



**LITTLE INDIA:
A CULTURAL
AND HISTORICAL
PRECINCT**

**THE LEGACY OF
JOSEON KOREA
(1392-1897)**

**#GALLERY 10:
THE DIGITAL
REALM IN
MUSEUMS TODAY**



Front Cover

Navin Rawanchaikul. *Passage to Little India*, 2016. Collection of Indian Heritage Centre.

Inside Front Cover

Bridal Robe from Late Joseon dynasty. 19th century or early 20th century. Silk with embroidered decoration. Collection of National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul [don 4937]. Gift of Lee Sang-ryong, 2002.

Read more about The Legacy of Joseon Korea on page 27.

FOREWORD

In spite of its small land mass of less than 750 square kilometres, Singapore is composed of different estates which hold many unique and interesting stories that are just waiting to be told. This issue, we focus on the history behind several of Singapore's early estates, and how they came to be shaped by commercial and industrial factors as well as governmental policies.

Our cover story – *Little India: A Cultural and Historical Precinct* (page 4) traces the journey of how Little India developed from a predominantly Malay and Chinese district driven primarily by commerce during the 19th century into the multi-faceted Indian enclave that exists today. We then dig deeper under the surface with *SIT Houses along Serangoon Road* (page 12) to study how government and municipal policies on worker's quarters and housing were instrumental to the development of former housing estates such as Kampong Kapor, Race Course Road and Jalan Besar.

Still on the topic of Singapore's development, read about what our museums are doing to preserve the history of two prominent Singapore estates. *Dichetak Oleh: A Walk Through Kampong Gelam* (page 32) showcases the effort of the Malay Heritage Centre in documenting Kampong Gelam's development through the eyes of the printing and publishing industry, while *Celebrating Jurong and its Industrious Pioneers* (page 43) demonstrates how Our Museum @ Taman Jurong is preserving heritage by collecting social memories contained in the form of personal accounts and old photographs.

Leaving our shores, we turn the spotlight on Korea with our feature on *The Legacy of Joseon Korea (1392–1897)*, which can be found on page 27. Written in conjunction with the exhibition – *Joseon Korea: Court Treasures and City Life*, we learn more about the Joseon dynasty – one of Korea's most influential time periods, and its impact on numerous aspects of modern-day Korea's art, culture and social structure.

Continuing our tribute to the 75th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore, we showcase two lesser examined sides of the war. Nicky Loh discovers in *A Time to Remember* (page 18) how survivors of WWII have chosen to turn their difficult experiences into positive reminders to keep living life to the fullest, while our review of the recently launched Singapore War Crimes Trials web portal (page 63) examines the fates of the Japanese occupiers who stood trial for war crimes from 1945 to 1948.

Finally, *#Gallery 10 – An Eye on Tomorrow* (page 49) takes a much-needed look into the growing influence of the digital medium and its impact on the traditional museum model, as well as what the National Museum of Singapore is doing to respond to this digital challenge.

On behalf of the team at *MUSE SG*, we wish you many pleasurable moments reading these and the many other articles that we've had fun piecing together for you.

MUSE SG TEAM

Publisher

National Heritage Board
61 Stamford Road,
#03-08, Stamford Court,
Singapore 178892

Chief Executive Officer

Chang Hwee Nee

Assistant Chief Executive

Alvin Tan
(Policy & Community)

MUSE SG Team

Editor-in-chief

Norsaleen Salleh
David Chew

Editorial Manager

Stefanie Tham

Production Manager

Lawrence Low

Layout

Design Fusion Pte Ltd

Copy-editing

Rufus Tan, Hedgehog
Communications

Printing

Hobee Print Pte Ltd

Contributors

Clement Liew
Dr Anitha Devi Pillai
Fairuz Iman Ismail
Jervais Choo
Joanne Chen
Joshua Goh
Kan Shuyi
Matthew Lim
Nasri Shah
Nicky Loh
Raudha Muntadar
Ruchi Mittal
Wynnie Kwok

SINGAPORE: A BOOK OF DAYS

A NEW LINE OF MUSEUM LABEL MERCHANDISE

The National Museum of Singapore's collection, which began to be assembled from the 19th century, contains a diverse range of artefacts of historical and cultural significance to Singapore. This includes everything from treasured objects like the Mace of the City of Singapore, commissioned to mark Singapore's attainment of city status in 1951, to everyday items like a 1950s Singapore Traction Company driver's badge. Both of these artefacts, along with many more from the museum's collection, are featured in this diary. Big or small, they serve as visual and tangible reminders of important dates through the year in Singapore's illustrious history, one that continues to be written today.

The Book Of Days is available for purchase at Museum Label shops for \$28.

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LITTLE INDIA



A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PRECINCT

Text by Ruchi Mittal

Photo on this page
Little India, 2016.
Courtesy of National
Heritage Board.



01

Little India is a precinct that is not quite like any other in Singapore. Together with Chinatown and Kampong Glam, it is part of the popular trio of cultural precincts on the tourist circuit. It is also an important place for the local Indian community who visit it to eat, shop, socialise and pray.

Today, it has come to be known as the Indian precinct, but this was not always the case. In fact, Little India was not designated by Sir Stamford Raffles as an area for the Indian community in the Raffles Town Plan. Before Little India got its current name in the 1980s, it was just known as Serangoon, after one of the earliest roads in Singapore. This road was indicated on an 1828 map as the “road leading across the island”.

AN IMPORTANT THOROUGHFARE: 1819 TO 1860

Serangoon Road got its name from the Malay word *saranggong*. It is likely that this derived either from a marsh bird called *ranggong* or the term *serang dengan gong*, which means to beat a gong. It began as an important artery of commerce and transport for the plantations in the interior of the island along the route to Serangoon Harbour. This northern harbour was never a major port of call for Singapore’s entrepôt trade. However, it was a vital loading and unloading point for the Johor gambier and pepper planters. These goods would then be transported to town by bullock carts.

The road remained a buffalo-trodden dirt track for many decades. In the 19th century, the



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01. Postcard showing bullock carts being used to transport goods, late 19th century. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

02. A print titled “Rochor, Singapore”, 1866. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.



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03. *Workers at a betel nut plantation in Singapore, c. 1880s–90s.* Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

04. *Postcard titled “Kampong Boyan” showing the Baweanese kampong, 19th century.* Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

05. *View of the convict jail between Bras Basah Road and Stamford Road, c. 1870.* Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

06. *Serangoon Road, 1900s.* Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

opportunities available in Serangoon drew various communities there. Possibly the most important was the presence of waterways. The Kallang and Rochor rivers facilitated habitation, transportation and commerce.

For these reasons, many kampongs (Malay for “villages”) were established around the Serangoon area. The Chinese community congregated around the present-day Syed Alwi Road and Balestier Road areas, and were largely involved in farming and plantation activities. The Javanese lived at Kampong Java, while the Baweanese established themselves at Kampong Kapor, many of whom worked at the nearby racecourse. Kampong Kapor also attracted Indian Muslims, who worked mainly as port labourers and peons (low-ranking office workers).

Serangoon Road proper was laid by convicts who had been brought to Singapore by the British for their

labour and were held at a prison at Bras Basah Road. Many of them settled nearby after serving their sentences. Other Indians also gathered in that area to practice supporting trades. This was the genesis of an Indian district, which later extended down Selegie Road and into Serangoon Road.

Indians called the Serangoon area *Soonambu Kambam*, meaning “Village of Lime” in Tamil. In the past, lime was an important ingredient of Madras Chunam. This was a kind of cement or plaster brick that was introduced from India and used in construction work. By the 1820s, the British set up lime pits and brick kilns along Serangoon Road, where many Indians found employment.

