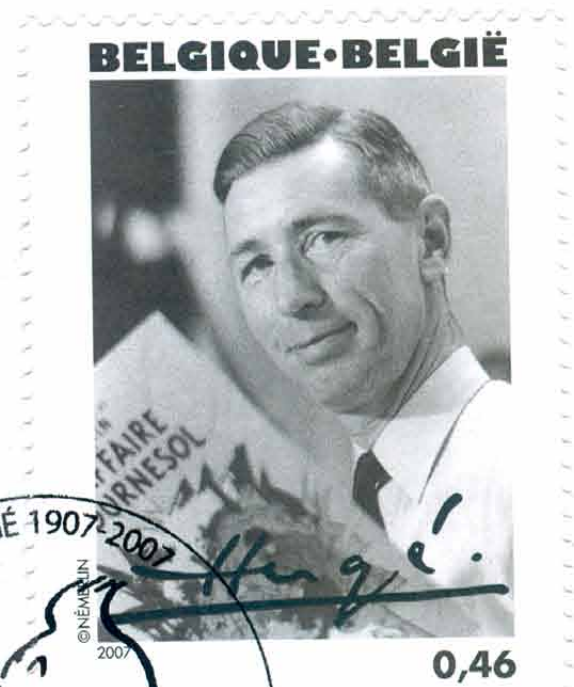


..... I ♥ MUSEUMS
CHILDREN'S SEASON
18 MAY - 24 JUNE 2012
JOINTLY PRESENTED BY NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD & MUSEUM ROUNDTABLE
FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT WWW.MUSEUMS.COM.SG

List of museums and galleries participating in *International Museum Day Open House on 19 May 2012*: Asian Civilisations Museum, Infocomm Experience Centre (iExperience), Memories at Old Ford Factory, National Museum of Singapore, Peranakan Museum, Police Heritage Centre, Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, Reflections at Bukit Chandu, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore Philatelic Museum, Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, The Changi Museum and YOG Gallery @ the Singapore Sports Museum.



© HERGÉ-ML 2007
HERGÉ 1907-2007



ABOUT A BOY

F.D.C. P. 1590 IV

TEXT BY **LUCILLE YAP**
IMAGES: POUR TOUS LES VISUELS D'HERGÉ,
© HERGÉ/MOULINSART 2012

'THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN'
AT THE SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM

“TINTIN BROUGHT ME HAPPINESS.
I DID MY BEST AT WHAT I WAS DOING
AND IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY.
BUT I HAD A LOT OF FUN.
MOREOVER... I GOT PAID FOR DOING IT...”

— HERGÉ, 30 DECEMBER 1975 —

FROM 5 NOVEMBER 2011 to 31 May 2012, the Singapore Philatelic Museum (SPM) celebrates one of the most beloved comic characters worldwide, the boy reporter Tintin. Created by Belgian comic artist Georges Remi (1907-1983) – also known as Hergé, Tintin is a teenage journalist who began a series of exciting adventures in 1929, accompanied by his faithful dog Snowy; and later his faithful friends Captain Haddock and Professor Calculus.

Tintin's adventures, which spanned 24 comic books, took the young reporter and Snowy to various places around the world. They ventured into India, Tibet and China in Asia; to the Congo in Africa; Arabia in the Middle East; Russia in Europe; North and South America; and even the Moon!

Shown in this exhibition are stamps from SPM's permanent collection. Also on display are a wide range of Tintin collectibles and rarely seen original stamp artworks on loan from the Museum Voor Communicatie in the Netherlands and L'Adresse Musée de La Poste in France.

HERGÉ - CREATOR OF TINTIN

It is difficult to separate Hergé's life from his work. As a child, his sketches lined the margins of his exercise books. During his teenage years, he was always with his sketchbook, and his adult life was spent eternally stuck to his drawing board.

His fictional creation was part of him, living within him and playing key roles in his life. His life influenced his creation, and his creation influenced his life.

From youth to adulthood, Hergé drew alone, with the occasional one-off collaborations. His was the work of a master craftsman, and it came from his heart and his technical expertise. But when Hergé reached the age of 40, he began to favour working within a team and set up Studios Hergé in 1950.

Hergé's studio allowed many talented artists to flourish and develop their own work. It became an institution dedicated to the conservation and exhibition of the clear line style. Hergé was the artistic director of Tintin magazine and the managing director of Studios Hergé. But he was more of a mentor than the boss of a company.

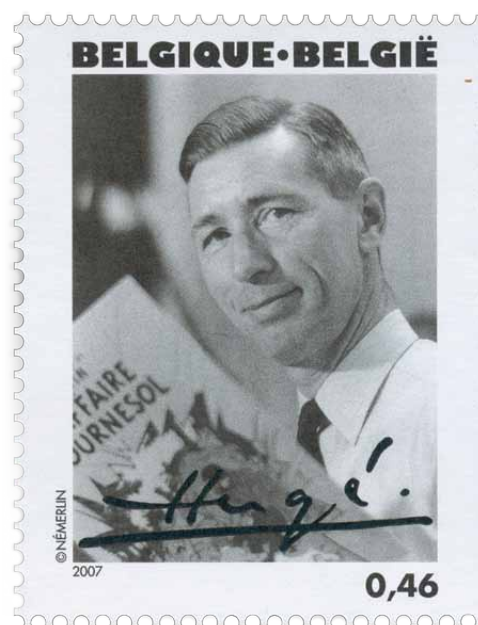
SCOUT'S HONOUR

In 1921, the young Hergé joined the Saint-Boniface College scout group. He was given the nickname 'Curious Fox'.

“It was with scouting that the world really began to open up in front of me. It's the greatest memory of my youth. Being close to nature, respecting nature, resourcefulness. It was all very important to me and even if it all seems a bit old-fashioned today, I still hold dear the values we learned.”

— HERGÉ, 1974

The budding artist was always with his sketchbook and pencil, sketching scenes of daily scout-life, landscapes from his travels and life portraits. The teenager quickly built up a good reputation for drawing such subjects.



- **NAME:** Georges Remi
- **DATE OF BIRTH:** 22 May 1907
- **DIED:** 3 March 1983 (age 75)
- **NATIONALITY:** Belgian
- **FATHER:** Alexis Remi (1882 -1970)
- **MOTHER:** Elisabeth Dufour (1882 - 1946)
- **SIBLING:** Paul Remi
- **SPOUSE:** First Wife – Germaine Kieckens, secretary of Father Wallez, director of *Le Vingtième Siècle*. Married in 1932, separated in 1960, and divorced in 1977.
- **SPOUSE:** Second Wife – Fanny Vlamynck, colourist by profession. Married in 1977.
- **CHILDREN:** None

“AS I WAS A BOY SCOUT, I STARTED TELLING THE STORY OF A LITTLE BOY SCOUT TO OTHER LITTLE BOY SCOUTS ... THESE WERE NOT YET REAL COMIC STRIPS: THEY WERE MORE LIKE STORIES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND, FROM TIME TO TIME, A SHY LITTLE EXCLAMATION MARK OR QUESTION MARK.”

— HERGÉ, 1975

The scout's honour he so strongly embraced put him through traumatic nightmares when he was working on *Tintin in Tibet*. During this time, he suffered from dreams of a white monster that represented the personal conflict he had over whether he should divorce his wife of three decades to be with a 22-year-old employee.

HIS JOURNEY BEGAN

After completing his studies in 1925, Hergé worked in the subscriptions department of the Belgian newspaper *Le Vingtième Siècle* ('The Twentieth Century').

He was talent spotted by Father Norbert Wallez, director of *Le Vingtième Siècle*. Noting Hergé's abilities in lettering and illustration, Father Wallez entrusted the young man with his first graphic design assignment, such as the designing of headings, layout of newspaper columns and creation of dropped initials, tailpieces and illustrations.

Three years later, Hergé was given his first real responsibility as an illustrator when he became the editor of *Le Petit Vingtième* ('The Little Twentieth'), the children's supplement to *Le Vingtième Siècle*. The first issue was published on 1 November that year.

HIS CREATIONS

Hergé's first drawings appeared in 1921 in *Jamais assez*, a scout magazine for schools; and then in *Le Boy-Scout Belge*, the monthly magazine of the Belgian scouts.

From 1924 onwards, he signed his drawings as Hergé, a phonetic transcription of his initials G.R. in the reverse (pronounced as 'Air-Zhay' in French).

He created *Totor*, *Patrol Leader of the May Bugs*, in *Boy-Scout Belge* in 1926. On 10 January 1929, Tintin and Snowy made their debut in *Le Petit Vingtième*. In 1930, Hergé introduced *Quick and Flupke*, street urchins from the backstreets of Brussels who starred in short stories in *Le Petit Vingtième*. *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets* was published by *Editions du Petit Vingtième* in the same year.

MAN OF LETTERS

Hergé was a prolific writer. He was as demanding of his writing as he was of his drawing and painting. He left behind approximately 40,000 letters. While the majority were about his work, there were many that touched on love, his emotions and social life.

These writings bear witness to the author's character and taste.

This is an extract of a letter he wrote to a young girl, Anne le B., from Casablanca. She had written to him about her teenage loneliness, thinking that she was writing to Hergé's grandfather!

*"Dear Miss,
In response to your esteemed letter of 20 June, I have the honour of letting you know: that I don't have a beard, yet if I did have one, it would not be white, but just going grey; that as I don't have a beard, my grandchildren can't pull it; that furthermore I'm not a true grandparent as I have neither beard nor grandchildren; that part of the reason I'm not a grandparent may be because I'm not even a father; that I limit myself to having just one wife, because that's the Belgian custom, in contrast to your area, where the custom is to have several; that I don't have anyone who really is the living model for Captain Haddock; that I do generally receive and see the letters I am sent; that if some malevolent force had made your hand disappear, I would have been deprived of this pleasure; and lastly that I am very keen on writing back to you, and here is the proof!*

Is there still anything else to write? Since you haven't asked me anything, I don't even have the ability to refuse you anything. Basically, you have confided that you don't even have a rat to talk to. If I understand it correctly, you've promoted me to that flattering role.

I am clean-shaven ('ras' in French) and I could also be your rat, given that our conversation would be rudimentary and short-lived. It's not only in fairy tales that a hideous beast can be transformed into Prince Charming, in the big round eyes of a 16-year old princess."

CINEMA IN A COMIC STRIP

Hergé's work drew inspiration from the art of film-making. The plots, atmosphere and framing that constituted his picture stories were all heavily influenced by cinematic style. This led to his adventures, recorded in mere ink on paper, turning out to be as animated and expressive as full-length features shown in the cinema.

Hergé treated his characters as actors and he used current events and from history for his scenes. In this way, his frames and speech bubbles speak directly to us.

"I operate just like a film director. Firstly, there's the scenario. In principle, I'm the scriptwriter as well ... It's true that it's very similar to the cinema. Then there's the directing. The artist needs to be an actor and director simultaneously, and a draughtsman as well. He directs the actors. He has to feel when a character in a particular situation needs to run to the left or right or elsewhere. The artist also writes the dialogues, except in cases where there is a team with a scriptwriter and artist. In my case, I have to be everything at once." – HERGÉ, 1971

TINTIN'S TRADEMARKS

Famous Hairstyle

His little blond quiff. This quiff was formed only on pages 7-8 of *Tintin in the Land of Soviets* when he jumped into a car and raced away. The sudden acceleration gave him the distinctive quiff which became synonymous with Tintin. Since then the little tuft of hair never droops.



Plus-Four Pants

He is always dressed in a plain yellow or white collared shirt, often with a blue sweater over, and his trademark plus-four trousers. But he traded his plus-fours for bell-bottoms in *Tintin and the Picaros*.



WHO IS TINTIN?

Tintin was definitely born of my unconscious desire to be perfect, to be a hero. – HERGÉ

Hergé has never confirmed who inspired him to create the Tintin character, and it may never be known who that was. But there are several claims.

DANISH ACTOR PALLE HULD (1912-2010)

For decades he had claimed that his 44-day round-the-world trip, made in 1928 when he was a 15-year-old scout, was the inspiration to the appearance of Tintin a year later in *Le Petit Vingtième*.

FRENCH WAR AND TRAVEL PHOTOJOURNALIST ROBERT SEXE (1890-1986)

Like Tintin, he rode a motorbike and had a best friend called René Milhoux (Tintin's dog, Snowy, is called Milou in French). He also toured the Soviet Union, the Congo and America in the same order as Tintin in the first three comic issues.

PAUL REMI, HERGÉ'S YOUNGER BROTHER (1912-1986)

A military officer, Paul Remi's likeness to the comic character prompted the nickname "Major Tintin" by his colleagues. That led him to shave off his hair and sport a 'crew-cut' look. Hergé reciprocated by using this new look to create the villainous character Colonel Sponz, who was featured for the first time in *The Calculus Affair*.

"My childhood companion and playmate was my brother, who was five years younger than me. I watched him, and he amused and fascinated me ... Undoubtedly, this explains how Tintin adopted his character, his gestures, his attitude."

– HERGÉ, 1943

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, HERGÉ HIMSELF

The creator had claimed "Tintin, c'est moi" or "Tintin, it's me." ... "These are my eyes, my meaning, my lungs, my tripe! ... I believe that I am alone in being able to animate, in the sense of giving a soul."

KNOW THE CAST

Hergé's world was occupied by sharply defined characters. They were mostly inspired by real people who were either close to him, historical figures or celebrities at that time. Their portraits and psychological profiles had been meticulously composed, leaving nothing to chance.

» SNOWY

Tintin's constant companion is an extraordinary white wire fox terrier. He is known as "Milou" in French. There are several stories on whom Snowy was named after. One version was that Snowy was named after Hergé's girlfriend Marie-Louise Van Cutsem who was called "Malou". Another candidate was René Milhoux, the best friend of French war and travel photojournalist Robert Sexe, who was himself one of many speculated inspirations of the Tintin character.

Snowy appeared right at the start, in the first drawing of the first adventure. He sticks by Tintin through good and bad times. He is faithful and courageous, saving Tintin in numerous adventures. He is known to be Tintin's alter ego and his only confidant at the beginning.

» CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD HADDOCK

The arrival of Captain Haddock does in some way replace Snowy. The Captain has always been a bit naïve, temperamental, loud, emotional and irritable, but he has a good heart and is always willing to help people who are in trouble.

His first appearance was on pages 14 and 15 of *The Crab with the Golden Claws* in 1941. He has been a seafaring captain of over 20 years. His ancestor was Knight François de Hadoque who commanded the frigate, the *Unicorn*.

Some of Captain Haddock's distinctive features are his sailor outfit of black trousers, sailor's hat and blue pullover with the image of an anchor; and a pipe in his mouth. His favourite exclamations are "Thundering Typhoons!" and "Blistering Barnacles!"

He is courageous but very clumsy, adding much comic relief to the stories. His main weakness is his excessive enjoyment of whisky and rum.

» CHANG CHONG-CHEN

This character was inspired by a young Chinese student of similar name, 張仲仁 (1907-1998), whom Hergé met in 1934 when Chang was studying at the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* in Brussels.

The extremely beneficial relationship inspired both Hergé's professional and spiritual life. This marked a turning point in Hergé's career, and was central to the creation of *The Blue Lotus* in 1935. Twenty-four years later Hergé celebrated his friendship with Chang again in *Tintin in Tibet*.

"I think that Chang was, without knowing it, one of the artists who had the most influence on me. He was a young Chinese student whom I had first met at the time when he helped me to create The Blue Lotus, and it was he who made me aware of the absolute necessity of being well informed about a country and of constructing a narrative." – HERGÉ, 29 APRIL 1977

Chang returned to China after he completed his studies in 1937. He became the Principal of the Shanghai Fine Arts Academy and was a celebrated sculptor.

The two good friends lost contact when World War Two broke out. The Japanese occupation of China during the war, coupled with the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), separated them for almost three decades. Hergé, however, never gave up looking for his friend. His long quest finally paid off in 1975, and they kept in contact through touching letters. It was not for another six years before Chang and Hergé had an emotional reunion in Brussels in 1981.

» THOMPSON & THOMSON

These two clumsy policemen first appeared in *Cigars of the Pharaoh* in 1932. They were then known as X33 and X33A. Their names were revealed

only in *King Ottokar's Sceptre* in 1939.

The only way to distinguish between the two is from the trim of their moustaches. Thompson's is neatly trimmed, whilst Thomson's has a distinctive twirl at the ends.

Both Thompson and Thomson are not very intelligent, and are super clumsy and confused. They are hence full of blunders, misunderstandings, and always in trouble. One possible inspiration for the characters was Hergé's father, Alexis Remi, and Alexis' twin brother, Léon. They were identical twins; both had moustaches, were dressed alike, wore boater or bowler hats, and held walking canes or umbrellas. Thompson and Thomson, however, are not twins.

Hergé could also have been inspired by movies of that time, namely the films of Charlie Chaplin, as well as the comedic duo Laurel and Hardy who shared similarities in characteristics with Thompson and Thomson.

» PROFESSOR CUTHBERT CALCULUS

He is an absolutely deaf and absent-minded inventor whose French name is Tryphon Tournesol. "Tryphon" is the name of Hergé's carpenter and "Tourn-esol" means sunflower.

He was actually modelled after a real person.

"Physically, Calculus and his submarine were based on Professor Auguste Piccard [1884-1962] and his bathyscaphe. He was a scaled down version of Piccard, who was much too tall. Piccard had a very long neck. I would occasionally bump into him in the street and he struck me as the incarnation of a typical

scientist. I made Calculus a mini-Piccard, because otherwise I would have needed to enlarge the frames." – HERGÉ

Calculus's deafness was modelled after Paul Eydt, the lawyer at *Le Petit Vingtième*. His deafness was a source of jokes amongst the editorial team.

» ROBERTO RASTAPOPOULOS

A dangerous Greek billionaire with the worst morals and taste in clothing, Rastapopoulos is a master of evil and the sworn enemy of Tintin.

His first appearance was in *Tintin in America* in 1932. He crossed paths with Tintin again in *Cigars of the Pharaoh* in 1934, *The Blue Lotus* in 1935, *The Red Sea Sharks* in 1958, and finally in *Flight 714* in 1967.

He was modelled after the Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis (1906-1975), who made a fortune constructing super tankers and became legendary for his wealth and display of it.

» DR. J.W. MÜLLER

Violent and dangerous, enterprising and unscrupulous, and thoroughly evil, Dr Müller's personality was based on Dr Georg Bell, a secret agent cum forger and a Nazi troublemaker of Scottish descent.

Physically, Dr Müller was based on the British actor Charles Laughton who starred in the film *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1933). Laughton played the role of a mad genius, a pioneer of genetic modification and super surgeon, joining animals and humans together to create monstrous hybrids.

Dr Müller made his first appearance in *The Black Island* in 1938 as an outlaw and a master of disguise who often assumed multiple identities.

CELEBRATING TINTIN THROUGH STAMPS

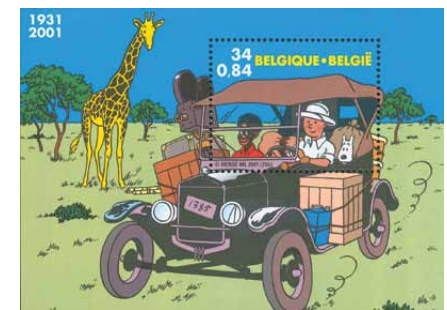
The Adventures of Tintin in 24 Albums

This 2007 stamp collection issued by the Belgium Post features the covers of all 24 titles of the Tintin comic book series, together with a portrait of Hergé.

Albums 2 to 9, which were originally in black and white, were republished in colour and in a fixed 62-page format between 1943 and 1947, as well as in 1955. Album 10 was the first to be published in colour right from the beginning. Albums 16 to 23 (and the revised editions of Albums 4, 7 and 15) were published with Studios Hergé.

A shortage of paper during World War Two had restricted the comics to 62 pages instead of the 100-130 pages allowed before the war.

HERGÉ 1907-2007



The Double-Adventure Sequels

The *Secret of the Unicorn* and *Red Rackham's Treasure* were Hergé's first attempt at dividing Tintin's adventures into two parts.

The double-adventure was such a successful formula that Hergé repeated it in four other books. The second double-bill, which came right after *Red Rackham's Treasure*, spanned *The Seven Crystal Balls* and *Prisoners of the Sun*. The third double-adventure was told in *Destination Moon* and *Explorers on the Moon*.

Hergé had attempted to create a sequel earlier in 1934 when he embarked on *Tintin in the East* in *Le Petit Vingtième*. But the resulting work, *The Blue Lotus*, was more of a companion volume rather than a straight sequel to the preceding book, *Cigars of the Pharaoh*.



Tintin on the Moon

Hergé's world was filled with science and technology. He was an inquisitive artist who sought out and interviewed numerous scientific experts. The process reached its peak in Tintin's adventure to the Moon.

Hergé had the ability to weave complicated scientific subject matters into truly remarkable stories. He drew inspiration from the space race between America and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, keeping close tabs on new developments in rocket science.

To ensure accuracy in his work, Hergé made a scale model of the Moon rocket to be featured in *Destination Moon*, and brought it to Paris for the approval of Professor Alexandre Ananoff, author of *L'astronautique*. The model could be dismantled to reveal each inner section clearly. Upon his return to Brussels, Hergé asked his assistants to draw the iconic red rocket based on his model.



"I wanted Bob De Moor [one of Hergé's assistants] ... to know exactly whichever part of the space vehicle the characters were to be found in. It was essential that each detail was in place, that everything was perfectly exact: the venture was too dangerous for me to be involved without guarantee."

– HERGÉ

Hergé was way ahead of his time. He put Tintin on the Moon in 1953, four years ahead of the Soviet Union which launched the first, unmanned, Sputnik rocket on 4 October 1957. And it was not until two decades later on 20 July 1969 that Neil Armstrong from the United States' Apollo XI mission finally landed and set foot on the Moon. As a fitting outcome to this creative undertaking, Tintin became, in the eyes of many, the first man to walk on the Moon!

"This is it! ... I've walked a few steps! ... For the first time in history of mankind there is an Explorer on the Moon!"

– TINTIN DECLARED IN 1953, 16 YEARS BEFORE NEIL ARMSTRONG'S DECLARATION OF "ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN, ONE GIANT STEP FOR MANKIND."

TINTIN ON THE BIG SCREEN

Tintin comics have been made into movies since 1960, when Tintin first appeared on the big screen in *Tintin and the Golden Fleece*. This was followed by *Tintin and the Blue Oranges* in 1964.

In 1969, Belvision Studios in Brussels produced a feature-length animated cartoon based on the book *Prisoners of the Sun*. In 1976, *Moi, Tintin*, a full-length documentary about Tintin and his creator, hit the screens.

In October 2011, *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn*, made its debut as a computer animated 3D movie. Directed by Steven Spielberg, the movie script was based on three of the comic stories: *The Crab with the Golden Claws*, *The Secret of the Unicorn* and *Red Rackham's Treasure*. A new set of stamps was issued by bpost (Belgium Post) on 27 August 2011 to mark this special occasion.

Lucille Yap is Senior Curator, Singapore Philatelic Museum.



2011
Tintin à l'écran
Kuiffe op het scherm
2011

Le Crabe aux pinces d'or (film d'animation) – 1947 – De Krab met de Gulden Scharen (animatiefilm)
© Hergé - Moulinart 2011

L'Île Noire (film d'animation) – 1961 – De Zwarte Rotsen (animatiefilm)
© Belvision 1959

Tintin et le mystère de la Toison d'or (film) – 1961 – Kuiffe en het Geheim van het Gulden Vlies (speelfilm)
© A.P.C. et P. P. 2011
Tintin et les Oranges bleues (film) – 1964 – Kuiffe en de blauwe Sinaasappels (speelfilm)
© A.P.C. et P. P. 2011

Tintin et le Temple du Soleil (film d'animation) – 1969 – Kuiffe en de Zonnetempel (animatiefilm)
© Belvision 1964

La Lotus bleue (film d'animation) – 1991 – De blauwe Lotus (animatiefilm)
© Elipse Programmatica Nivaria Limited, France 3, M6
© Hergé - Moulinart 2011



SUNKEN TREASURE

A NINTH CENTURY SHIPWRECK

TEXT BY KAN SHUYI



Four-lobed box with mandarin ducks. China, ca. 830, partly gilded silver. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph by John Tsantes & Robb Harrell, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

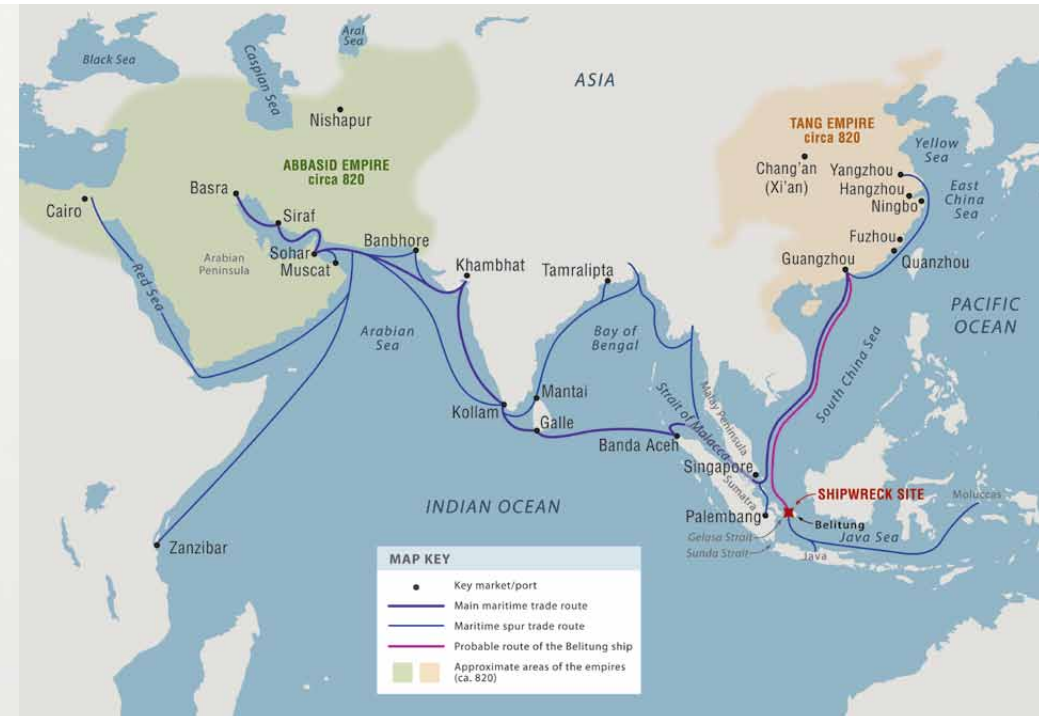
A DIVE FOR SEA CUCUMBERS. A mound sighted. An accidental and amazing discovery was made.

Lying silent for more than a millennium underwater, a chance discovery by local fishermen in 1998 brought the Belitung cargo to light. The wreck was found in relatively shallow waters at a site approximately 17 metres deep and a few kilometres off the shores of Belitung Island in the Java Sea. Tragedy probably struck when the ship crashed into reefs in the area, referred to as Batu Hitam ('black rock').

Authorised by the Indonesia government, salvagers proceeded to recover some 60,000 objects from the wreck site over two seasons of excavation work. The bulk of the finds were Chinese ceramics from the Tang period (618 – 907), comprising both mass produced and rare examples. Bullion in the form of silver and lead ingots was also found. The most astonishing finds were perhaps the exquisite pieces of Chinese metalwork – gold, silver, and bronze – which suggested that the people on board had a connection with the highest strata of Tang society.

The extraordinary nature of this find was heightened by the vessel itself. Examination of the ship's construction methods and analysis of its timbers revealed that the ship was most likely to be of Arab origin. The ship's hull were formed by planks sewn together using vegetal fibres instead of iron fastenings, the latter a feature of Chinese ships. The timbers, consisting of African hardwoods, were common materials used by shipbuilders from the Gulf region. Thus, this shipwreck stands as the earliest Arab vessel to have been discovered in Southeast Asian waters, a testament to the bustling maritime trade and sprawling commercial networks during the ninth century.

Yet, much remains a mystery. Just as the ship's exact place of origin is undetermined, so is its final point of departure. It was probably Yangzhou (in Jiangsu province) or Guangzhou (in Guangdong province), both bustling trade hubs in ninth-century China, from which the Belitung ship sailed. And where was the ship heading when it ran into reefs off Belitung



Maritime trade routes during the ninth century.

Island? It appears to have deviated from the main shipping route that most vessels took when traversing the region. Was it perhaps blown off course? Or had it taken another course to avoid pirates? More likely, it was dropping off ceramics or acquiring new trade products and provisions at a port in Java.

Humble utilitarian items, which shed light on the lives of those on board, added another layer of interest to this discovery. The crew and other passengers on the vessel were most likely multinational. Arab or Persian traders probably chartered the ship, and brought with them vessels such as the turquoise-glazed amphora. On the long voyage, it would have made multiple stops in India and Southeast Asia to recruit new crew. There were most probably Chinese merchants on board also, as suggested by the inkstone used for writing.

The exact date when the ship embarked on its final journey has also been much discussed. The ceramics found in the shipwreck are the types produced in the ninth century, a dating which matches the results of radiocarbon tests on organic materials from the wreck. A date equivalent to 826 is thought to be incised on one of the Changsha bowls. It is thus likely that the Belitung ship sailed in the second quarter of the ninth century, possibly within a few seasons of the bowl's manufacture.



Turquoise-glazed amphora. Iraq or Iran, ca. 830, earthenware. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Singapore Tourism Board.



Left: Bowl with incised inscription. China, Hunan province, Changsha kilns, 826, stoneware. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Singapore Tourism Board. Right: Inkstone. China, ca. 830, stone. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph by John Tsantes & Robb Harrell, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.



PHOTO COURTESY OF M. FLECKER

THE CARGO

A commodity difficult for camels to transport via the overland Silk Road, shipping had made possible the large-scale export of ceramics from the mid-Tang dynasty. The Belitung ship carried close to 60,000 pieces of Chinese ceramics. But breakages were found at a relatively low level of approximately 20 percent, which suggests that there were more than 70,000 pieces of ceramics in the ship's original cargo. This is an impressive figure considering that the vessel measured approximately 18 metres by 6.5 metres. It carried numerous storage jars, of which many with larger openings were packed with ceramic bowls. The manner of packing – many bowls were tightly arranged in a “helical” manner and probably cushioned by straw – enabled the boat to carry such an enormous load. This packing method and the silt of the seabed also protected most of the cargo from damage.