AN ERA OF COWS AND BUFFALOES: 1860 TO 1930

The brick kilns were discontinued in 1860. After this, the development of the Serangoon area centred on

07. Postcard of a nearby slaughterhouse at *Jalan Besar*, c. 1910. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.



07

08. An Indian man milking a cow, mid-20th century. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.



08



09

cattle, which transported produce to town for sale. This area was ideal for cattle because of the abundant water from ponds, mangrove swamps and Rochor River. These provided bathing areas for water buffaloes, which were the workhorses of Singapore at that time and were used for all heavy tasks, from transporting goods to rolling roads.

Many cattle-related industries were established in and around *Kandang Kerbau* (Malay for “buffalo enclosure”). This village was located to the west of Serangoon Road and later became known as *Kampong Kerbau*. Such industries included slaughterhouses, tanneries and milk peddling.

The presence of the cattle industry attracted even more Indian settlers such as North Indian herdsmen from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the early 1900s who settled by Rochor Canal. Until the 1930s, one could also find Bengali and Tamil milkmen around Buffalo Road and

Chander Road. They travelled with their goats and cows, bringing fresh milk right to customers’ doorsteps. Another common sight was Indian women travelling from house to house, selling fresh homemade *thairu* (Tamil for “yoghurt”).

The old Tekka Market was built in 1915 at the junction of Serangoon and Bukit Timah roads as one of the first centralised sites for selling cattle produce. An important reason for building this market was so that the retail activities did not clutter up the verandas and roadways along Serangoon Road.

S. Rasoo, a former watchman at Tekka Market, remembers it as a “lively, bustling place with Indian women coming up in their colourful saris, their hair done up in buns or single plaits decorated with fragrant flowers, jostling against the pig-tailed houseboys that served the Europeans and wealthy Asians. The noise was deafening, the atmosphere



10

09. Chua Mia Tee. *KK Fresh Food Market (Kandang Kerbau/ Tekka Market)*, 1979. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

10. A bullock cart transporting pineapples to preserving factories in the Serangoon area, c. 1900. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

11. Postcard of scenes in Little India showing some of its traditional trades, 1970s–80s. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

12. Former house of Tan Teng Niah, 1988. Lee Kip Lin Collection. Courtesy of National Library Board.

13. Municipal housing along Hindoo Road, 1966. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.



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reverberating with the sound of raised voices bargaining over fresh fish, meats, vegetable and fruits”.

MULTICULTURAL CENTRE OF BUSINESS AND TRADE: 1860 TO 1970s

Wheat-grinding sheds, sesame oil presses, rattan works, rubber smokehouses and pineapple factories emerged alongside the cattle industry. Although these industries may seem unconnected, they had a symbiotic relationship centred on the wet environment with buffaloes providing the labour. Their waste products were often used as cattle feed.

One such example was *taukeh* (Malayan term referring to a Chinese businessman of good standing) Tan Teng Niah's sweet factory at Kerbau Road which used sugarcane to manufacture candies. It is likely that the bungalow which can still be seen today was part of this factory. Sugarcane was transported to Tan's factory by

bullock carts, and after the juices were extracted, the leftover fibres were reused as fuel or cattle feed.

There was a significant Chinese and Malay presence in the Serangoon area at the beginning. However, various factors helped to eventually establish a larger Indian enclave here. For instance, many Indian migrants were employed by the municipality in the early 20th century. From the 1920s, the colonial government started constructing terrace houses in Serangoon to accommodate them. These were known as Municipal Quarters or Coolie Lines. Some of these quarters can still be found in their original form along Hindoo Road in Little India.

Shops and amenities catering to this growing Indian population flourished. There were garland makers, astrologers, goldsmiths, moneylenders, tailors, restaurateurs and shop owners selling luggage, saris, spices and other provisions from India.



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14. *Devotees at the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple*, 2016. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

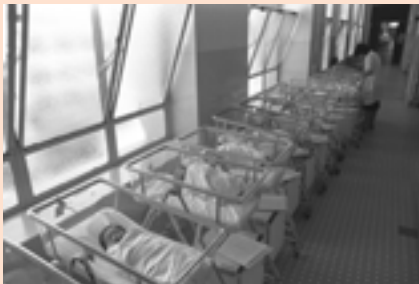
16. *Kandang Kerbau Hospital Nursery*, 1986. Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

15. *Kandang Kerbau Maternity Hospital*, 1950s. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.



THE TURMOIL BROUGHT BY WORLD WAR II: 1941 TO 1945

When the Second World War began, Serangoon Road became one of the targets for Japanese bombers. Kannusamy s/o Pakirisamy (b. 1914) used to live at Buffalo Road as a child. Speaking to the National Archives of Singapore, he recalled: "... some houses were damaged by bombs in front of Hindoo Road and... [in] Farrer Park, some people went and put camps. [...] The Japanese bombs [would] be coming three, six, nine, in V-shape. [...] Houses were all damaged."



Many people turned to places of worship for refuge at this uncertain time. The Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple was one such place where hundreds took shelter. It survived unscathed through the bombing and this was attributed to the power of the deities by its devotees.

However, other sanctuaries were not as fortunate and one side of Foochow Methodist Church was destroyed. Another casualty was Kandang Kerbau (KK) Hospital, where a big red cross was displayed so that it would not be bombed.

Unfortunately, one morning the British began moving their lorries and guns into the compound and the hospital was bombed within half an hour.

At this time, Singapore's second president, Dr Benjamin Sheares (1907 to 1981), was Deputy Medical Superintendent at KK Hospital. As there was only one other doctor at the hospital, both men stayed there and worked in shifts. Midwives were also kept very busy as there were only three nurses to look after around 200 babies.

When the smoke cleared in February 1942, Singapore had become Syonan-To. It is believed that the conquering "Tiger of Malaya", General Yamashita himself, passed through Serangoon Road. During the first weeks of the Japanese Occupation, New World Park in Serangoon was one of the 28 sites used as a mass-screening centre for the *Dai Kensho* (Japanese for "great inspection") operation to remove anti-Japanese elements within the Chinese population of Singapore, later known as the *Sook Ching* (Mandarin for "cleansing through purging") massacre.



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17. P. Govindasamy Pillai's shop at Little India Arcade, 1990. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.

THE URBANISATION OF SERANGOON ROAD: 1945 TO 1980s

Even after the war ended in 1945, its effects on Little India's socio-economic landscape remained. Many shop owners had sold their businesses to their hired hands before they fled the island. Those who survived moved up the social ladder in the post-war era.

P. Govindasamy Pillai, affectionately known as PGP, had five sari shops in Serangoon before World War II. He left for India in 1941, handing his business to a relative. He returned after the war to continue his business. While new businessmen were just setting up in the 1960s, PGP was already moving ahead and renovating his existing stores. He was also known for his generosity in using his wealth for philanthropic purposes and supporting community institutions such as temples.

Once Singapore attained full independence in 1965, there was a drive to clean up and renew the city. Early efforts focused mainly on the town area and later expanded outwards to encompass Serangoon. At this time, many residents of this area were living in dark, cramped and unhygienic conditions. By the mid-1970s, concrete development plans had been introduced with the Housing & Development Board (HDB) setting aside a significant sum of S\$4 million for Kampong Kapor's renewal.

In 1980, it was decided that the old Tekka Market had to be relocated to a better facility nearby. The Zhujiao Centre (now Tekka Centre) was thus built across the road in 1981. It was planned as one of the early residential-cum-shopping complexes in Singapore and included a wet market, food centre and HDB homes.