The size of the cargo underscores the great popularity of Chinese ceramics, which were valued for their beauty, strength, and durability. These qualities were unrivalled by ceramics from other parts of the world. To cater to the growing demand, new kilns sprang up in many provinces in China, while old ones changed their technologies and products. For instance, there was a shift from producing low-fired tomb pottery to high-fired tableware. Assembled from diverse sources, the repertoire of wares in the cargo highlights the vitality and competitiveness of the Chinese ceramics industry. It also shows the merchants' entrepreneurial ways as they targeted different groups of clientele by exporting a range of goods.

CHANGSHA WARES

Ceramics from the Changsha kilns in Hunan province dominated the cargo of the Belitung wreck. Approximately 57,500 items were produced by Changsha potters and among these were some 55,000 bowls. Most of these bowls carry one of a few basic patterns, which include foliage, flowers, birds, and clouds. However, these were created by many different artisans, hence giving an impression of a huge variety of designs that ranged from the realistic to the abstract. This staggering quantity of ceramics reflects the organisational and productive capacities of China's

ceramic industry.

Relatively isolated from the Tang court, major commercial centres and other kilns, Changsha potters developed a distinctive decorative style, featuring lively designs painted with iron and copper pigments. They introduced underglaze painting, blazing the way for the development of this form of ornamentation in Chinese ceramics.

The Changsha potters made a wide variety of forms and many of these were represented in the Belitung cargo. Apart from daily utensils like bowls and ewers, they also fashioned toys and scholars' implements such as water droppers. The potters often instilled an element of fun into their wares. A fine example is the incense burner that has a cover topped with a man tussling with a lion. The man is forcing open the mouth of the beast, which creates the hole where the smoke escapes.

Changsha wares appear to have been popular in both domestic and overseas markets. Significant quantities have been excavated at the port of Yangzhou, where they must have been stored before being shipped. They have also been found in large amounts in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia.

OTHER CERAMICS

In addition to Changsha wares for the wider market, the ship ferried a selection of finer ceramics, reflecting the prevailing taste in China. Such an assortment of goods was made possible by the network of waterways (rivers and the Grand Canal) which linked northern and southern China, as well as inland cities to coastal ports. The items included high-fired white wares that represent the ceramic achievements of northern China, and green-glazed stone wares which were premier products of the south during the Tang period. During the eighth and ninth centuries, Yue celadons from Zhejiang and Hebei's Xing white wares were regarded as symbols of beauty, elegance, and wealth. The Chinese affection for monochrome ceramics crystallised at this time and reached its height in the Song dynasty (960 – 1279).

The Tang cargo also contained three extremely rare blue-and-white dishes, which are among the earliest complete Chinese blue-and-white ceramics known.



Clockwise from left: Tripod incense burner with man and lion. ca. 830, stoneware. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Asian Civilisations Museum. • Blue-and-white dish with floral lozenge motif. China, Henan province, Gongxian kilns, ca. 830, stoneware. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Singapore Tourism Board. • White wares. China, Hebei province, ca. 830, stoneware. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph by John Tsantes & Robb Harrell, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. • Stemcups with copper-green splashes. China, probably Henan province, Gongxian kilns, ca. 830, stoneware. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph by John Tsantes & Robb Harrell, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Unlike the ceramics mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the production of blue-and-white wares was short-lived during the Tang dynasty, probably because it did not match the prevailing Chinese taste. The lozenge with leafy fronds, seen on the Belitung blue-and-white dishes, is a motif that originated in eighth- or early ninth-century Iraq. The cobalt used to paint the designs may have come from the Abbasid Empire. They were made chiefly for export, and the Belitung examples may have been experimental prototypes sent for the approval of Abbasid clients.

WHITE WARES

Probably the most valuable ceramics on the ship was a relatively small consignment of white wares. Comprising some 300 pieces, they were drawn from three or four different kilns in northern China. The finest were produced at the Xing kilns in Hebei province. Thinly potted and covered with a glossy clear glaze, they were likened to snow and silver. The exquisite Xing wares were imitated by the Ding kilns located farther north in Hebei and the Gongxian kilns in Henan province. Although connoisseurs of Tang ceramics ranked Xing

wares as supreme, the products of the Xing and Ding kilns were often very similar and almost indistinguishable. Attribution was made more difficult by the poor condition of some of the finds.

GREEN-SPLASHED WARES

Almost 200 pieces of white wares decorated with copper-green splashes were recovered from the wreck. Chemical analysis of retrieved shards suggests that the majority of these ceramics came from the kilns at Gongxian in Henan province. Gongxian potters probably sought to develop alternative product lines as their white wares faced serious competition from Xing ceramics. These more colourful products appealed in particular to foreign markets. Tang green-splashed wares have been found at the Abbasid city of Samarra (Iraq) and the port of Siraf (Iran), among many other sites in the Near East region.

GREEN WARES

The most esteemed green wares from the Yue kilns in Zhejiang province were likened to jade. Lu Yu, a tea connoisseur from the Tang dynasty, rated Yue tea bowls most highly in his *Chajing* (The Classic of Tea), the first monograph on tea in the world. The lustrous glaze of Yue wares was perceived to enhance the tea's colour. Yue ceramics were thus often undecorated, emphasising the beauty of their glaze and form instead.

Of the approximately 900 pieces of green wares found on the ship, only around 200 were from the Yue kilns. The rest were products of Guangdong, which consisted mainly of sturdy storage containers and a small selection of tableware. The figures reflect the limited output of the Yue kilns, which seem to have rather strict quality control. Just like the many ceramic wares found on board, there was an enthusiastic foreign market for green wares, as indicated by their discovery at sites as far afield as Samarra in Iraq, Siraf in Iran, and Fustat (old Cairo) in Egypt.

PRECIOUS METALS

The gold, silver, and bronze objects found in the shipwreck constituted one of the most important discoveries of Tang metalwork, and the first outside of China. Especially rare are the objects of pure gold: an

octagonal cup, three shallow bowls, and three dishes. Also discovered were silver boxes of varying forms, possibly used as containers for cosmetics, incense or medicine; and a richly decorated wine flask.

A total of 29 Chinese bronze mirrors were found in the wreck – one of the largest assemblages of Tang mirrors ever discovered. Such a large collection suggests that the mirrors were meant to be sold, and not the crew's personal possessions. Among the mirrors was the only surviving example of a celebrated form called "*Jiangxin*" or "*Yangxin*" (Heart of the Yangzi River), which was previously recorded in texts. It was supposedly cast on board a boat moored in the Yangzi River at Yangzhou and charged with cosmological powers. Of extremely high quality, it was also presented as tribute to the imperial court.

Many of these objects were probably made in Yangzhou, a leading centre of fine craft. It remains a mystery for whom these luxuries were intended. The gold objects might have been gifts from the Tang emperor in return for tribute presented by a foreign mission. Or they might have been used by Chinese officials to ease trade negotiations over desirable imports from abroad, such as spices, pearls and other exotic rarities. Whichever the case, these extravagant articles indicate that the masters of the Belitung ship were engaged in dealings with the elite of Tang society.

Although there are still many puzzles surrounding the ship and its excavation has raised debate, the importance of this Tang shipwreck is immense. Its extensive cargo is one of the most significant assemblages of Tang artefacts found at a single site. Not only does it serve as a time capsule of ninth-century Tang China, it has also revealed the interactions between China, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, showing an already very well connected world.

Kan Shuyi is Curator (China), Asian Civilisations Museum.



Flask. China, ca. 830, gilded silver. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Singapore Tourism Board.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION:

The Tang Shipwreck: Gold and Ceramics from 9th-century China

21 Jan - 24 Jun 2012

Gallery 2, Asian Civilisations Museum, Empress Place

This exhibition is organised by the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Singapore Tourism Board. Unless otherwise stated, the objects on display are from the Tang Shipwreck Treasures: Singapore's Maritime Collection. The acquisition was made possible by the generous donation of the Estate of Tan Sri Khoo Teck Puat. The recovery and conservation of the collection was undertaken by Tilman Walterfang.



Green wares, parcel-gilt silver bowl with rhinoceros motif, and gold oval bowls. China, ca. 830. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph by John Tsantes & Robb Harrell, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.



Octagonal cup with musicians and a dancer. China, ca. 830, gold. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Singapore Tourism Board.

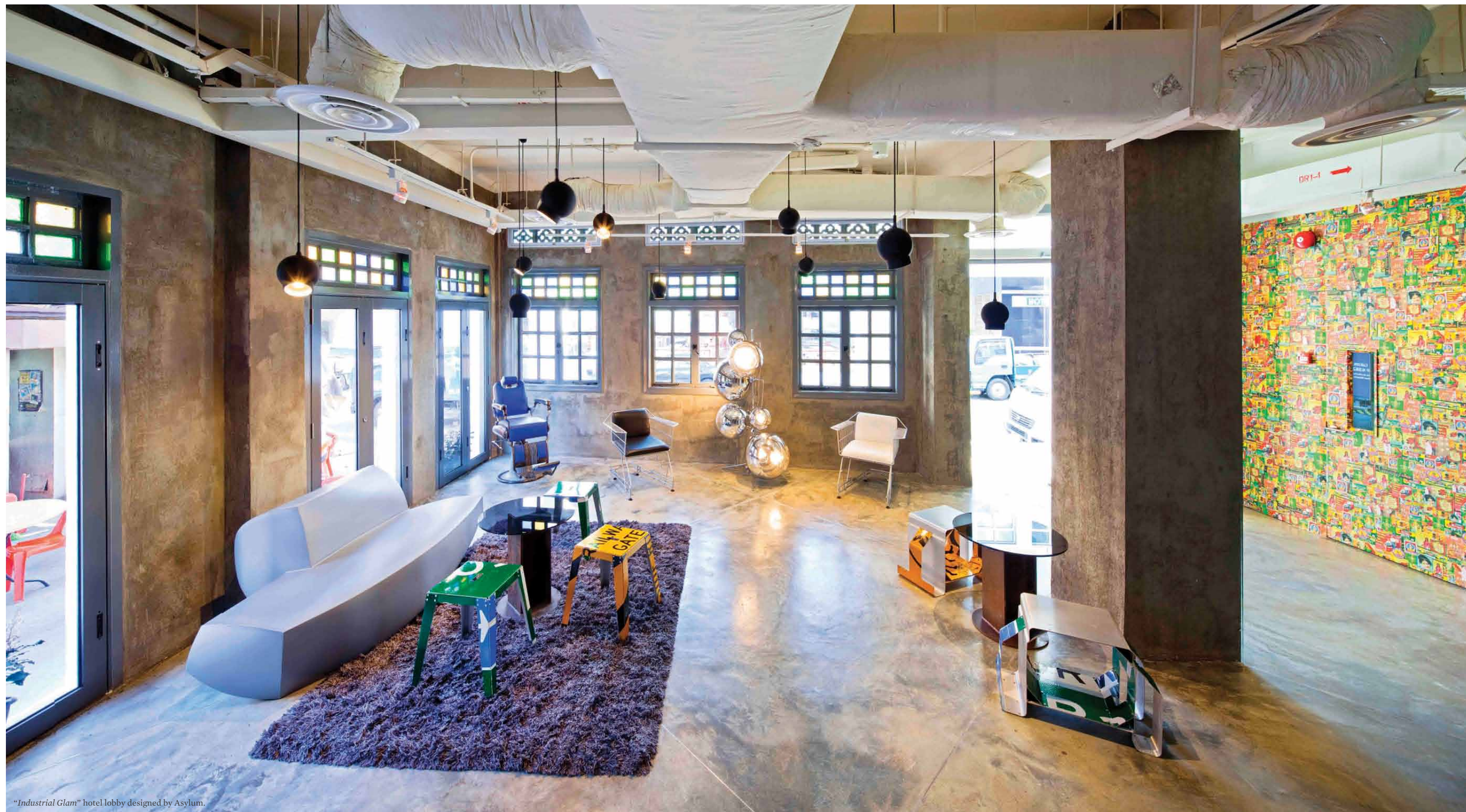


"Jiangxin" mirror with cosmological decoration. China, 759, bronze. Tang Shipwreck Treasure: Singapore's Maritime Collection. Photograph copyright Singapore Tourism Board.

TEXT BY **CHERYL SIM**
IMAGES COURTESY OF **WANDERLUST HOTEL**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RORY DANIEL**

A WANDERLUST PLAYGROUND

2 DICKSON ROAD



“Industrial Glam” hotel lobby designed by Asylum.



THIS FOUR-STORY “ART DECO” STYLE BUILDING in the Little India Conservation Area is located at one end of a row of two-storey shophouses. Believed to be built in the 1920s or 1930s and accorded the conservation status in 1989, it was once the premises of Hong Wen School and the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services’ Dickson Branch.

In 2008, boutique hotelier Mr Loh Lik Peng purchased the building and transformed it into a 29-room hotel. Retaining the original essence of the building, the hip and playful Wanderlust Hotel attempts to reconnect visitors and guests with their childhood.

“I can still recall the sense of adventure, fun and thrill of exploring the world when I first travelled as a child but as an adult we get a little jaded. Sometimes, amazing things and original experiences get lost in the fog of our worldliness. With Wanderlust, it is my attempt at making that adult world into a fun playground once again,” said Mr Loh.



OLD CHARM WITH A NEW TWIST

The building was very well maintained by the previous owner, and the refurbishment was focused on keeping the old charm while introducing a new twist into the hotel.

Uniquely different from other two-storey shophouses in the vicinity, this four-storey building stands out from its surroundings due to its height. But it blends harmoniously with its neighbours, thanks to the floor-to-floor height alignment between the building and the adjacent shophouse.

The building has a symmetrical facade with the front richly decorated with beautiful and intricately painted ceramic tiles – an architectural expression not found in other shophouses. This original facade was cleaned and retained during the restoration process. Neutral colours such as white with grey accents were used to complement the quirky and colourful ceramic tiles. The facade’s lighting was also designed to bring focus to these tiles.

Besides the colourful ceramic tiles, most of the other architectural elements on



the external envelope were also preserved, such as the classic stained glass window panels. Several wooden window frames had to be repaired and restored.

Notwithstanding the building’s unusual facade and atypical storey height, it has an internal air well that is characteristic of shophouses, allowing daylight to penetrate all levels in the building. During the refurbishment process, new micro piles were added in the air well area to allow for a new lift core. One of the greatest challenges faced by the project team was to do so without damaging the original structure.

The building’s overall structure was preserved except for the rear, where new micro piles and steel beams were added to allow for the construction of a new roof garden and Jacuzzi on the second floor. Rows of unsightly air-conditioning units, which used to line the rear ledges at each storey, were replaced with a new system located at a corner of the roof garden, well hidden from view on the second floor. Existing staircases from the second level onwards were retained, but modified at the first level to meet fire regulations befitting the use of a hotel.

Air well.

New roof garden and Jacuzzi on the second floor.



The first storey, designed by Asylum, takes on an "Industrial Glam" look.





MUSEDESIGN.

A UNIQUE THEME FOR EVERY FLOOR AND NO TWO ROOMS ARE THE SAME

Even though the building was not originally designed for hotel use, its simple rectangular floor plates and the many windows at each level make it an ideal candidate for the creation of individual guest rooms. Each guest room in the hotel is arranged such that it is lit by natural daylight from the air well. This resulted in 29 rooms that vary in size, comprising 11 small capsule rooms on the second floor, nine mid-sized rooms on the third and nine “double volume” rooms on the fourth floor. The main hotel lobby and reception are on the first floor, together with the French restaurant, Cocotte, and a lounge.

Every level in the hotel adopts a different theme. With DP Architects leading the design process, the interior design concept for each of the four storeys was created by a different firm.

The first storey, designed by Asylum, takes on an “Industrial Glam” look by introducing industrial elements such as gold-painted collapsible gate, raw oxidised steel countertop and neon sign on tinted mirror. At the lobby, furniture ranges from trolley chairs to stools made from recycled road signs to barbers’ chairs.

Inspired by the nearby thieves market, PHUNK themed the second storey “Eccentricity”.



DP Architects’ “Is it just black and white?” theme for the third storey offers rooms clad in white with contrasting black accents.



The fourth level, named “Creature Comforts” and designed by fFurious, comprises rooms with “friendly monsters”. The spaceship in the “Space” room and the sofa in the “Typewriter” room were skilfully painted by artists Wong Shih Yaw and Shirley Ho.



PHUNK, inspired by the nearby thieves market, themed the second storey “Eccentricity”. Each capsule-sized room is simple in design and mono-coloured, with the room colour reinforced with a neon sign of a suitable song title, such as New Order’s “Blue Monday” and The Beatles’ “Yellow Submarine”. All the mono-colours converge into a graphic design in the Jacuzzi at the roof garden.

DP Architects’ “Is it just black and white?” theme for the third storey offers rooms clad in white with contrasting black accents. An element of surprise is played up when guests are led through a black corridor into contrastingly white rooms. Some rooms follow a pop art concept, while origami rooms have sharply angled ceilings representing paper folds. Guests are able

to control the colour of room lightings, empowering them to become the artist cum mood-setter of the space.

The fourth level, named “Creature Comforts” and designed by fFurious, comprises rooms with “friendly monsters” in the form of wall sculptures, room furniture or floor graphics. For instance, in the “Space” room, a floor-to-ceiling rocket sits next to friendly aliens, while the sofa in the “Typewriter” room was skilfully painted as a typewriter by an artist. The “double volume” space at this level, thanks to its greater storey height, allows an upper-deck platform bed to be placed in each room. Treated like an art gallery, every room is creatively put together for guests to enjoy the artwork and a loft experience.

GOOD ADAPTIVE REUSE OF AN UNORTHODOX BEAUTY

As one of the two Category A winners of the 2011 Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) Architectural Heritage Award, 2 Dickson Road’s resurrection is an illustration of creativity cum good adaptive reuse of a rare four-storey shophouse and old school building. Wanderlust Hotel’s unique design has also allowed it to clinch several other awards, and attracted media coverage from *The Straits Times* and various travel websites.

Cheryl Sim is Editor, BeMUSE.



THE PATTERNS
OF HERITAGE
IS A SERIES
OF ETHNIC
MERCHANDISE
PRODUCED BY
MUSEUM LABEL.

PATTERNS OF HERITAGE

The Cheongsam Series

This series of merchandise is inspired by the motifs on the *cheongsam* fabrics in Singapore's national collection. The *cheongsam*, a one-piece Chinese ladies' dress, was the epitome of Chinese identity and feminine beauty during the middle decades of the 20th century. Over the decades, its popularity rose and fell, and has subsequently been revived and re-interpreted for new generations. Initially seen as a symbol of the trendy and new, the *cheongsam* soon adopted intellectual overtones and was favoured by the sophisticated and society's elite at elaborate social functions. When it was abandoned following the success of the Communist Party in China, the *cheongsam* survived in Singapore as the garment of choice for independent, educated women.



Cosmetics advertisement, showing two ladies dressed in the popular 1930s style of long *cheongsam* with very high collar, decorated with binding and piping in matching colours.



PATTERNS OF HERITAGE

The Indian Textile Series

If you are looking for a truly chic and unique gift idea, check out this series of patterned merchandise inspired by the Indian textiles in Singapore's national collection.



About MUSEUM LABEL

Indulge in life's little pleasures at MUSEUM LABEL, the museum retail stores operated by the National Heritage Board.

The MUSEUM LABEL logo is inspired by barcodes - a necessary yet mostly unattractive feature of a product, which has now been given a meaningful, contemporary and quirky twist that alludes to one's favourite pastime - shopping!

Your support for the MUSEUM LABEL will help us make our museum programmes better!

Do you know:
Scanning the logo with your smartphone's barcode scanner application will render the words "MUSEUM LABEL"?
Try it!



SIU FONG FONG

司公春源 **MAGNOLIA** ICE CREAM FUN TO EAT - QUALITY TREAT

號七十牌門那美亞拉慶坡嘉新
藏冷理代冰
二八七四四
八二二一五
三八一三三

GUAN CHOON & CO.,
ICE DISTRIBUTOR OF
COLD STORAGE
17, JALAN NOVENA,
SINGAPORE, 11.
443782
TEL: 511228
53189



DAIRY FOODS



JANUARY 一月 歲己酉年十二月小 1970							FEBRUARY 二月 歲庚戌年正月大						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			

1970 Guan Choon & Co. Calendar featuring Magnolia products, including ice cream, Sunshine bread, bottle chocolate milk. National Museum of Singapore collection © National Museum of Singapore



HERITAGE IS
ALIVE AND LIVING
AMONGST US!

TEXT BY LOH CHAY HWEE

IMAGES COURTESY OF
NATIONAL PARKS BOARD

MUSEINGS.

HERITAGE IS INDEED ALIVE and living amongst us, literally!

Not many people realise the magnificent Tembusu tree featured on Singapore's five-dollar note is a Heritage Tree. Another well-known Heritage Tree is the towering Angsana tree along Upper Serangoon Road, near Woodleigh Park.

What are Heritage Trees? These are trees recognised and conserved under the Heritage Tree Scheme. The scheme was started in 2001 by the National Parks Board (NParks) to conserve magnificent mature trees in our landscape.

In the same year, the Heritage Road Scheme was also initiated. It seeks to conserve the unique tree-scapes along some roads in Singapore. Preservation of these Heritage Roads adds an element of permanence to the landscape, and contributes to Singapore's sense of identity, history and continuity.

INTRODUCING OUR HERITAGE TREES

The Heritage Tree Scheme was created to identify, recognise and preserve significant and valuable trees in the country's landscape. As natural living landmarks of Singapore, our Heritage Trees hold important links to our past as we go forward into the future. The scheme also promotes the appreciation of these trees.

Heritage Trees are recognised for their girth (circumference of tree trunk measured one metre from the ground), size, aesthetic, rarity, as well as social, cultural and historical significance.

Out of the current 183 Heritage Trees, 17 are located in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, including the Tembusu (*Fragraea fragrans*) featured on the back of Singapore's five-dollar note.

Reportedly more than 150 years old, this Tembusu tree has a girth spanning more than 7.8 metres in circumference and stands at a height of 30 metres. It is easily recognised by its signature lower branch.

The Tembusu tree is an evergreen with deeply fissured tree bark. The wood is durable and hardy; in olden days, its trunk was used to make chopping boards. The Tembusu tree has a relatively regular flowering pattern, which occurs twice a year – usually in May or early June and October or November. During flowering

seasons, its creamy-white blooms emit an enticing fragrance. You will not miss their perfume, especially in the late evening when the fragrance is stronger.

Another majestic Heritage Tree in the Singapore Botanic Gardens is the Penaga Laut (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), located next to the Botany Centre. This slow-growing evergreen Penaga Laut Tree is more than 100 years old. It plays host to several other life forms such as ferns, climbers and small animals. You may chance upon a squirrel scuttling among its branches as you admire the tree.

"*Calophyllum*" means "beautiful leaf" in Greek, and that aptly describes the tree's beautiful leathery leaves, with their numerous slender veins.

The Penaga Laut is exceptional as all parts of the tree – namely the leaves, bark, flowers, fruits, seeds and roots – can be used for medicinal purposes to treat various ailments such as skin disease, piles and chickenpox. The seeds produce fragrant oil that is valued by some as a natural moisturiser. This oil is also largely used in cosmetics and soap-making, or even as burning fuel. The wood of this tree can be used for heavy construction, such as furniture and shipbuilding.

The Tembusu Heritage Tree and the Penaga Laut Heritage Tree in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, as well as the other 181 Heritage Trees located all over Singapore, can be easily located as all of them are listed in the Heritage Tree Registrar on the NParks website (www.nparks.gov.sg).



Angsana Tree at Upper Serangoon Road.



Nominate A Tree!

If you come across any tree which has the potential to be a Heritage Tree, you can nominate it by simply filling up a form at the NParks' website.

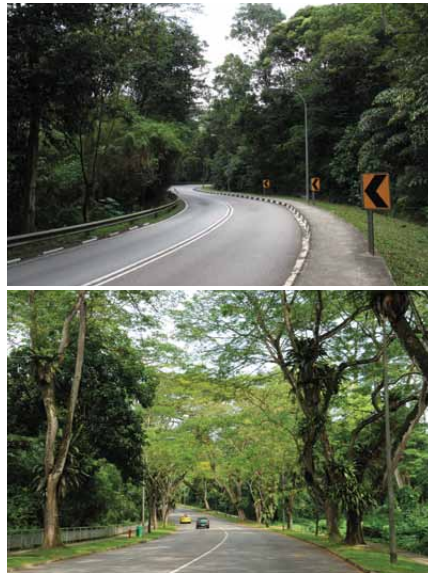
Nominated trees will be inspected by NParks' arborists ("tree doctors") and assessed by the Heritage Tree Panel to determine their suitability as Heritage Trees.



Isn't it wonderful to know that you carry an image of Singapore's Tembusu Heritage Tree with you all the time?



Anyone can nominate a tree for heritage status, and help contribute to Singapore's sense of identity, history and continuity.



Heritage Roads include South Buona Vista Road (above) and Arcadia Road.

OUR HERITAGE ROADS

Another interesting segment of Singapore's living heritage is the Heritage Roads. Currently, we have gazetted five Heritage Roads to promote the conservation of these scenic and significant tree-lined roads in Singapore. They are Arcadia Road, Lim Chu Kang Road, Mandai Road, Mount Pleasant Road and South Buona Vista Road.

Heritage Roads are easily recognised by the wide canopies extending from the big trees overhanging these roads, forming a green tunnel and providing much needed shade from our scorching sun.

Travelling along Mandai Road is a pleasant and tranquil experience, as adjoining the road is the scenic Upper Seletar Reservoir Park. The starting point of this Heritage Road is opposite Upper Seletar Reservoir Car Park, and it ends at the junction with Mandai Avenue.

Constructed in 1855, this road used to be an old carriageway that served as one of the main links between Woodlands and Upper Thomson, connecting the agriculture and poultry farming villages in the area.

Another Heritage Road is South Buona Vista Road, which begins before the junction with Storkport Road and ends at the junction with Vigilante Drive. Constructed before World War Two, South Buona Vista Road (means "a good view" in Italian) used to offer elevated views of the sea. It was on this part of the ridge that the famous battle of Pasir Panjang was fought in February 1942. South Buona Vista Road is also distinctive for its many curves. Lining the sides of the road are mainly Tembusu and Yellow Flame trees, as well as other mature trees.

VISIT OUR HERITAGE TREES AND HERITAGE ROADS!

To get up close and personal with the Heritage Trees, download DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Trail-Guides from www.nparks.gov.sg/eguides and embark on a journey to discover the magnificent trees in Changi, Fort Canning Park, Pulau Ubin and the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Not only will the trails take you to different species of trees nestled amongst lush greenery, you will also get to learn more about our parks, gardens and many other places of nature.

Also, come explore our picturesque Heritage Roads, which are the fruits of more than 40 years of care and growth. Take a stroll, cycle or drive down these roads, and immerse yourself in the beauty of the winding roads lined with magnificent trees.

As Head of Urban Gardening at the National Parks Board, Loh Chay Hwee promotes the benefits of greening Singapore to the public. She is also a member of the Heritage Tree Secretariat.

Do visit these websites for more information:

Heritage Trees website:
www.nparks.gov.sg/heritagetrees

Heritage Roads website:
www.nparks.gov.sg/heritageroads

DIY Trail-Guides:
www.nparks.gov.sg/eguides



"Green Tunnel" effect along Mandai Road, one of the five Heritage Roads in Singapore.



The coffin, carried on a large palanquin, was led to the funeral site with a long red cloth borne by relatives of the deceased.



Above: The *tau-tau* being carried to the funeral site.
Left: The *tongkonan* houses of the Toraja are among the most distinctive in Southeast Asia.

BRIDGE TO THE ANCESTORS

DOCUMENTING TEXTILE HISTORIES AMONG THE TORAJA OF SULAWESI

TEXT BY DAVID HENKEL
IMAGES BY ARDILES RANTE
© ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM

THE FIRST INKLING I HAD that I would be going to Toraja came on a Sunday. By Wednesday, I was gingerly lowering myself from the passenger seat of our dusty four-wheel-drive vehicle in Toraja. To get to Toraja, I took two flights and a 12-hour marathon drive up the coast and into the hills, along the barely serviceable highway connecting the major port of Makassar with Makale, in the heart of Tana Toraja on the island of Sulawesi, in central Indonesia.

At the airport in Jakarta, I had picked up veteran photojournalist Ardiles Rante – my trusty fixer and experienced hand who usually accompanied me on documentation trips to Indonesia for the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM). Ardie could always be relied on to drop what he was doing for a bit of adventure, and that we would certainly find, documenting a Torajan funeral and hunting down stories of the fascinating history of Indian trade textiles.

In 2009, the museum acquired an important and beautiful collection of Indian trade textiles. These textiles were produced in India – mainly Gujarat in the northwest, as well as in the southeast, on the Coromandel Coast. Most of the pieces in the collection had been found in Indonesia. Some of the earliest and most enigmatic of these cloths had been discovered in the highlands of the centre of the island of Sulawesi, the homeland of one of the most

remote and fiercely traditional communities in Indonesia – the Toraja.

The Toraja had preserved these ancient Indian textiles as sacred clan heirlooms for many hundreds of years. Some of them have been radiocarbon tested, which revealed possible dates ranging into the late 13th century. Indeed the cloths are so old that when ethnographers first learned about them in the late 19th and early 20th century, the Toraja claimed these cloths were produced by their ancient ancestors, or even by the gods. They call these cloths *ma'a*, or sometimes *ma'wa*, which means “bridge” in the Toraja language and refers to the textiles’ role in connecting the Toraja to their ancestors in the afterlife. For centuries, the Toraja believed their ancestors had produced these cloths, but that over time the special techniques needed to produce such textiles had been lost. Because of this, they looked after the *ma'a* very carefully and used them only in the most important and sacred rituals – the funerals of the aristocratic elites of Torajan society.

THE TORAJAN FUNERAL

Ardie and I had come to document the funeral of Puang M. L. Bangapadan, a highly respected elder in the Torajan community. He was the police commissioner of West Kalimantan province and a member of one of the aristocratic clans of the Sa'adan Toraja. Predicting the timing of a funeral



Top: Water buffalo fights are a major part of the entertainment during aristocratic Torajan funerals. **Bottom:** Decorating the funeral site with *ma'a*.

in Toraja can be tricky. Traditionally, funerals are supposed to happen at the end of the local harvest season in late July or August, but in modern Indonesia this is not always the case. Nowadays, all but the most conservative Torajans time their funerals for the public school holidays in June and December. This is because in a proper Torajan funeral, all relatives of the departed are supposed to attend. With so many Torajans working and living outside their homeland today, school holidays are the only time when the entire family, including school-aged children, can attend.