18. Aerial view of Little India, 1989. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.

SERANGOON BECOMES LITTLE INDIA: 1980s TO PRESENT DAY

Little India as we know it today was not officially named as such until the 1980s. This was the result of a concerted effort by the then Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) to promote the preservation and celebration of Singapore's ethnic quarters.

Today, Little India is a district that offers something for everyone. While local Indians visit the temples here and shop for traditional goods, non-Indian locals and tourists also come to soak in the culture and history of this historical precinct. Launched in 2017, the Little India Heritage Trail reveals some of the stories and memories of this area, while offering three thematic routes for visitors to better understand this area.

Go on the Little India Heritage Trail!

The Little India precinct melds the old with the new and hosts trades from the past alongside modern businesses. Through three thematic trails, discover the rich and diverse histories, cultures, religions and trades in this colourful historic precinct.

Download the trail at NHB's portal at roots.sg/visit/trails.

You can also catch a glimpse of the Little India Heritage Trail before you set off at roots.sg/learn/resources/Videos.

SIT HOUSES ALONG SERANGOON ROAD



SINGAPORE'S FORGOTTEN URBAN HERITAGE AND THE ENCLAVES OF LITTLE INDIA

Text by Clement Liew

Photo on this page
A four-storey SIT flat at
the junction of Petain and
Sturdee Roads. These
were the last SIT flats
built along Serangoon
Road, c. 1966. Courtesy
of Urban Redevelopment
Authority.



01

01. A two-storey SIT flat at the junction of Petain and Sturdee Roads. This was one of the first SIT flats to be built in the area, c. 1966. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.

02. These terrace houses were built in the 1920s at the junction of Chitty and Kampong Kapur Roads, c. 1966. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.



02

There are many stories of Serangoon Road which tell of the people, trades and festivities that make Little India an interesting and exciting place for locals and tourists to visit. Yet, there's still plenty waiting to be discovered. Some of the following accounts will not only shed light on some of the realities that we see along the streets of Serangoon Road today, but also enrich our knowledge of how Little India came to be. One of these historical nuggets is the district's forgotten urban heritage which is an integral part of Singapore's urban redevelopment and nation building story. It was during the 1920s that government quarters were built within parts of Little India to form small housing estates. It was around these population clusters that various ethnic communities began to put down their roots and create places which they would later call home.

HOMES FOR GOVERNMENT WORKERS – THE GENESIS OF A COMMUNITY

Today, there are several abandoned long blocks of terrace houses along Hindoo Road. They were once part of a cluster of residences that the government used to house

labourers under its employ, many of whom were Indians. Starting from around 1920, the government started building such quarters in the area bounded by Upper Weld Road, Jalan Besar, Rowell Road and Kampong Kapur Road.

Looking at the layout of this area, it is clear that a planned housing estate had been created in the heart of Kampong Kapur. It had two playgrounds for residents which were situated on opposite ends along Kampong Kapur Road. The provision of these play fields highlighted the nature of the arrangements made for this municipal town, which was meant to include family units. These quarters were not just large rooms that housed numerous coolies, but they also had quarters for married men with families. Clearly, this reflected how principles of modern town planning were applied here. Beyond concerns that open areas were necessary for clear air and healthy living, the planting of a domiciled community which included family units in the district provided a community catchment that could sustain the business and social-communal institutions rooted in Serangoon Road.

What is astonishing about this development is that the construction of Kampong Kapur estate was undertaken by the municipality even before the Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT), the colonial predecessor of the Housing & Development Board (HDB), had been empowered to erect pioneering townships. For this reason, the houses here were then called Municipal Quarters. Initially, municipal planners had only intended for these houses to accommodate government coolies and peons. However, by the time construction began, coolie lodgings were being developed into full-fledged housing estates.

After World War II (WWII), during the time of the British Military Administration, authorities established a temporary municipal market for this community at the site of the playground on Rowell Road. As one side of these grounds ran along the length of Hindoo Road, it was called the Hindoo Road Market. For a period of two years, it served the needs of the residents of this estate. It was closed in 1948.

In addition to Kampong Kapur, another cluster of government housing was built in 1927 on



03

the grounds of Kandang Kerbau Hospital, on the side of Kampong Java Road. These houses were established for hospital staff, as well as government employees who were above the labouring class. These were known as Government Quarters.

Half a dozen blocks of flats were also erected at Race Course Road in 1940, at the junction of Rotan Lane. They consisted of 148 apartment units. This was the first SIT project in Serangoon Road. The Race Course Road flats were used to house artisans and other municipal staff, including hospital nurses. However, these flats did not survive the decade. By 1950, they were levelled and replaced by more than a dozen new SIT flats which stretched the entire length of the Farrer Park Field. This estate was named Princess Elizabeth Flats, and is not to be mistaken for the Princess Elizabeth Park Estate at Upper Bukit Timah Road.

Both Princess Elizabeth estates, however, shared similar beginnings. They were created with funds

which were originally meant for celebrating the marriage of Princess Elizabeth. These funds were eventually donated to the municipality which then assigned them for public housing purposes. The flats at Race Course Road were occasionally inundated by flood waters during heavy downpours.

There was also a unique cluster of SIT flats, which sat at the junction of Campbell Lane (known today as Madras Road). Here, SIT managed to squeeze in several blocks of flats consisting of 24 houses. These were built in 1941, not as part of a housing estate, but to replace individual blocks of houses in the area that had become dilapidated and which required rebuilding. Today, only one block remains. It currently functions as the Madras Hotel.

Construction of SIT flats took a pause during WWII, but continued unabated soon after. The Princess Elizabeth Flats estate was extended to the other end of Farrer Park to form Farrer Park Estate. Around



04

03. *These terrace houses were home to many Indian municipal workers, c. 1966. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.*

04. *Two-storey SIT block of flats at the junction of Petain and Marne Roads, built in the early 1950s. These terrace houses featured a five-footway all around the ground level, c. 1966. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.*



05



06



07

05. *Two-storey SIT block of flats built in the mid-1950s at Petain Road, c. 1966.*
Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.

06. *This row of terrace houses at Upper Weld Road, built in the 1920s, was also called "Coolie Lines", c. 1966.*
Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.

07. *Playground at Upper Weld Road, c. 1966.*
Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.

the same time, another SIT estate was also being built towards the Lavender Street side of Serangoon Road. These were the SIT flats of Petain Road which would later become known as Jalan Besar Estate. These flats have since given way to private developments.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS

What is interesting about the Little India public housing experience is that the district featured almost all the models of flats built during colonial times – from pre-SIT 1920s municipal quarters (terrace houses) at Hindoo Road to the subsequent generations of SIT flats that the government would go on to build. The first ones were no more than two levels high. Then, during the 1940s, SIT increased the height of these flats to three storeys, and by the 1950s, the flats built at Jalan Besar Estate, along Petain and Sturdee Roads, reached up to four storeys in height.

The evolutionary progression of Little India's urban development is worth noting. While terrace

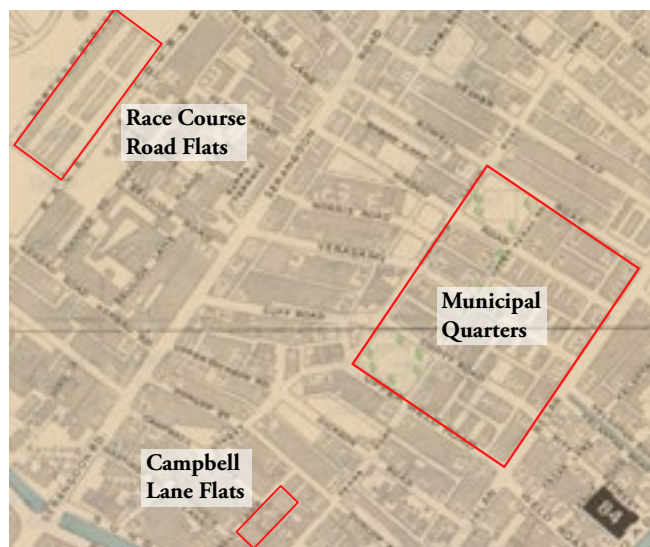
houses of the 1920s were built with internal staircases, the design of the 1940s SIT flats had evolved towards a more community-centric approach, featuring elements such as shared staircases. By the 1950s, the modern two and four-storey SIT flats at Jalan Besar Estate were being built with common corridors in the front, as well as staircases on both ends of the blocks.

At the junction of Petain and Marne Roads, there was a curious evolving design of a terrace-like housing block with a five-footway which went all around the ground level. This was a perfect example of the transition between the design of the old quarters and modern new flats. The five-footway, in this instance, was the first step towards the creation of common corridors in government housing. This preceded the coming evolutionary cycle of public flats in the 1960s and 70s, where the hanging of laundry poles moved from the front corridors towards the back of the flat.

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT



08



09

08. *Pre-war government flats at Serangoon Road.* Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

09. *Government housing along Serangoon Road in the 1950s.* Courtesy of National Library Board, Singapore.



10

COMMUNITIES AND ENCLAVES

In an area covered by abattoirs, factories, shophouses and warehouses, the municipal and government quarters, as well as SIT flats, acted as crucial population centres which gave the Serangoon Road district the semblance of a kampong (Malay for "village") of multi-ethnic domiciled communities. This is the reason why such a great diversity of communal and religious institutions remains in the district till this day. Edifices sprouted all over Serangoon Road because the communities they served were also here.

Without these institutions and communities, this part of Serangoon Road would simply have evolved into an industrial and commercial district, and not the Little India that we know today. The flats in Serangoon Road helped to sustain the community, made up of businesses, schools, hospitals, religious institutions, as well as market and street stalls.

There's much to be learnt from Serangoon Road's forgotten urban heritage. In documenting the

building of government quarters in the district across the years, one can truly appreciate the thinking and logic of Singapore's early planners and builders. Perhaps, the Serangoon Road urban experience serves as a microcosm of how public housing has evolved throughout Singapore's historical districts. With this aspect of Singapore's social-urban history being rediscovered, we can now add to our understanding of Little India and Singapore's urban heritage.

Though much of this urban heritage may have vanished from Little India, memories of these spaces may still be recovered through archival research and new oral enquiries. There are also still a few remaining housing edifices at Hindoo Road and Madras Street, where you can appreciate how pockets of housing within Little India had once been the heartland for many of Singapore's labouring pioneers.

10. *Terrace houses at the junction of Veerasamy and Kampong Kapor Roads, built in the 1920s. The compound was enclosed with an external wall during the post-war years, creating a garden space for each unit, c. 1966. Courtesy of Urban Redevelopment Authority.*

A TIME TO REMEMBER

Text and images by Nicky Loh

Mr Joseph Conceicao, 92, a former Singapore ambassador and Member of Parliament who was about 17 when the Japan bombings started in Singapore.

Mr Joseph Conceicao, 92

When we arrived for the photoshoot and video interview with Mr Joseph Conceicao, 92, a former Singapore ambassador and Member of Parliament, at his apartment in Marine Parade, he sternly asked one of the crew: “Tell me young man, why is your hair golden?” Everyone froze awkwardly for about two seconds before Mr Conceicao broke into a hearty laugh and said: “It’s okay young man. It looks good!” Age was evident, but the fire in his heart was still burning bright.

We were then invited into his apartment, which contained a hearty collection of antiques and photographs collected from his travels around the world. They were all displayed and labelled meticulously on his glass shelves – proof of the full life he led after the war.

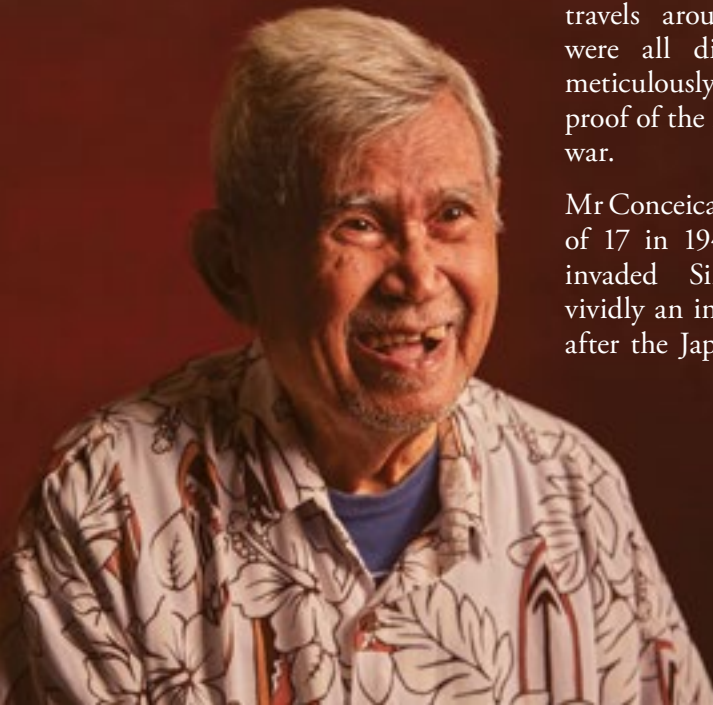
Mr Conceicao was just a young man of 17 in 1941 when the Japanese invaded Singapore. Recounting vividly an incident with his cousin after the Japanese had just heavily

bombed the Orchard and Newton areas to cut off communications:

“My cousin and I were curious and wanted to see the aftermath, so we walked across a field near our house towards the Newton Circus area. Suddenly, we heard a man gasping and turned around to see what had happened. We saw hands, heads maybe, legs, and parts of a human body lying about. That scene affected my cousin throughout the course of the war and his life.”

Subsequently, Mr Conceicao’s family felt that their home was too dangerous to continue living in, and decided to relocate to the basement of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) building on Battery Road.

“While walking there with our belongings, we saw British soldiers taking off their military uniforms. Fleeing. To our shock, when we arrived at the bank, we found more British soldiers here instead of out there fighting. This gave us a terrible impression of them. Sir Shenton Thomas (then Governor of Singapore) had said that Singapore must not fall, it shall not fall, but the next day it fell.”



At the start of 2017, I was commissioned by the National Heritage Board (NHB) to create a photo essay of World War II (WWII) survivors to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore.

My initial pitch to NHB was to shine a light on the faces of these amazing people through tight portraits on a red background. The red was meant to symbolise self-sacrifice and also serve as a metaphor for Singapore. I wanted

pensive, stark and strong portraits to do the talking. My pre-conceived narrative had a sombre tone, where the survivors would reflect on their experiences during the war. However, it was not until I met the first subject for the photo shoot did I realise that I had misjudged their ability to take something tragic and turn it into a vehicle for hope. I learnt from them that:

When you find yourself in a situation way beyond your control, all you can do is to follow the

instinct to survive. Only after a horrible ordeal, do you then realise how precious life is, and hence you try to live the rest of your life in the most fruitful and meaningful way possible.

In the end, instead of the sombre pictures that I first imagined, the photoshoot turned out shots full of smiles, reflecting the spirit of these survivors who made the best out of a bad situation and went on to live life with a passion.