Ordinary Torajans have funerals which would be more or less familiar to all of us. For aristocratic Torajans, however, a proper funeral is a very complicated and expensive affair. Such funerals rarely, if ever, happen immediately after a person passes away. Preparations for the funeral can take months, even years. The body is carefully washed and prepared for preservation, then wrapped in a large cloth bundle that serves as a coffin. Since most Torajans have converted to Christianity, rites are observed but the body is not buried. Instead it is stored away in a place of honour in one of the large clan houses, called *tongkonan*, for which the Torajans are famed.

In addition to planning for and gathering together hundreds of relatives, food for all those relatives, as well as for the hundreds or even thousands of villagers in the surrounding area, must be provided. Most important, scores of water buffalo, or *tedong* (pronounced *TAY-dong*), are rounded up for ritual sacrifice during the ceremonies. One Torajan informant told me that for a funeral to be successful, a minimum of eighty buffalo, along with hundreds of pigs and chickens, are needed. Traditional Torajan funerals are so large and complicated that there are several competing clan-based companies which provide everything that is needed – from arrangement and coordination services, to cooking utensils and public address systems, to constructing and decorating the huge, stadium-like temporary funeral grounds. Local companies, mainly distributors of household products and consumer goods, sponsor the funerals and provide goods to be distributed at the funerals in exchange for advertising space!



Top: An old Indian-made *ma'a* with dancing ladies motif. Gujarat, India, 15th century. Probably acquired in Toraja. Cotton; block printed, mordant and resist dyed. Asian Civilisations Museum. 2009-02070. 108 x 541 cm. **Bottom:** Pak Yuris showing off an heirloom made during his father's time. Behind him was a reproduction of the famous textiles with dancing ladies motif, which are amongst the most prized old Indian export cloths.

The expense of these funerals is staggering: one buffalo can cost more than S\$1,500, and the clans compete to see which can sacrifice the most animals. The costs are so prohibitive that almost all aristocratic Torajans breed and rear buffalo. The clans have also developed a carefully orchestrated barter system to ensure that sufficient animals can be obtained when they are needed. Perhaps the greatest expense is the *tedong bonga*, or “flower” buffalo, a relatively rare albino of the species. These can command 10 or even 15 times the price of a normal buffalo, but the sacrifice of a *tedong bonga* is absolutely necessary because the spirit of the *tedong bonga* will lead the deceased safely to the afterlife.

For years the Indonesian government tried with little success to discourage such lavish expenditures on funerals, but anthropologists now recognise these funer-

als as a locally important form of income redistribution. Upper echelon Torajans exchange the huge resources expended on funerals and other staged ceremonies for prestige and status within the wider society. Commoners from the surrounding villages, meanwhile, benefit from gifts of food, clothing and other items. While the funeral commemorates the death of an important member of the aristocracy, the Torajan funeral is rarely a solemn affair. Most of the activities serve as entertainment and spectacle for the guests. The names of donor families who contributed money or resources for the funeral are announced, and they are thanked. There is a good deal of pageantry, music, dancing, and even lucky draws. Cockfights, as well as buffalo fights, are staged. The buffalo fights are particularly spectacular: the surprisingly agile monsters battle with unexpected ferocity, occasionally charging dangerously into the on-looking crowds. As a precaution, the ambulance of the local Red Cross stands by, ready to rush any injured to hospital.

The funeral area is an extraordinary construction. The body of the deceased is placed on a large central structure several stories high for the duration of the funeral. The immediate family of the deceased and honoured guests sit on a raised platform below. The *tau-tau*, an eerily realistic model of the deceased, is placed upon this platform with a prime view of the many activities which take place. Around the central structure is an enclosure, covering two football fields, surrounded by viewing galleries for the many guests in attendance. The best galleries are private boxes for the families of major donors and contributors. Most amazingly – and relevant to our mission – the entire arena-sized structure is adorned with contemporary versions of Indian textiles. Here, finally, I discovered in person the modern descendants of our ancient collection of *ma'a*.

TRACKING DOWN THE MODERN DAY MA'A

Tracking down the source of these modern day *ma'a* proved to be something of an adventure in its own right. Luckily, most of the excitement in a Torajan funeral takes place in the late afternoon and evening. Hence, we would go “hunting” in the morn-

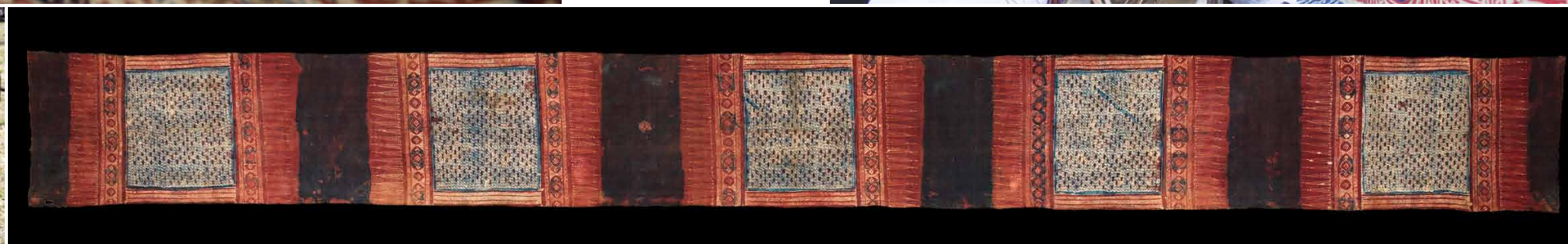


Left: Pak Tingting showing off one of the last of the really old *ma'a* still kept in Toraja. The clan intends to preserve it along with other more recent pieces in a special museum, which is currently being built.

Right: On the trail of the *ma'a*.



A buffalo, draped with a sacred *ma'a* known as a *roto bokong*, led the funeral procession.



An ancient example of a *roto bokong*-type *ma'a* cloth. Gujarat, India, 14th to 16th century. Probably acquired in Toraja. Cotton; block printed, mordant and resist dyed. Asian Civilisations Museum. 2009-01843. 94 x 553.7cm.

ings, and rush back each afternoon to the funeral site to document the activities of the funeral. After a series of disheartening dead-end visits to handicraft and “antique” shops, a break came when I discovered a newly made *ma'a* for sale, buried under a pile of cloths in the stall of a weaver at a tourist attraction outside Rantepao. After bribing the weaver by way of overpaying for the cloth, we were given an address in Rantepao, which proved to be that of a local Chinese antique shop we had visited the day before.

Armed now with a sample and ever more determined, we again “confronted” the shopkeeper. He buckled under our “interrogation” and agreed to telephone the

workshop where his cloths were produced, but only after we paid a similarly inflated price (about S\$20) for another piece of cloth. After a short interview, the *ma'a* maker agreed to bring us to his shop and show us how he produced his cloths.

We set off the next morning through the streets of Makale, uphill through the outskirts of town. We passed the last house and were soon enveloped in deep forest. Onward and upward we proceeded. And I began to wonder if, after some rather precarious adventures hunting ancient temple sites and “really old” antiques in the past, I had finally rolled the dice one too many times. Suddenly, a small man stepped out of the forest and flagged us down. Exchange-

ing bemused glances with Ardie, I took comfort in the fact that between us we outweighed the fellow three-to-one, so at least we had a fighting chance.

Putting aside our suspicions, we got out and walked a hundred metres or so into the forest on a narrow footpath. We emerged into a sunny clearing and saw the cheerfully painted home of our host amidst the verdant green. Mattius Hardin Tape, or Pak Yuris, moved to this remote site to escape the hubbub of Makale so he could concentrate on his trade. Pak Yuris made his *ma'a* using a modern, more convenient and efficient, silk-screen method, which he had learned in Bali. His father and grandfather had also been makers of *ma'a*,

using more traditional methods. Pak Yuris sold some of his cloths to local craft shops, but most were sold to the clan funeral companies. We videotaped Pak Yuris as he demonstrated his craft for us, and parts of the video can be seen at the ACM’s *Patterns of Trade: Indian Textiles For Export, 1400–1900* exhibition.

THE OLD CLOTHS, AND THE FINAL DAY OF THE TORAJAN FUNERAL

We succeeded in finding *ma'a* being used and even produced in Toraja. Another goal was to find someone who knew about the old cloths and how they were used. For this, we approached the great Tingting Sorung Allo, the current caretaker of Kete

Kesu, the largest and best preserved traditional Toraja village in the region. Pak Tingting is a certified National Treasure, recognised by the Indonesian Ministry of Culture. When we arrived at Kete Kesu, he was delighted to show off his charge to a fellow curator and cheerfully rattled off a “Who’s Who” list of notable textile art historians and ethnographers whom he had met over the years. Pak Tingting is a master Torajan architect who designed and built the massive *tongkonan* houses with their distinctive swept roofs. He even spent two years travelling back and forth to Osaka to build a house for a museum there.

Pak Tingting showed us dozens of cloths in the Kete Kesu treasury, including

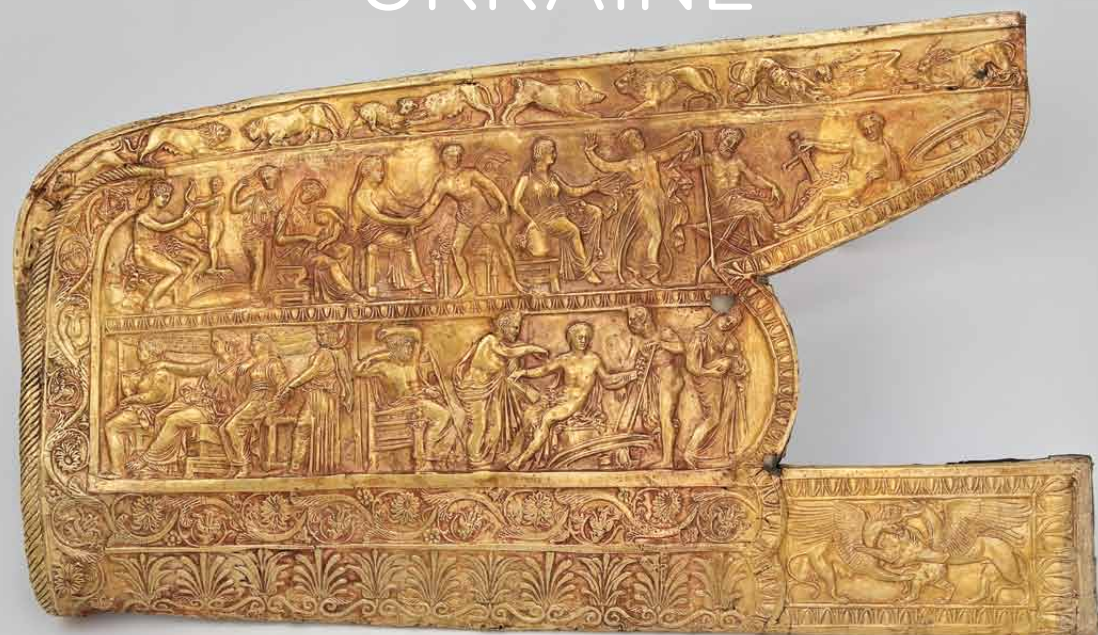
a few very old examples. Sadly, though, he informed us that the older generation, who really knew about these cloths, had passed away years ago, and thus there was no one left who knew the meanings of the cloths. Fortunately, the caretakers of Kete Kesu now recognise their importance and are gradually building a gallery to display and store their heirlooms more securely. While disappointed that much knowledge has been lost, Pak Tingting is justifiably proud of what his ancestors had accomplished. They had preserved for many hundreds of years the fragile and beautiful textiles which are now treasured objects in museums around the world. Without their diligence and care, there would be nothing to help bear witness to this extraordinary history.

That night Ardie and I made it back to the hotel especially late. Pak Tingting and his friends regaled us with traditional Torajan songs, and stories of his adventures representing his culture in Indonesia and around the world. The following day was the final day of the funeral and was marked by more joyous processions, dancing and, of course, water buffalo fights. In the late afternoon, the body of Puang Bangapadan was carried down from its perch atop the central structure and brought to the small family mausoleum nearby. A witness to almost 10 days of continuous celebrations, I had to admit, I was exhausted.

David Henkel is Curator (Southeast Asia), Asian Civilisations Museum.

GOLD RUSH

TREASURES OF UKRAINE



Gorytus cover, 4th century BCE (Scythians). Gold – stamping, embossing. From Zaporizhia region, 1954. H27.5 x W47cm. © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.

TEXT BY **WONG HWEI LIAN**

COME END-MAY 2012, visitors to the National Museum of Singapore will have the opportunity to view a spectacular collection of 260 pieces of gold jewellery, weapons, coins, household and religious objects. These treasures are on loan from two state museums in Ukraine – the National Museum of the History of Ukraine and the Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine. Comprising a wide selection of artefacts from the eighth century BCE to late 19th century CE, this exhibition draws upon the material culture of the northern coast of the Black Sea – an area that corresponds to present-day Ukraine – to present a historical narrative of the region, known to be an important contact point for various cultures over the centuries.

Given the rich and diverse material culture of the Black Sea region, the exhibition

has chosen to focus on object form and its use, so as to explore the interactions between different cultures and contrast their artistic styles and techniques, rather than to adopt the conventional chronological approach. Acknowledging the existence of different nomadic groups and settlements along the Black Sea, the display is divided into two main sections – the Nomads section and the Settled section. The former presents ten nomadic groups through a display of weapons, horse-related ornaments, pole tops, plaques, jewellery and vessels. The latter showcases coins, jewellery and vessels of the Greek colonies established around the Black Sea, as well as illustrate the Byzantine influence over the first empire in the region – the Kievan Rus' empire.

Among the selection of gold, silver and bronze artefacts, gold features prominently



Top image: Torque (left) and Pin (right), 8th century BCE (Cimmerians). Gold, faience, glass – forging, soldering, inlay. From Cherkasy region, 1984. L74 x W10.1cm (Torque), L7.8cm (Pin). © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine. **Bottom image:** Sword and scabbard with boar head, 4th century BCE (Scythians). Gold, iron – stamping. From Zaporizhia region, 1979. L65.5cm. © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.

in this exhibition. Gold not only reflects wealth and status, its durability and malleability further justifies the nomadic aristocracy's preference for the metal, as did the Greeks in the coastal towns of the Black Sea and the nobility of the Kievan Rus' empire (late ninth to mid-13th centuries CE). The earliest artefacts in the exhibition are the gold pin inlaid with faience and tiny blue glass beads as well as the twisted gold torque, both dating to the eighth century BCE. These are attributed to the Cimmerians, an equestrian nomadic group who inhabited the area north of the Caucasus and Black Sea till they were displaced by the Scythians around 700 BCE. The pin was uncovered in a burial mound, possibly that of a high-ranking Cimmerian nobleman. Its actual use is uncertain; it could have been used as a clasp or worn as a pendant around

the neck.