Ms Mary Magdeline Pereira, 75

Ms Mary Magdeline Pereira, 75, was born in 1942 – the year Singapore fell, inside an air raid shelter in Tiong Bahru.

Relating the incidents that led up to her birth, Ms Pereira said: “My father was activated for duty on January 21, 1942. He told my mother before he left, ‘I don’t know if I’ll return.’” That very night, an air raid occurred and her family had to seek refuge inside the shelter located at Block 78, Guan Chuan Street. Inside, Ms Pereira’s mother went into labour under the care of Professor J. S. English, Singapore’s first professor of obstetrics and gynaecology, who happened to be in charge of the medical unit in the shelter. Just after midnight, Ms Pereira was born.

Unfortunately, January 21, 1942 was also the day that Singapore suffered its biggest number of casualties from the Japanese bombing. Ms Pereira shared: “I heard my father was carrying the injured when shrapnel hit him on his chest and on his face. That was how the war began for me – with the loss of my father.”

As I photographed her at the entrance of the very shelter she was born in, she said: “I think [growing up during] the war is what gave me so much resilience to overcome all odds. I went through tough times but I viewed them as obstacles to overcome. When I could not get my teaching post in Singapore, I went to the United Kingdom at the age of 55 to become a barrister. So don’t tell me there isn’t a time to learn.

“WWII has brought out one class of people – a generation with the resilience and ability to overcome all odds. That was the good part of the war.”

Ms Mary Magdeline Pereira, 75, was born the year Singapore fell, inside the Tiong Bahru air raid shelter. Tragically, this was one day after her father was called for duty and perished.



Mr William Gwee, 82

Students and researchers of Peranakan and Straits Chinese studies will no doubt be familiar with Mr William Gwee, 82, a fifth-generation Singaporean Baba (Peranakan male). Mr Gwee and his son, Andy, are prolific collectors and this was evident the moment I stepped into the house. Mr Gwee probably has the largest collection of Baba Malay (a variation of Malay used by the Peranakans) books in the world, and also collects memorabilia and artefacts pertaining to WWII, medicine and porcelain.

When war reached Southeast Asia, Mr Gwee, then eight years old, was just about to start Primary 2. Like Ms Pereira, he shared that the experiences he went through during the three and a half years of the Japanese Occupation helped provide him with an accelerated maturity.

He said: "During the bombing days, my family took shelter at my grand-aunt's house located at 97 Devonshire Road. From there, we could see Cathay Cinema, which

was the tallest high-rise building in Singapore back then. Every day, I saw the Union Jack of the British flag fluttering high up on a pole on top of the building.

"On that day when Singapore fell, I was probably the first to realise that Singapore was about to change, because when I looked out of the window at the building, I saw a different flag. It was a white flag with a red circle in the centre."

After the surrender, the Japanese chased Mr Gwee and his family out of the house and they had to take shelter near his father's friend's home near Sultan Mosque. During this time, the streets were watched by Japanese soldiers, which made it difficult for Mr Gwee and his family to return home.

"Against the advice of his good friend, my father brought us to one of the security posts and shouted some Japanese words and showed them pictures of him and his former bosses," shared Mr Gwee. It turns out Mr Gwee's father had been under the employment of a Japanese company before the war started.

"I supposed this saved our lives because after that, the Japanese soldiers stamped something on each of our arms and shouted at us to move on."

As Mr Gwee and his family walked home to Devonshire Road, he noticed that there were only women on the road. Many women they encountered along the way would ask Mr Gwee's father if he knew what had happened to their loved ones. He could not answer. Only after the war did they realise that many of the young men in Singapore had been massacred.

"The actual handing over of Singapore from the Japanese to the British took place in mid-September, 1945. On this day, Singaporeans came in the thousands and waited at the Padang opposite the City Hall building to boo them," said Mr Gwee.

A few days later, the British made the Japanese soldiers dig up the ground in front of City Hall to fill up the holes in front of the building. "A huge crowd was watching the Japanese having to work for us. You saw nothing but smiling faces. Excitement. Sparkles in their eyes. Knowing that the worst was over."



Mr William Gwee, 82, then eight years old, was about to start Primary 2 when the war started.

Mrs Helen Joseph, 88

My first impression of Mrs Helen Joseph, 88, was that of a sweet lady with a ready smile on her face. Her demeanour reminded me of Betty White of the 1980s American sitcom, *Golden Girls*. Perpetuating my image of this genteel lady were the soothing chimes that would ring out every 15 minutes from the grandfather clock in her home during our photoshoot.

Beneath her soft exterior, however, lies a back story of unimaginable bravery.

Mrs Joseph was just around 12 when the Japanese Occupation began. She recounted: “They took Chinese people by the lorries including my neighbour’s husband. We heard rumours that the Japanese had dug a hole in the Padang, laid out the Chinese men and shot them with machine guns. One by one, the men fell into the hole. One pretended that he was dead and waited till it was all quiet and then he ran away to tell everybody of the massacre. My neighbour never saw her husband again.”

During the occupation, Mrs Joseph stayed with her uncle and relatives in Government Quarters along Rowell Road in Little India. It

was during these times of hardship that Mrs Joseph experienced the true communal spirit of her neighbours.

She said: “It didn’t matter if you were Chinese, Indian, Malay or Eurasian like me. Everyone helped one another because we needed to. We had to start queuing up for food rations at 3 am in the morning. Even so, when it came to our turn, the food would have run out and the person in charge would tell us to go away. Thankfully neighbours who had queued earlier would share with us whatever they had.”

In contrast to the mild-mannered Mrs Joseph which I first encountered, her tales of the Japanese Occupation revealed another feisty and seemingly fearless side to her.

Sharing one such tale, she said: “The [prisoner-of-war] camps were near our place and we could see inside. The British soldiers were so skinny, all ribs. My sister and I would secretly pack some bread given by the Japanese into a bundle and leave them near the barbed wire fences and shout ‘Johnny*, Johnny!’ The next day the bundles would be gone.”

***“Johnny” was a term loosely used by locals to refer to any of the soldiers of western descent.*

Check out “The Fall of Singapore”, a series of videos about Singapore during World War II, at NHB’s portal at roots.sg/learn/resources/Videos.

Mrs Helen Joseph, 88, was around 12 years old when the Japanese Occupation began. During this period, Helen stayed with her uncle and relatives in Government Quarters along Rowell Road in Little India.



THE STORY (OF THE FOREST)



Text by Fairuz Iman Ismail

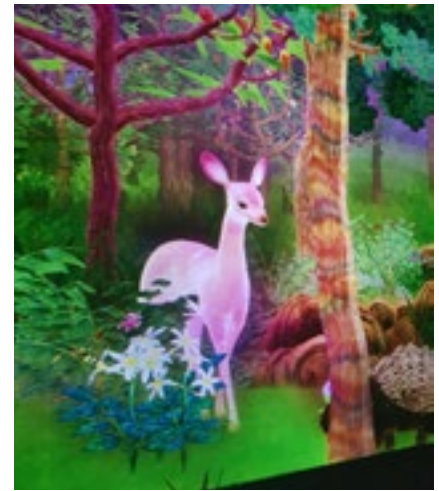
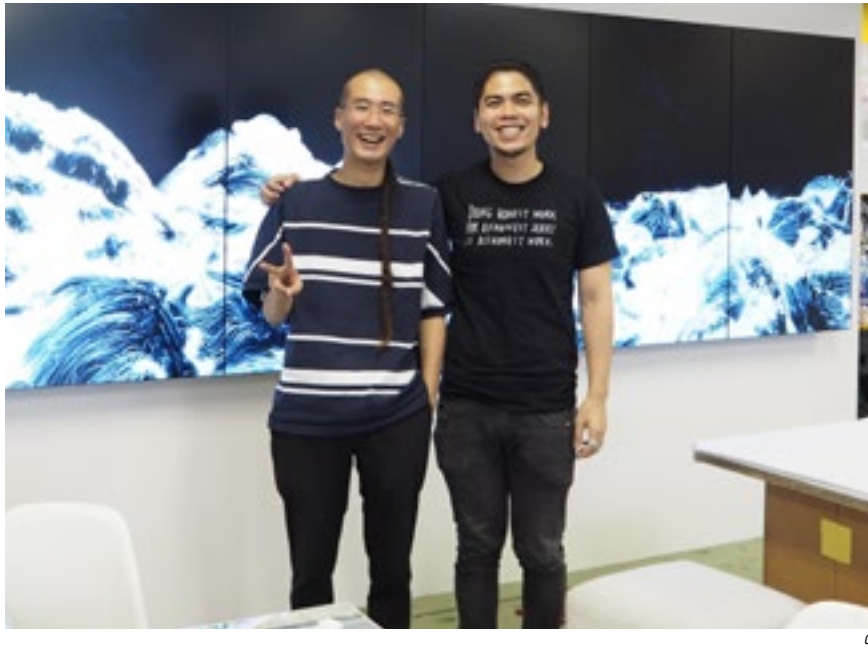
Images courtesy of National Museum of Singapore

*Photo on this page
Story of the Forest
(Lower Glass
Rotunda).*

01. *Kudo Takashi and Iman Ismail, Assistant Curator at National Museum of Singapore, at the teamLab office in Tokyo.*

02. *The three-dimensional render of the sambar deer for Story of the Forest by teamLab.*

03. *Sambar deer from The William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings.*



Story of the Forest is an immersive, larger-than-life digital installation, which initiates multi-faceted dialogues with visitors. The artwork touches on various histories – that of the site it is presented in, as well as the muses it features. The interactive installation bridges conversations between Singapore’s colonial past and its present-day modernity by means of a visual and virtual landscape, which provides an alternative lens through which to examine history.

The installation debuted at the opening of the revamped Glass Rotunda in the National Museum of Singapore (NMS) in December 2016 – the culmination of a project that took two years to create. The first conversation with Kudo Takashi from teamLab about the revamp began back in February 2014, shortly before the closing of Singapore Biennale 2013. Having successfully presented the immersive

digital installation, Peace Can Be Realised Even Without Order, which awed visitors at Singapore Biennale 2013, NMS was excited to see how teamLab, a collective of more than 300 creatives, would respond to its latest challenge.

THE 2015 NMS GALLERY REVAMP

The Glass Rotunda was first erected during the museum’s revamp in 2006 as a modern architectural response to its 19th-century neo-Palladian Rotunda, which was built when the institution first opened in 1887. In addition to serving as the main entrance to the Singapore History Gallery (SHG), the Glass Rotunda was also used to host a video projection artwork by Singapore artist, Tan Pin Pin. NMS then underwent an extensive revamp of its permanent galleries in tandem with the nation’s Jubilee celebrations in 2015. The SHG

was relaunched in August 2015, and the Glass Rotunda and Gallery 10 were unveiled in December 2016.

NMS had two main objectives when they decided to collaborate with teamLab for the revamp of the Glass Rotunda. They wanted to exemplify the museum’s continuing interest in working with contemporary art and artists, and at the same time initiate relevant conversations about both the past and present.

BRAINSTORMING ARTISTS

teamLab’s preliminary idea was inspired by NMS’s surrounding natural landscape. Taking into consideration the site of the Glass Rotunda, which was framed by the lush greenery of Fort Canning in its background, teamLab sought to depict local flora in the design of the installation. This gave NMS the idea to share the William Farquhar Collection of



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Natural History Drawings with the Japanese collective. For NMS, it was an opportunity to not only rekindle and regenerate interest in the prestigious collection, but also to reintroduce it to the public.

The 477 illustrations commissioned by Farquhar during his tenure as the British Resident and the Commandant of Melaka from 1803 to 1818 is one of NMS' most valued collections. The drawings depict the flora and fauna of the region, and were instrumental in the discovery of several important zoological and botanical species. The Chinese artists that Farquhar commissioned utilised Chinese brush painting techniques while attempting to show the perspective and naturalism of Western paintings. This resulted in an enchanting fusion of two different art making approaches.

TRANSFORMING DIMENSIONS

From the selection of 477 illustrations, teamLab, in close consultation with curators from NMS, shortlisted 69 drawings to be digitally transformed into three-dimensional form. The collective began extensive research on the selected drawings. teamLab wanted their artists, programmers, sound engineers, CG animators and technologists to understand the characteristics of the selected flora and fauna, before transposing the illustrations into a virtual biosphere.

Apart from the intensive study of the different subject matters from the drawings, teamLab also had to create a virtual landscape to house the three-dimensional inhabitants. In this task, the collective deployed their creativity and imagination to envision what the original artists would have experienced in their

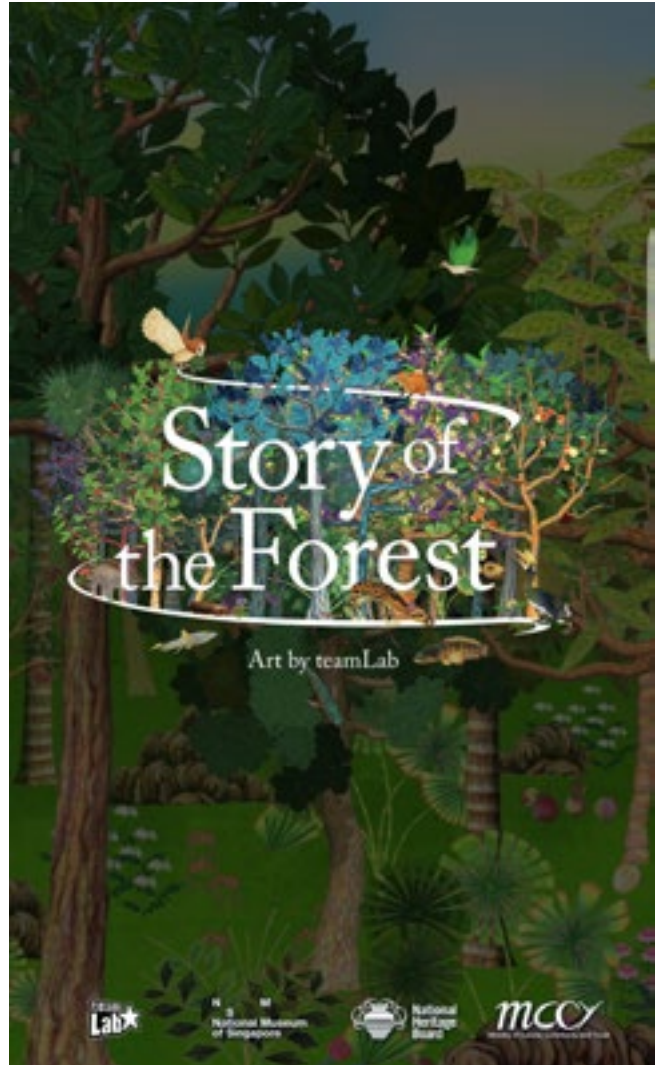
task to document these flora and fauna. Although the mediums of execution used by teamLab and the original Chinese painters are vastly different, attention to detail in both cases are extraordinary.