Of the nomadic groups featured in the Nomads section, the Scythians are well-represented by a diverse selection of artefacts in this exhibition. Believed to be an Iranian-speaking tribe, the Scythians inhabited the steppe regions north of the Black Sea from around seventh century BCE and participated actively in wars and military campaigns. Archaeological findings revealed a rich Scythian material culture, including weapons, horse bridles, pole tops and jewellery, many of which are on display at the exhibition. Several of these artefacts could have been produced in the Greek colonies around the Black Sea. For instance, the gold gorytus cover, which is one of the four found in the region, is believed to be manufactured in the Bosporan workshops in Panticapaeum, a

EXHIBITION INFORMATION:

Gold Rush: Treasures of Ukraine

29 May – 26 August 2012

National Museum of Singapore Exhibition Gallery 2

In cooperation with National Museum of the

History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical

Treasures of Ukraine

Exhibition coordinator: Brain Trust Inc., Tokyo

Greek town in Crimea founded between seventh and sixth century BCE by Miletus¹. It has been suggested that the scenes either depict the episodes in the life of Achilles or illustrate an Iranian epic. The fine details on the gorytus cover attest to the skilful workmanship of craftsmen residing in Panticapaeum. By sixth century BCE, workshops catering to the tastes and demands of the nomadic aristocracy had also emerged in other Greek towns such as Olbia. With both local Greek and Scythian craftsmen employed in the workshops, it is not surprising to see a rich blend of influences, particularly from the Greeks, on the objects in the Nomads section. Shared iconography between Scythian and Greek art is also visible on one of the highlights in the exhibition – the gold sword and scabbard stamped with the motif of a stag attacked

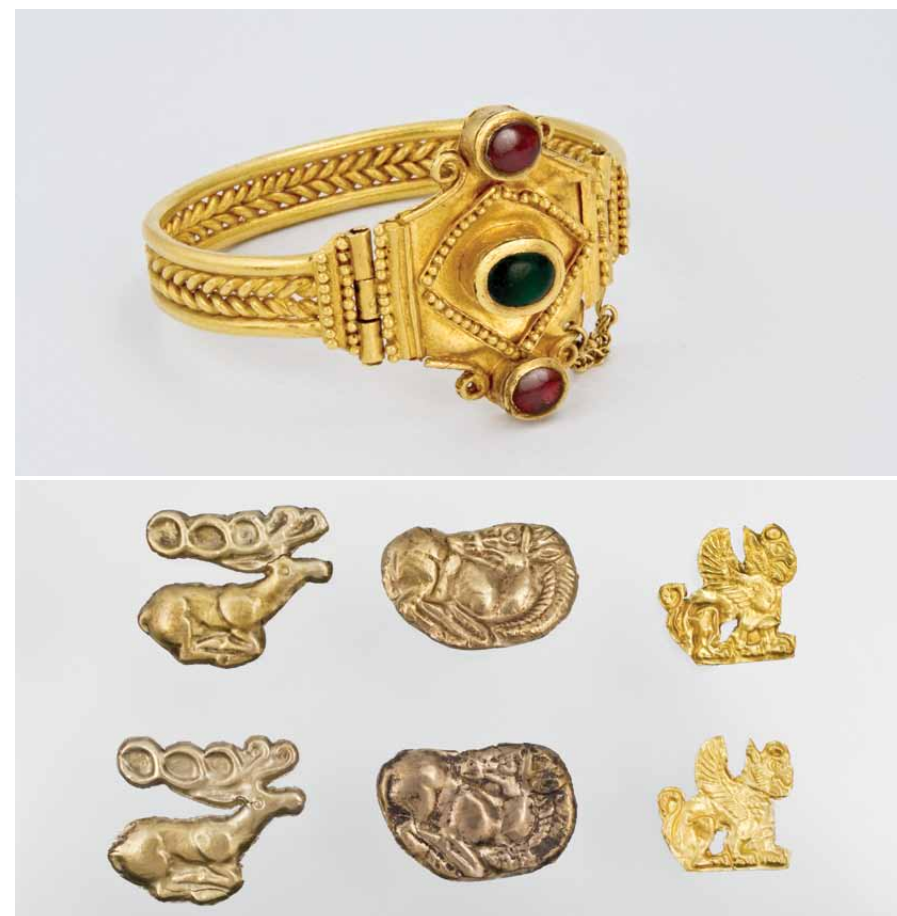
by a griffin and lion.

Gold was also used to decorate horse trappings, as exemplified by the bridle ornaments and saddle ornaments excavated from tombs. Archaeological excavations also revealed that other than the sacrifice of grooms (male servants) with torques and quivers, horses were also sacrificed during the royal burial process, thereby affirming the importance of these mares to their nomadic masters. Horses were after all crucial to nomadic success and superiority in the steppes, as these animals provided the speed, range and mobility required by nomads in their environment. Equestrian nomads such as the Scythians and the Huns excelled at the Parthian shot, a war tactic in which nomads feigned retreat and then turned back to shoot arrows at their enemies while mounted on horses.

Apart from weapons and horse-related ornaments, the jewellery and plaques in the Nomads section capture the imagination and spirit of the nomads. Notable among the jewellery display is a gold bracelet inlaid with carnelian, attributed to the Sarmatians (also of Iranian origins like the Scythians). The Sarmatians invaded Scythian territories in the early-third century BCE and were responsible for driving the Scythians into the Crimean peninsula. The red-coloured stones in the gold bracelet suggest the Sarmatians' fondness for ornamentation.

The prevalent animal style seen in nomadic art is evident on the plaques. Made in a variety of sizes and shapes, with inspiration taken from both real and mythical animals, these plaques – cast in the shape of stag, horse and griffin – would have been used on clothing, horse ornaments and weapons.

Bridging the Nomads section and the Settled section is a small selection of coins produced in Greek colonies like Olbia, Panticapaeum and Chersonesus. These coins, being an instrument of exchange, serve as a reminder of the economic relations² between the nomads and the settled Greeks. Though Greek presence in the Black Sea area has been attributed to their need for food and natural resources³, or even as a consequence of overpopulation or natural disasters back in mainland Greece, a more plausible explanation for



Top image: Bracelet, 1st century CE (Sarmatians). Gold, carnelian, glass – forging, filigree, granulation, inlay, soldering. From Mykolajiv region, 1974. D6.5cm. © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine. **Bottom image:** Pair of stag-shaped plaques (left) and pair of horse-shaped plaques (centre), 7th–early 6th century BCE (Scythians). Gold – stamping. From Cherkasy region, 1897. H3.3 x W4.1cm and H3.6 x W4.1cm (stag), H2.7 x W4cm each (horse). Pair of griffin-shaped plaques (right), 7th century BCE (Scythians). Gold – stamping. From Kiev region, 1845. H2.8 x W2.8cm each. © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.

exerting domination over the Black Sea area is the Lydians' hostile policy towards Miletus and the grim political situation within the city. This resulted in Greek colonies being established in Borysthenes (late seventh century BCE), Olbia (mid-sixth century BCE) and Chersonesus (early fifth century BCE). The colonising activity by Miletus lasted till 530 BCE when the Persians started to conquer these colonies. The Greeks also took control of the rivers, including Dniester, Southern Bug, Dnieper, Don, Kuban and the Kerch Strait, thus the trade routes. In a way, the Greek colonies of the Black Sea region connected the classical Greek world and the steppes on the northern coast of the Black Sea, leading to the creation of a unique syncretic material culture in the Black Sea region. Furthermore, immigrant goldsmiths from mainland Greece brought highly decorative forms to the jewellery through stone inlays and techniques such as granulation



Earring (left), 3rd century CE. Gold, agate – forging, filigree. From Chersonesus region in Crimea, 1981. H3.8cm. Serpent-shaped signet ring (centre), 2nd–3rd century CE. Gold – forging, engraving. From Odessa region, 1958. D2.3cm. Earring (right), 3rd–4th century CE. Gold, carnelian, garnet – forging, filigree. From Chersonesus region in Crimea, 1982. H4cm. © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.



Group of bridle ornaments, 4th century BCE (Scythians). Gold – stamping. From Sumy region, 1897. H37.7 x W8cm (Head ornament), H12.9–13.3 x W4.2–4.7cm (Cheek pieces), D21–24cm (Plaques). © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.



Teapot, c1715. Silver, wood, coral – casting, chasing, gilding, engraving.
Master Ivan Ravich, Kiev. H18 X W19cm. © National Museum of the History
of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.

and filigree, thus generating variety and excitement for the Black Sea region's material culture.

The Black Sea region remained an important contact zone for different cultures over the centuries, during which there were notable external influences on the artistic tradition. These include the Byzantine influence over the Kievan Rus' state from the ninth century CE onwards. The Kievan Rus' state founded by Oleg, ruler of the Rurik dynasty between 879 and 912, was the largest and most powerful state in Eastern Europe during the second half of the ninth century CE⁴. When the capital of Kievan Rus' was moved from Novgorod to Kiev in 882 CE, the city Kiev grew to become an important cultural centre. Then in 988 CE, Vladimir the Great who was in power between 980 and 1015 made Eastern Orthodoxy the state religion of Kievan Rus'. This acceptance of Christianity saw the Kievan Rus' court adopt the manners and fashion of the Byzantine court. The influx of Byzantine priests, artisans and architects to Kiev led to the prevalence of Christian icons, relics and ceremonial objects. This is well-exemplified in the pair of temple pendants with cloisonné enamelled decoration. Worn on the temples (the sides of the faces) of Kievan Rus' aristocrats, the pendants are depicted with birds, possibly doves that symbolise the Holy Spirit or a design with its origins from Slav art. The use of cloisonné enamelling was also a technique learnt from Byzantine masters

in the late 10th century. With the rise of the decorative arts tradition, the craft tradition in the region continued into the 17th century. A small group of decorative objects from the early 17th century to the late 19th century, produced in Kiev as well as Germany and France, are on display at this exhibition. The decorative arts tradition from Kiev is represented here through the works of Ukrainian master craftsmen like Ivan Ravich and Iosef Marshak. During this time, silver was exalted like gold. Though silver alone reflected the wealth and status of the individual, craftsmen also had the option of gilding the silver objects such that both gold and silver-gilt objects were indistinguishable.

The use of gold and its significance in the Black Sea region is an important focus of this exhibition. The value, aesthetic beauty and universal appeal of gold have not diminished with time. The gold objects in particular reflect a blend of artistic traditions and styles unique to the Black Sea region; testify to the knowledge and skills of the craftsmen; and encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cultural contexts and influences through the centuries.

Wong Hwei Lian is Curator, National Museum of Singapore.

1. Miletus, an ancient Greek city situated on the western coast of Anatolia (present-day Turkey), was known to be one of the wealthiest Greek cities.

2. Around fourth century BCE, the nomadic aristocracy had become the mediator in the supply of corn to the towns of the Bosphoran kingdom. Besides trading relations with the Greeks, the Scythians were also well known as archers who fought with and against the Greeks. And in classical Athens, the Scythians bowmen were employed as policemen. See Edwin Yamauchi, "The Scythians: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes", *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 46, no. 2, Spring 1983, p. 95.

3. Studies have indicated that the Black Sea region was less metal-rich than expected and was also not the main source of grain. Thus both metal and grain could not have been the main motivation for Greek migration. See Gocha R. Tsetskhladze, "Trade on the Black Sea in archaic and classical periods: some observations" in *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, edited by Helen Parkins and Christopher Smith, London: Routledge, 1998.

4. The territories of Kievan Rus' state extended from the steppes north of the Black Sea to the regions beyond upper Volga River and Lakes Ladoga and Onega. See *Glory of Byzantium: Arts and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261*, edited by Helen C. Evans, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 281.

References:
Evans, Helen C. (Ed.). *Glory of Byzantium: Arts and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.

Johnson, James William. "The Scythian: His Rise and Fall." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 20, no. 2, April 1959, p. 250-257.

Reeder, Ellen D. (Ed.). *Scythian Gold: Treasures from Ancient Ukraine*. New York: Harry Abrams in association with the Walters Art Gallery and the San Antonio Museum of Art, 1999.

Sinor, Denis. *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia Vol. 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Yamauchi, Edwin. "The Scythians: Invading Hordes from the Russian Steppes." *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 46, no. 2, Spring 1983, p. 90-99.



Pair of temple pendants, 11th-13th century CE (Kievan Rus'). Gold, enamel – stamping, cloisonné. From Kiev, 1876. H5.1 x W4.3cm each. © National Museum of the History of Ukraine and Museum of Historical Treasures of Ukraine.

THE STORY OF GOLD IN SINGAPORE

TEXT BY DANIEL THAM

A SECTION OF THE *Gold Rush: Treasures of Ukraine* exhibition will be devoted to exploring the history and significance of gold in Singapore to draw interesting parallels and points of comparison with the travelling Ukrainian collection. Just as the theme of cross-cultural interaction and influence is evident in the various styles and techniques found in the Ukrainian collection, the story of gold in Singapore is inextricably linked to the broader Southeast Asian context and the migration of cultures and traditions, especially since the 19th century.

The earliest-dated archaeological finds in Singapore may be traced to the 14th century, when Singapore was a settlement under the influence of and most probably ruled by the *Majapahit* kingdom. The Javanese *Kala*-head design on the gold armband

found at Fort Canning Hill attests to this. While the armband remains on permanent display at the National Museum of Singapore's Singapore History Gallery, other examples of classical Javanese gold jewellery and ornaments will be on display at the *Gold Rush: Treasures of Ukraine* exhibition. These pieces, as well as other Southeast Asian gold pieces, are drawn from the Asian Civilisations Museum's collection to supplement the National Museum of Singapore collection on display. Collectively, these artefacts help establish the important regional context that had shaped the formation and development of Singapore's material culture.

Since the 19th century, Singapore's rapid growth as a colonial port city resulted in a confluence of local and migrant cultures.

The use of gold by different communities that began settling in Singapore illustrates this well. While tastes and preferences varied, gold was commonly appreciated for its economic and symbolic value. It was also the precious metal of choice for jewellery made especially for important life events, such as weddings and birthdays. A selection of Malay, Indian and Chinese jewellery, some of which used for such special occasions, will be on display at the exhibition. In addition, the Peranakan gold jewellery on display introduces another fascinating angle in terms of the hybrid of influences on its style, mirroring the rich and complex multiculturalism that so characterises Singapore society today.

Gold also featured strongly in the celebration of milestones in Singapore's history,

through the use of the precious metal in commemorative coins and medals to convey the occasions' enduring significance. Such commemorative items include the 150-dollar gold coin issued in 1969 on the 150th anniversary of Singapore's founding, and the pendant medallion for the Mayoral Chain of Office to mark Singapore's city status conferred in 1951. Both pieces are historically significant: the former was the first gold coin issued by the Board of Commissioners of Currency and minted by the Singapore Mint, while the latter was commissioned by the Chinese community in Singapore but rejected by Singapore's then-Mayor Ong Eng Guan, who banished it together with the Mace of the City of Singapore, which he termed a "colonial relic".

The story of Singapore gold, however, is not complete without an understanding of the history of the goldsmith craft and the many goldsmith shops that populated areas like South Bridge Road from the early 20th century onwards. Both subjects will be explored at the exhibition, with an emphasis on the process of local gold-work and the unique culture of buying and selling gold in Singapore. It thus becomes clear that while the universal appeal of gold is evident in both the Ukrainian collection and the Singapore selection, its unique place in each culture and history cannot be overstated.

Daniel Tham is Assistant Curator, National Museum of Singapore.