BUILDING UP

Before teamLab could commence installation, they had one major obstacle to overcome. The inner structure of the Glass Rotunda was not conducive to housing the technical equipment that teamLab required for the new installation. teamLabs' architects, mathematicians and designers therefore had to work with external fabricators and audio visual specialists to specially plan the internal structure of the Glass Rotunda. The proposed structure had to house 17 projectors within the internal assembly and 42 projectors along the spiral passage.



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This was the biggest installation that teamLab had ventured into thus far.

Due to the complexity of the construction, teamLab decided to first create a life-size mock up in Kawasaki, Japan to ascertain the necessary equipment required for actual installation on site. Along with the fabricators and audio visual specialists, teamLab spent a total of three weeks testing the feasibility of the structure and assessing the equipment, before shipping the structure and technical equipment to NMS.

BRINGING IT BACK

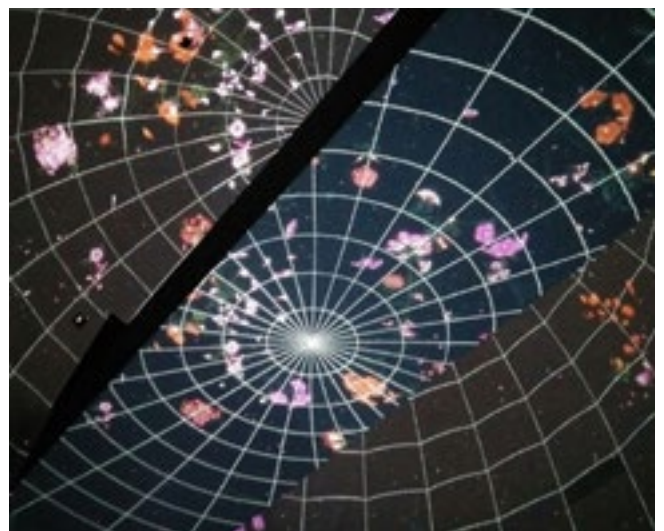
Once the structure and technical equipment had arrived in the museum, the team commenced installation work. The team was separated into two groups to oversee two key spaces – the main structure in the Glass Rotunda and the passageway.

The teams underwent weeks of groundwork – troubleshooting software and hardware to ensure that the installation would be smoothly delivered. In addition, the team working on the 170-metre passageway was also responsible for the development of a mobile application to accompany the

- 04. One of teamLab's CG animators working on Story of the Forest.
- 05. teamLab in Kawasaki, Japan for structural and equipment tests.
- 06. Team NMS onsite in Kawasaki, Japan for the preview and inspection of the structure for the Glass Rotunda.
- 07. Mobile application for the installation.



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installation. This mobile app would add another layer of interactivity to the installation, presenting additional information about the illustrations to visitors.

THE FOREST

The installation was officially opened on 10 December, 2016 to overwhelming response from visitors. The museum also witnessed a surge in visitorship as a result of this immersive installation. Visitors to Story of the Forest consisted of tourists, families and young audiences, many of whom could be seen studying the installation and comparing it to the original drawings that were located in the Goh Seng Choo Gallery.

As a result of the new installation, NMS discovered that visitorship to the Goh Seng Choo Gallery had also increased. This promising discovery is reassuring as it demonstrates NMS' success in bridging curiosity and conversation about history through modern approaches and methods.

Visit teamLab's installation, Story of the Forest at the Glass Rotunda, National Museum of Singapore. Open daily from 10 am to 7 pm. For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg/exhibition-list/glass-rotunda.

09. Projection calibration in the Glass Rotunda.

10. Projection calibration at the Glass Rotunda passageway.

11. Story of the Forest (Passageway).

THE LEGACY OF JOSEON KOREA (1392–1897)



EXPLORING 500 YEARS OF ART AND CULTURE

Text by Kan Shuyi

Images courtesy of National Museum of Korea, Seoul
and the National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul

Photo on this page
Moon jar, 18th century.
Porcelain, height 46 cm.
Collection of National
Museum of Korea.



02. *Sun, Moon and Five Peaks*, 19th century or early 20th century. Six-fold screen, colours on silk, 149.3 x 351.8 cm. Collection of National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul.

*The tree with deep roots does not tremble in winds;
its flowers are perfect, its fruit abundant.*

*Waters rising from deep sources do not end in drought;
forming a river, they flow on to the sea.*

– *Yongbi eochonga* (Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven)¹

Like a tree with deep roots, the Joseon dynasty which spanned more than 500 years is one of the longest-ruling dynasties in the world. Founded in 1392 by the military general Yi Seonggye (1335 to 1408), the new dynastic name Joseon was based on that of Korea's first kingdom, called Gojoseon. Apart from referencing Korea's legendary past, the name also signalled Yi's desire for new beginnings, for Joseon means "Fresh Dawn" or "New Dynasty".

General Yi, also known as King Taejo (reigned from 1392 to 1398), broke with the past by moving the capital from Gaegyeong (present-day Gaesong, North Korea) to a new site – Hanyang (present-day Seoul). More importantly, he supplanted Buddhism with Neo-Confucianism as the kingdom's state ideology. King Taejo as well as his successors sought

to curtail the power and excesses of the Buddhist establishment, which had become saddled with corruption.

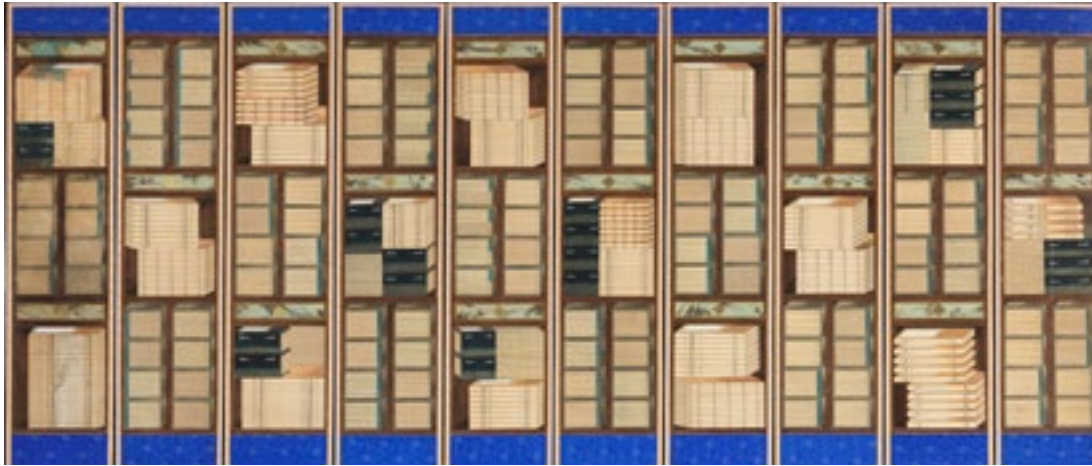
This elevated status of Neo-Confucianism distinguished the Joseon period from preceding dynasties by greatly shaping political and socio-cultural life, as well as much of the arts produced during the era. For instance, the Confucian emphasis on modesty can be discerned from Joseon porcelain which were often simple yet elegantly designed (fig. 1).

This Joseon adoption of Neo-Confucianism underscores the powerful influence which China traditionally had on Korea. The geographical location of Korea, lying between China and Japan, fostered much cultural and economic interaction as well as conflicts among these three countries. The devastation wrought

on the Joseon kingdom by the Japanese invasions in the late 16th century as well as by the Manchu invasions in the early 17th century was a turning point in Korean history.