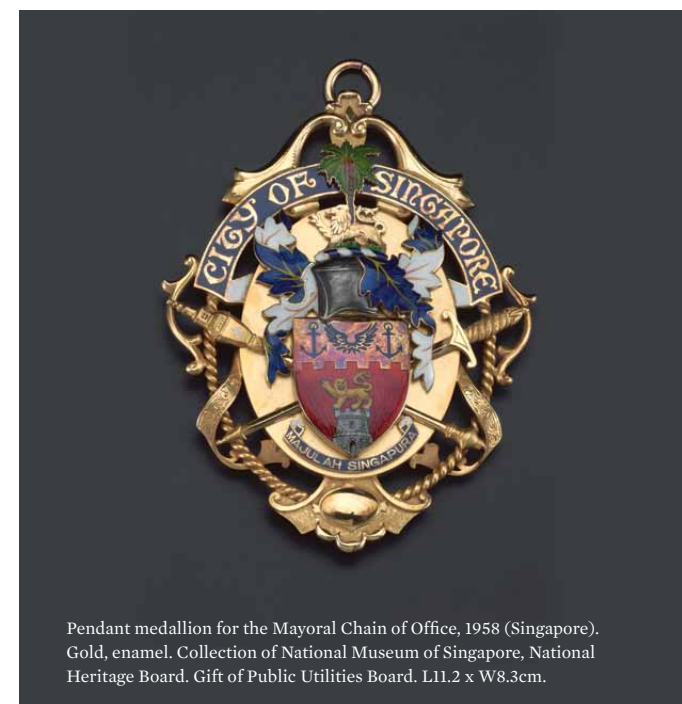
Conch shell-shaped ear pendant, 11th-14th century CE (Java). Gold. Collection of Asian Civilisations Museum, National Heritage Board. Gift of Mr and Mrs Andy Ng. L2 x W1.5cm.



Kerosang set, 19th century (Singapore). Gold, diamonds. Collection of Asian Civilisations Museum, National Heritage Board. H19 x W3.7 x D1cm, H5.2 x W3.7 x D1cm.

The earliest gold found in Singapore was of Javanese origin, attesting to Singapore's pre-modern beginnings as a 14th century settlement under the *Majapahit* empire. This ear pendant is crafted to depict the *Shankha*, the conch shell-shaped emblem of the Hindu god Vishnu.

Kerosang or brooches were popularly worn by Peranakan ladies as fasteners for their blouse. This brooch set is linked by chains and is set *a jour* with diamonds to form a beautiful bird motif with accompanying lush foliage.



Pendant medallion for the Mayoral Chain of Office, 1958 (Singapore). Gold, enamel. Collection of National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board. Gift of Public Utilities Board. L11.2 x W8.3cm.

The pendant medallion for the Mayoral Chain of Office was commissioned by the Chinese community in Singapore to commemorate Singapore's city status, conferred in 1951. The medallion features the coat of arms of the City of Singapore, and the motto "*Majulah Singapura*" (Onward Singapore), which has since been adopted as the title of Singapore's national anthem.



150-dollar coin, 1969 (Singapore). Gold. Collection of National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board. D3.0cm.

This is the first commemorative gold coin commissioned by the Board of Commissioners of Currency and minted by the Singapore Mint in 1969 to mark the 150th anniversary of Singapore's founding by Sir Stamford Raffles. The obverse shows the coat of arms of Singapore, while the reverse bears the design of the Horsburgh Lighthouse, built in 1851, on Pedra Branca island.

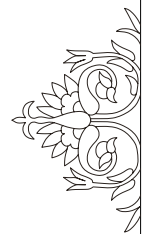


❖ The collar, sleeves, front flap and edges of this garment are embellished with machine-made trimmings, which help to accentuate the form. As the bolt is not wide enough, two pieces of fabric were joined at the centre to make this garment. The tailor had to skilfully match the patterns on both pieces of fabric to ensure that the design is symmetrical. This outfit has no slit on the left side and a press stud at the bottom can be seen if it is opened fully.

Padded *cheongsam* in silk damask, 1920s
Image: On loan from Hong Kong Museum of History,
Visual and Cultural Services Department

BE 'IN THE MOOD FOR CHEONGSAM'

AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE



Made popular in Shanghai in the 1920s, the ubiquitous *cheongsam* no longer invokes an image of an older generation in a bygone era who wore it for practical and functional reasons. Through the years, the *cheongsam* has evolved together with social, economic and political landscapes. It is now donned throughout the world, from silver screen sirens and female political figures to women from all walks of life.

IN A FITTING TRIBUTE to this iconic dress and how its evolution parallels the changing social roles of Singaporean women, over 150 pieces of *cheongsam* are put on display at the National Museum of Singapore from 28 March to 27 June 2012. Titled *In the Mood for Cheongsam: Modernity and Singapore Women*, the exhibition examines the rise of the modified *cheongsam* in modern Shanghai, its evolution, its introduction in Singapore during the 1920s and fascinating stories of iconic Singapore women who made the *cheongsam* their outfit of choice through the decades. These women include the wives of Singapore's former political leaders such as the late Mrs Lee

Kuan Yew, Mrs Benjamin Sheares, Mrs Wee Kim Wee and influential female icons such as Mrs Elizabeth Choy, Datin Aw Cheng Hu and Mrs Christina Loke. The exhibition will also feature the late legendary Hong Kong actress Lin Dai's personal *cheongsam* collection.

The exhibition is categorised into six sections: (1) The Origins of the Modern *Cheongsam*, 1920s; (2) The *Cheongsam* in Singapore, 1920 to 1940s; (3) The Golden Period of *Cheongsam* in Singapore, 1950s to 1960s; (4) Personal Wardrobes; (5) The Power *Cheongsam*; and (6) Modern Interpretation of *Cheongsam*.



THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN CHEONGSAM, 1920s presents the modernised *cheongsam* as worn by the educated elite. The style in the 1920s signified a period of liberation, with the burgeoning of new ideas and thoughts on the role of women. The *cheongsam* of the 1920s was loose; the sleeves were wide; and the overall look, simple.



This is an example of a late 1920s *cheongsam* with long and narrow sleeves made of silk damask with cloud motifs. One side of the *cheongsam* is secured by simple knotted buttons. Its loose silhouette is similar to the *changshan*, the long robe worn by men. This *cheongsam* is one of the oldest pieces in the National Museum of Singapore's collection.

Silk damask *cheongsam* with black piping
Late 1920s, Singapore
Image: © National Museum of Singapore

BY
CHUNG MAY KHUEN
CURATOR, NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF SINGAPORE (NMS)

DESIRENE HO
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
NMS - MARKETING & CORPORATE
COMMUNICATIONS (MCC)

SOO MING JIE
ASSISTANT MANAGER, NMS-MCC

NICHOLAS YEO
ASSISTANT MANAGER, NMS-MCC

IDA BETRYL CECIL
MANAGER, NMS-MCC



THE CHEONGSAM IN SINGAPORE, 1920 TO 1940s

saw a stronger sense of modernisation and the embrace of western fashion concepts such as narrower and shorter sleeves, the use of imported fabrics such as silk crepe, georgette and chiffon, as well as the use of geometric, floral and Art Deco motifs.

In Singapore, the *cheongsam*, which was associated with modernity, was a popular garb for teachers, wives of wealthy businessmen, young girls, and the Peranakans.



« This is a typical example of a 1930s *cheongsam*, made of fabric printed with geometric patterns from the Art Deco period. The use of such fabrics was extremely popular in Shanghai during the 1930s and reflected the rising influence of Western trends in the *cheongsam*.

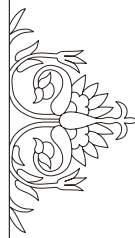
The sleeves and body of the *cheongsam* were made from one piece of fabric. The cut is relatively slender and narrow at the waist compared to the loose-cut *cheongsam* of the 1920s. The sleeves are not only shorter but also narrower, suggesting the effort to highlight the curves of the female form. There is a slit on the left side, and a full opening on the right. The collar, cuffs, front flap and hem are adorned with piping and binding that complement the colour of the fabric. Blue and white knotted buttons embellish the high collar.

Silk *cheongsam* with geometric patterns, 1930s
Image: On loan from Hong Kong Museum of History, Visual and Cultural Services Department

» This 1930s *cheongsam*, made of imported silk crêpe with floral embroidery, was worn by a bride on her wedding day. As the *cheongsam* is translucent; it is paired with a slip of scalloped edging underneath.

The use of lightweight, imported fabrics for *cheongsam* in Shanghai and Singapore showed a shift in the nature of the garment from traditional to cosmopolitan.

Silk crêpe *cheongsam* with floral embroidery
1930s, Singapore
Donated by Douglas Chua
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



This *cheongsam* collection features a nipped-in waist which became popular in the West after the Second World War. Darts on the bust and waist of the *cheongsam* help to take in excess fabric and accentuate the figure of the wearer.



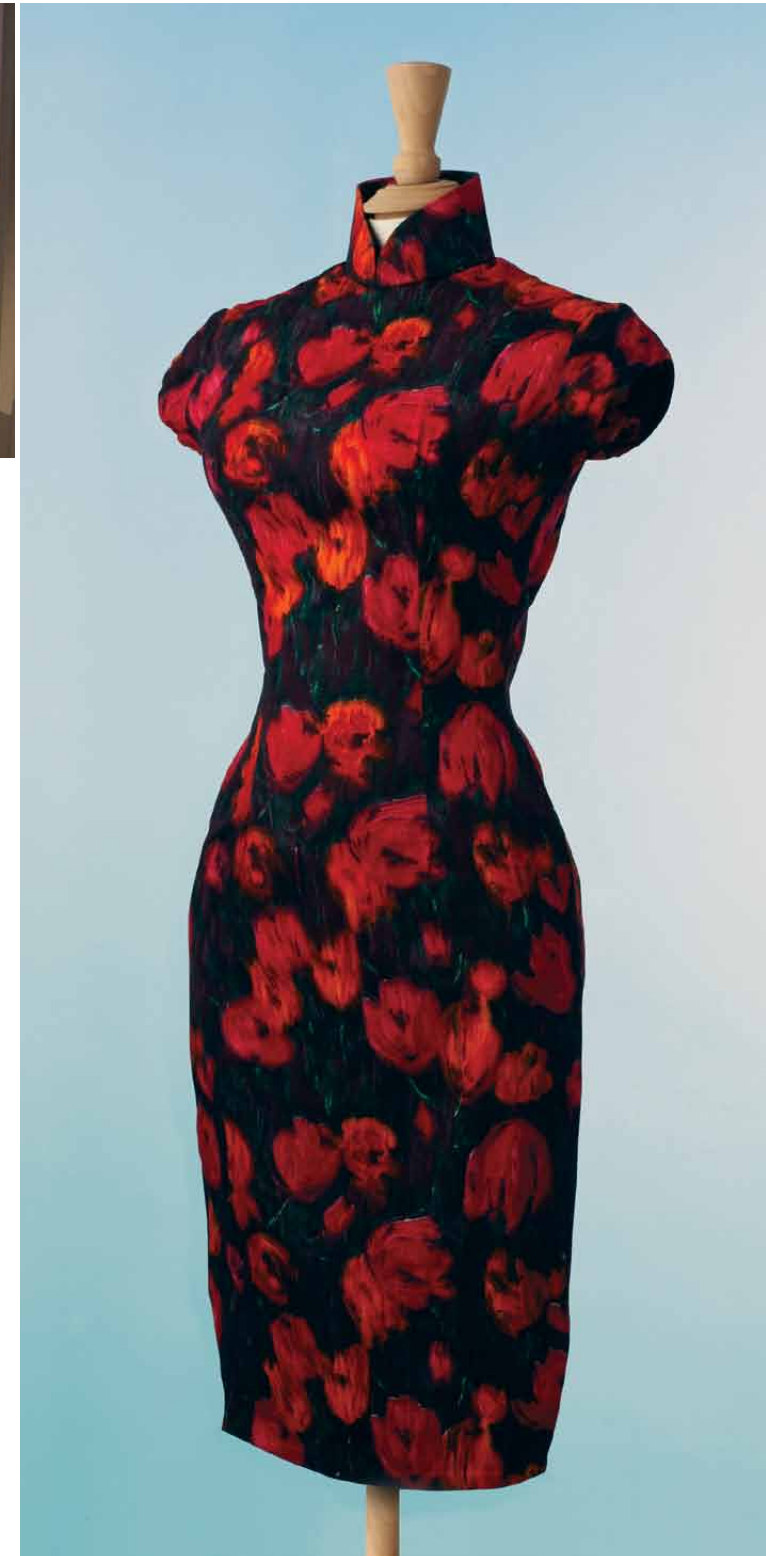
THE GOLDEN PERIOD OF CHEONGSAM IN SINGAPORE, 1950s TO 1960s

represents the evolution of the *cheongsam* to a popular everyday wear for working women, showing a significant shift in the identity of women from the traditional home-maker to the modern working female due to the country's changing political, economic and social climate after World War Two.



After World War Two, Singapore women began to place more emphasis on their appearance as their roles in society evolved. They began to exercise more control over their appearance, and would wear a corset or go on diet to fit into a tight-fitting *cheongsam* such as this.

Capped-sleeved *cheongsam* with floral motifs
1950s to early 1960s, Singapore
Donated by Jeffrey Teo
Image: © National Museum of Singapore





PERSONAL WARDROBES is a showcase of the personal *cheongsam* collection of extraordinary women including war heroine Elizabeth Choy and legendary Hong Kong actress Lin Dai.



« This glamorous *cheongsam* with a tight-fitting silhouette is fully embroidered with beads and sequins. It belonged to legendary Hong Kong actress, Lin Dai (1934 – 1964). A four-time winner of the *Asian Film Festival Best Actress* award, she was renowned for her versatility as an actress, appearing in different roles such as historical beauties, village and modern city girls.

Capped sleeves embroidered *cheongsam* with rose motif
Sequins, beads, 1960s, Hong Kong
Image: On loan from Hong Kong Film Archives, Leisure and Cultural Services Department

» This sleeveless tight-fitting *cheongsam* belonged to Mrs Christina Loke. She received her education in Australia and America before she married Cathay cinema tycoon Dato Loke Wan Tho in 1950. Mrs Loke led an active social life, and was often spotted at public events even before her marriage.

Mrs Loke, known for her beauty and poise, was frequently photographed by the media in *cheongsam*. In 1965, American fashion magazine *Vogue* listed her as one of the 10 most beautiful women in the world.

Sleeveless grey *cheongsam* with vertical embroidered floral panel in red
Wool, 1950s, Singapore
Donated by Mr and Mrs Melvin Poh.
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



« This silk satin *cheongsam* with capped sleeves and motifs of painted floral bouquets belonged to Mrs Elizabeth Choy. An active participant of Singapore's politics from 1950 to 1955, she represented a small but growing number of Singaporean women who were no longer shy about getting their voices heard in matters related to nation-building.

Silk satin *cheongsam* with floral motifs
1953, Singapore
Donated by Mrs Elizabeth Choy
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



« The *cheongsam* with the gold sequined dragon was a popular evening outfit among Singapore women in the late 1950s and 1960s. The dragon signified strength, power and good luck in Chinese mythology. The tailor used black as a canvas to showcase his artwork of an entire dragon among clouds, which he painstakingly embroidered by hand using sequins and beads. This outfit was donned by Madam Wu Chuen Chuen for formal occasions.

Cheongsam
Synthetic, sequins and beads
1960s, Singapore
Donated by The Hoe Family
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



« This ankle-length sleeveless *cheongsam* with watercoloured floral motifs in silk georgette belonged to Mrs Irene Lim. In the 1960s, silk georgette was popular as a fabric for making *cheongsam* because it was light and easy to maintain compared to traditional fabrics such as silk.

Initially, Mrs Lim wore the *cheongsam* to assert her identity as a Chinese. Born to a Peranakan family in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the family subsequently settled in Singapore in 1928. Mrs Lim was exposed to the *cheongsam* from a very young age by her mother, Ms Edna Kung, who was often dressed in chic *cheongsam*.

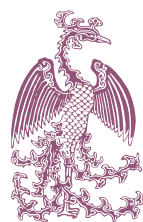
Ankle-length sleeveless *cheongsam* with watercoloured floral motifs in silk georgette
Late 1960s to early 1970s
Donated by Mrs Irene Lim
Image: © National Museum of Singapore

» This orange and gold floral *cheongsam* with a matching jacket belonged to Datin Aw Cheng Hu. The scalloped hemming found on the collar, cuff of the sleeves and hem of the jacket was an extremely popular style in the late 1960s.

Born in Rangoon, Burma, Datin Aw came to Singapore at age 13 when her father, Mr Aw Boon Par, decided to relocate his business, *Eun Aun Tong*, from Burma to Singapore. In 1931, Datin Aw married Dato Lee Chee San who was subsequently appointed the Managing Director of the family-run Chung Khiaw Bank in 1950.

Orange and gold floral *cheongsam* in French lace and a matching jacket
Late 1960s to 1970s, Singapore
Donated by Judy Lee
Image: © National Museum of Singapore





THE POWER CHEONGSAM section showcases a collection of *cheongsam* belonging to the wives of Singapore's political leaders. This collection is on display at the museum for the first time.



This sleeveless mid-calf-length *cheongsam* with geometric motifs belongs to Madam Yeo Seh Geok, wife of late former President Dr Benjamin Sheares (1907 – 1981). Besides wearing lace and silk *cheongsam* for formal public events, Mrs Sheares seem to favour *cheongsam* carrying pop art motifs (such as this *cheongsam*) for day wear, with her hair in the popular bouffant style of that period.

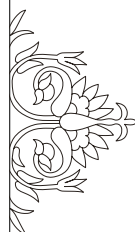
Sleeveless *cheongsam* with geometric motifs
Jersey, 1970s, Singapore
On loan from Ms Constance Sheares
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



MUSEINGS.



The *cheongsam* presented include those worn by the wives of Singapore's former Head-of-States, such as Mrs Benjamin Sheares (1917 –); Mrs Wee Kim Wee (1916 –); the late Mrs Ong Teng Cheong (1937 – 1999); and the late Madam Kwa Geok Choo (1920 – 2010), wife of Singapore's former Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew (1923 –). These prominent ladies considered the *cheongsam* to be both elegant and dignified, and hence an appropriate attire for their public roles.



This ankle-length apricot *cheongsam* with lace belongs to Mrs Wee Kim Wee. She wore this *cheongsam* when Queen Elizabeth II visited Singapore in 1989. Mrs Wee is always elegantly dressed in *cheongsam* at public events. It was observed that she began to wear the *cheongsam* when the late former President Dr Wee Kim Wee (1915 – 2005) and herself picked up ballroom dancing in the early 1950s. The *cheongsam*, with slits at the sides, was more convenient for moving around on the dance floor.

Ankle-length apricot *cheongsam* in lace
Late 1980s, Singapore
On loan from Mrs Wee Kim Wee
Image: © National Museum of Singapore

⤴ This ankle-length sleeveless brocade *cheongsam* belonged to the late Mrs Lee Kuan Yew. She wore this *cheongsam* on several occasions, such as Mr Lee Kuan Yew's 80th birthday in 2003. Mrs Lee was the pillar of strength in the family and she symbolised the virtuous wife who not only took care of the family but also had a career of her own. Her taste was simple, quiet and elegant.

Sleeveless brocade *cheongsam* in gold
1980s, Singapore
Donated by Mr Lee Kuan Yew
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



MODERN INTERPRETATION OF CHEONGSAM includes pieces by John Galliano for Christian Dior, Vivienne Tam, and local designers such as Tan Yoong, Francis Cheong and Tan Sheau Yun.



This black number incorporates traditional elements of the *cheongsam* into the modern dress. Decorated with satin piping and floral embroidery, the lace trimmings embellishing the side of the dress and the hem are reminiscent of the slip worn under *cheongsam* of the 1930s.

A capped-sleeved *cheongsam* in nylon
By Vivienne Tam, 2002, New York
Image: © National Museum of Singapore



THE EXHIBITION CONCLUDES WITH A TAILOR'S ROOM filled with artefacts. The displays range from tailor shop boxes and *cheongsam* paper patterns, to old photographs of tailors and seamstresses and footage of a tailor making the *cheongsam*.

⤴ Instead of paper bags, *cheongsam* would be packed into tailor shop boxes.



COFFEE WITH LEE WEN

LEE WEN IS ONE OF SINGAPORE'S most internationally recognised contemporary artists. His earliest known work titled "A *Waking Dream*", a book of original poetry and drawings, was published in Singapore in 1981. A multidisciplinary artist and a pioneer in the field of performance art in Singapore, Lee Wen is best known for his *Yellow Man* series of works. He is a member of The Artists Village, a local contemporary art association founded in 1988 by artist Tang Da Wu and Blackmarket, an international performance art collective. Lee Wen also co-founded Future of Imagination and R.I.T.E.S, a series of international performance art festival and events here in Singapore.

In March 2012, **Khairuddin Hori [KH]**, Senior Curator of the Singapore Art Museum, met Lee Wen [LW] over coffee in Singapore's Little India for a little chat about his art practice in anticipation of *Lucid Dreams in the Reverie of the Real*, the artist's first solo exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum from 20 April to 10 June 2012. Below is an excerpt of that conversation.

KH: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AS AN ARTIST IN SOCIETY?

LW: In many ways, I try to address the tension of between being an individual and belonging to a society. Artists are people who are sensitive to this tension, and hence, there could always be a lot of contradictions on what positions an artist takes. The challenge is to be part of this society and yet have the freedom to become an individual and diverge into a different direction which might not be consistent with what the society expects out of an individual. But through art-making, an artist finds resolution to these contradictions. This is one of the main roles I see of an artist.

KH: DID YOU HAVE THIS IDEA WHEN YOU FIRST DECIDED TO BECOME AN ARTIST?

LW: No. This thinking comes after working for many years and looking at what other people (and artists) do as well.

One of the things that I kept bringing up is the novel, *I am Asher Lev* by Jewish writer Chaim Potok. It speaks of a Jewish artist, a painter, coming from a conservative Jewish family who painted Jesus Christ and the crucifixion. As I understand, this is not allowed in the strict Jewish tradition and its social environment. I could identify with what the artist (Asher Lev) went through.

Every one of us (artists) faces many contradictions with society and we express these contradictions through works of art. From the time that I read this book, I have often returned to it to be reconciled with what I am doing as an artist.

KH: WHAT DID YOU INTEND TO DO WHEN YOU FIRST BEGAN AS AN ARTIST?

LW: I always see Singapore as facing the globalised situation of a multicultural environment. And although I have very personal attachments to philosophy in terms of Buddhist ideas, I refuse to subscribe to any religious commitments because I feel it is not necessary. I began to see the world based on a more comparative and combined religious worldview rather than subscribing to one alone. In my growing up years, there was a very strong Christian conversion with people around me and I felt very alienated by it. Even today, there seem to be a lot of fundamentalism going on which all the more makes me feel the need to say that we shouldn't be so engrossed in taking a conclusive position of the right versus wrong. We have to be more open to every point of view.

KH: THE GENERATION OF LOCAL ARTISTS BEFORE YOU WERE QUITE INFLUENCED BY THE 'WESTERN' MODERNIST APPROACH IN ART-MAKING. AND WHEN THE ARTISTS VILLAGE, WHICH YOU ARE A PART OF, WAS FORMED IN 1988, ARTISTS SEEM TO BECOME MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN SUBJECTS SUCH AS GENDER, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES.

LW: When I look back, I feel that it is not just them (the generation before) that made 'art for art's sake'. Even when we deal with issues, we are still working from the artists' perspective. This is the reason why, a lot of times, we the artists from The Artists Village iterated that we are not activists. As artists, we have rights to speak

about issues and we speak of issues from the human perspective and not necessarily as social or political activists. The activism comes in a sense where we are trying to give more space and platform for such issues to be discussed in public and from the artists' point of view.

KH: HAVE YOU OBSERVED THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS YOUR WORKS? DO YOU THINK THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN TRYING TO CONVEY?

LW: Up to a certain point, one realises that because of the shifting contexts of things, it has to ultimately come back to one's own decisions as artists. When I work in public spaces, for example, I would never know the kind of audience to expect. And in relation to restrictions and freedom, do we bring it down to the lowest denomination of understanding? And of course, the public has rights to say that they do not want certain types of art to be seen or allowed in public. But as artists, you would also want the freedom to be able to do what you want and express the issues that irks you on the inside. At the end of the day, it comes back to ourselves.

Sometimes, members of the general public seem to be able to understand my work better than artists or people that have studied art. It is all in the attitude of the perceiver. If they look at you with openness, they will be able to understand what you are presenting.

Let me relate a favourite story of mine. Once, my mother's friend, an ordinary 'auntie' type, came over to my mom's. My mother then told this auntie that she does not understand what I do except draw 'dragons and tigers' everyday. She then pointed to a painting on the living room wall, a blue abstract painting with a distant horizon. This auntie then said, "Oh! This is a very good painting! It looks like the water is streaming calmly to the edge of the horizon. So this painting is about peace. Am I right?" And she got it right the first time without any explanation.

I feel that the reason why we regularly receive complaints for performances and other artworks is due to complainants who



Strange Fruit, 2003.
C-Print photographs, 42 x 59.4 cm,
Singapore Art Museum collection.

often seem caught up with issues in their own world. In Queensland, Australia, when I was talking about identity and ethnicity in reference to my *Yellow Man* series at the *Asia Pacific Triennial*, a woman suddenly sprang up and protested in half tears, questioning my audacity in joking on such matters. It turned out that she was a Chinese immigrant from Hong Kong who left after the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China and that she was somewhat traumatised by the adjustments she had to make for her new life in Australia.

KH: DO YOU FEEL THE NEED TO WORK IN VARIOUS MEDIA?

LW: I have also been trying to produce an analytical way of communicating as I feel the lack of it in Singapore; this is why I spend time writing to articulate my thoughts and ideas. But when I perform, I just perform and I throw this aside.

There are things that you can deliver through one media but not another, this is why I work with various medias.

KH: WOULD YOU SAY THAT THESE WORKS IN VARIOUS MEDIA ARE YOUR 'LANGUAGES'?

LW: In some ways you can but if you look at my work from only one of these media or 'languages', you might think I am really bad at it. It could be similar to the case of a theatre actor looking at a performance artist and saying that the performance is very bad theatre or that the artist has performed a very bad piece of acting but an artist viewing the same performance might say the opposite. The artist is more likely to view the performance as part of an entire artistic practice.

My works have often been misread due to this and I feel that instead of multidisciplinary, I prefer to refer to my approach as anti-disciplinary, as with Marvin Carlson's definition of performance art as an anti-disciplinary discipline. I discard the rules and use all elements that help deliver my work with strong impact.

KH: IN REFERENCE TO YOUR NEW WORK *BEN LUO*¹, TWO CONSTRUCTED CHINESE CHARACTERS THAT ARE ACTUALLY AN AMALGAMATION OF TEN ORIGINAL CHINESE WORDS WHICH SPEAK OF 'DEVIANCY'. WOULD YOU CONSIDER TANG DA WU'S INFLUENCE OF THE LOCAL ART SCENE IN THE 1980S AS AN ACT OF DEVIANCY?

LW: A lot of people who make changes in society are often initially seen as deviants. But after their contributions start to get accepted, they are no longer demonised. We could include the founders of various mainstream religions today in this context. *Ben Luo* speaks of this deviancy, and of one that is foreign and often initially perceived with negativity.

These people bring new ideas to the status quo and somehow disturb the public order. In reality, this newness or fresh ideas are what the society essentially need. And this newness is perhaps found in what an artist has to offer.

KH: YOU COLLABORATE A LOT IN YOUR PRACTICE AND IT SHOWS THROUGH THE ARTWORKS THAT ARE PRESENTED IN THIS EXHIBITION. HOW DO YOU CHOOSE YOUR COLLABORATORS?

LW: All along, I have always said that visual arts is a very individualistic practice and its messages could often be obscure to most audiences. At the same time, I feel the need for creative connection with other people and I believe in the idea that art-making is for the community and not only for myself. Often, in discussions with other members of The Artists Village, we find that even though Singapore is small, artists often do not know of the practice and directions of their counterparts. This is the reason why we often invite other artists into our projects. As for myself, I generally like to meet people. In the past, as an emerging artist, I look to work with experienced artists and now that I am more experienced, I look to work with younger artists to keep in touch with their practice and concerns and vice versa.

KH: HOW DID SOMETHING LIKE THE *JOURNEY OF A YELLOW MAN* BECOME AN ENDURING SERIES THAT SPANNED MOST OF YOUR CAREER?

LW: The *Journey of a Yellow Man* series actually began through painting (*Where Are You Going Yellow Man*) and not performance. I started the series of *Yellow Man* performances towards the end of my stay in London in 1992. At that time, I was reading a lot and made various comparative studies between Chinese and Western art. My foray into performance art was not an act of aping of the West, something that many Singaporean artists were accused of in the early 1990s. In this case, it was a continuation of my practice, from painting to performance. With the exception of Japan that had close contact with New York and Paris due to the surrealist movement in the 1960s, artists in other parts of Asia only started engaging in performance art en masse in the late 1980s. This is true not only for Singapore but also for countries like Thailand, Vietnam and even China.

KH: THANK YOU LEE WEN FOR YOUR TIME AND PROVIDING US WITH SOME INSIGHTS TO YOUR PRACTICE.

LW: You are welcome.

» *Lucid Dreams in the Reverie of the Real* is an exhibition of Lee Wen's key works over the last two and a half decades. The vast selection includes installations, photographs, videos and documentations. Lee Wen will also perform 'live' at the exhibition during selected timeslots; and talk about his experiences and personal development as an artist covering subjects such as memories and myth-making.

Lee Wen, *Splash! No.2*, digital print on archive paper (Edition 3/5), 61 x 75 cm, artist collection.



¹ *Ben Luo* is a new neon installation work made up of two constructed Chinese characters based on an arrangement of ten Chinese characters that translates as 'nine days out of ten nights did not meet, enter cave, see big monster'. The artist came upon the term *Ben Luo* on his visit to Shenyang, China.

CLOUD NINE
BY SAKARIN KRUE-ON

CLOUD NINE
2005, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE,
CERAMIC DOGS, FEATURES,
TABLE, PLATES AND PLASTIC
FRUITS, SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM
COLLECTION

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

MUSEGALLERY.



Stray dogs are a common sight in the streets of Thailand, and artist Sakarin Krue-On employs them as a potent visual metaphor in this installation. By modelling these unwanted dogs into exquisite-looking porcelain figurines displayed in a tacky nouveau-riche¹ home setting, the artist alludes to the social inequalities embedded in the Thai society, as well as its class divides.

Cloud Nine illustrates the notion of 'empty hope', where Sakarin's street dogs can only dream of an alternative life of a more elevated status. By portraying the common strays as winged angel-like entities, yet bound by their instinctive nature, the artist presents a tragic and yet humorous parody

of Thai social realities. The work also reflects Sakarin's Buddhist beliefs of the limitations and inherent emptiness of dreams and self-delusion.

Sakarin's past solo exhibitions included *Cloud Nine* at 100 Tonson Gallery (2004) and *Yellow Simple* at Open Arts Space (2001) in Bangkok, Thailand. Other notable exhibitions in the international arena included his participation in the *Venice Biennale* in 2002 and 2009, as well as *Documenta 12* in 2007.

1. Characteristic of someone with newfound wealth but previously from a lower socioeconomic class, and is therefore crude and lacking in experience to utilise wealth in the same manner as those who have been wealthy for multiple generations.