Despite these upheavals, Joseon Korea experienced many artistic and scientific advances, especially under the leadership of several strong Joseon kings. Most of these important developments occurred during the 15th and 18th centuries, which are regarded as the two golden ages of the Joseon period. The fourth monarch, King Sejong (reigned from 1418 to 1450), is often regarded as the most outstanding among the Joseon kings. In addition to his social reforms, he sponsored many scientific and cultural projects. He is especially renowned for implementing a new phonetic alphabet in 1446. Initially called *Hunmin Jeongeum* (Korean for "correct sounds to instruct the people") and better known today as Hangeul, the alphabet project stemmed from King Sejong's desire to provide his people with a written means of expression that could be learned and used

¹ *Written in the mid-15th century, Yongbi eochonga is the first literary work written in Hangeul. The text praises the virtues and heroic deeds of the first and third king of the Joseon dynasty as well as their ancestors. This particular stanza likens the new dynasty to a tree with deep roots and a spring of deep waters, and predicts its longevity. The translation of this poem is from David R. McCann, Early Korean Literature: Selections and Introductions (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 125.*



03. *Shelves Full of Books*, 19th or early 20th century. 10-fold screen, colours on silk, 161.7 x 395 cm. Collection of National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul.

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with greater ease, instead of the complicated Chinese system.

THE KING AND HIS COURT

As the head of a Confucian state, a Joseon king was expected to possess excellent moral fibre, wisdom and erudition. From a young age, Joseon princes were subjected to a rigorous education in the Confucian classics and history in a bid to become sage-kings. This was especially important as a king's moral stature was thought to affect the stability and success of his rule. This belief was undergirded by the Confucian concept of the Mandate of Heaven, which General Yi invoked to establish the legitimacy of the new Joseon dynasty and his right to rule.

The Confucian emphasis on ritual propriety saw many ceremonies being conducted at the Joseon court. These were collectively referred to as the Five Rites of State and formally instituted in 1474. The Five Rites consisted of auspicious rites (*gillye*) which included memorial services to past Joseon kings and queens, celebratory rites (*garye*) which were performed on joyous occasions such as weddings, reception rites (*billye*) to welcome foreign dignitaries, military rites (*gullye*), and last but not least, inauspicious rites (*hyungnye*) that pertained to

mourning and funerals. These events allowed the monarchy to project its authority over officials, foreign envoys and the masses, while promoting harmony among the people.

In addition to participating in many of these rites as a representative of the Joseon people, the kings also wielded objects to signify their status and supremacy. Many of these objects such as the Sun, Moon and Five Peaks screens, royal seals, and items of clothing have become key icons of the Joseon period. The vividly-coloured screens depicting the Sun, Moon and Five Peaks (fig. 2) were seen to embody the universe and its cosmic forces. Set behind the royal throne or a king's royal portrait, these screens were associated with kingly power and signified the monarch's presence even when he was physically absent.

Such screen paintings were among the many fine objects sponsored by the king and his court. While some of the iconography were originally restricted for royal use only, certain motifs such as those with auspicious meanings became popular and were used by other members of society during the late Joseon period. For instance, folding screens which depicted books

arranged on shelves called *chaekgado* (fig. 3) are believed to have first appeared at the Joseon court in the late 18th century at the behest of King Jeongjo (reigned from 1776 to 1800), who was known for his great love of books and scholarship. Such screens featuring books, which were sometimes portrayed with scholarly paraphernalia and other valued possessions, were subsequently embraced by scholar-officials as well as the middle classes. The types and designs of other courtly objects such as porcelains and dress ornaments also shaped tastes and trends beyond the palace walls.

THE YANGBAN AND ARISTOCRATIC LIFE

Another key group that contributed much to the artistic legacy of the Joseon dynasty were the *yangban*. They formed the highest social class and constituted the kingdom's intellectual and cultural leaders. The *yangban* comprised the two orders of civil and military officials serving in the government, as well as their families. The *yangban* also referred to members of select lineage groups with distinguished ancestors such as prominent scholar-officials. In fact, from the mid-17th century onwards, many *yangban* no longer worked for



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04. Kim Jeonghui.
Calligraphy of Kim Yugeun's Autobiography of Mukso, 1837–1840. Handscroll, ink on paper, 32.7 × 136.4 cm. Collection of National Museum of Korea, Seoul.
05. Kang Huian. *Sage Contemplating Water*, 15th century. Album leaf, ink on paper, 23.4 × 15.7 cm. Collection of National Museum of Korea, Seoul.
06. *Document chest*, 19th century. Wood, 36.2 × 144 × 22.5 cm. Collection of National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

the government but resided in the countryside away from the main administrative centres.

Whether they were rich or poor, part of the government bureaucracy or not, the *yangban* were regarded as the moral pillar of Joseon society. As such, they were expected to devote themselves to the Confucian doctrine of self-cultivation and study. In addition to their pursuit of scholarship, the *yangban* also devoted much of their energies to calligraphy, painting, music and literature. Many *yangban* were highly accomplished in the arts of the brush, such as Kang Huian (1417 to 1464) and Kim Jeonghui (1786 to 1856), who were known for their adroitness in painting and calligraphy respectively (figs. 4 and 5).

The adherence to Confucian ideals and its hierarchical values was also translated into the living spaces of the *yangban*. The emphasis on the dichotomy between genders shaped the spatial arrangement of *yangban* households, while influencing the type and style of furnishings used in the respective spaces. For instance,

the living quarters of both genders were separated, with the men's quarters (*sarangchae*) located in the eastern section of the residence, and the women's quarters (*anchae*) to the west. This corresponded with the traditional notion that the east symbolised *yang* or masculine energy, while the west represented *yin* or feminine energy.

Moreover, furniture used in the *sarangchae* and more specifically, the *sarangbang* (master's room which also served as a study, bedroom and reception hall) were often designed with a minimalist aesthetic (fig. 6). Clean lines and a lack of ornamentation characterised the wooden furniture used in the men's quarters. On the other hand, the furniture and implements used by the women in the inner quarters were more colourful and elaborately designed (fig. 7).

EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE JOSEON PEOPLE

While the Joseon cultural landscape was shaped largely by the tastes and patronage of the royal and aristocratic elite, it was also enriched by the vibrant arts



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07. *Comb box*, 19th century. Lacquered wood with mother-of-pearl inlay, 30 x 29.5 x 29.5 cm. Collection of National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

08. Jo Yeongseok (1686-1761). *Shoing a Horse*, 18th century. Album leaf, ink and light colours on paper. 36.7 x 25.1 cm. Collection of National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Bequest of Lee Hong-kun.

and crafts produced for the wider populace.

By the early 16th century, the Joseon kingdom's population had exceeded ten million, nearly doubling the size it had been at the start of the dynastic period. The growth was spurred by improvements in agricultural technology which increased productivity. The capital Hanyang was not only the centre of political life but a major commercial city drawing people from all walks of life and from around the country.

The Joseon population was divided into four classes. After the *yangban*, who enjoyed the highest social status, came the *jungin*. This referred to people who possessed technical skills or professional knowledge, such as doctors, astronomers and interpreters. Below them were the *sangmin* or commoners – farmers, artisans, and merchants, who formed the largest segment of the population. At the lowest social stratum were the low-born (*cheonin*), which included butchers, musicians and courtesans.

The daily lives of all classes became the subject of genre paintings, a major form of Korean art that flourished in the 18th century (fig. 8). The paintings focused on candid depictions of commoners at work and at leisure. The trend was spurred by the growing interest among intellectuals in Korea's native customs and crafts, as well as its agriculture and geography. This developed under the banner of *Silbak* (Korean for "Practical Learning") – a popular movement during the late 17th and 18th century which advocated a practical approach to statecraft.

JOSEON LEGACIES

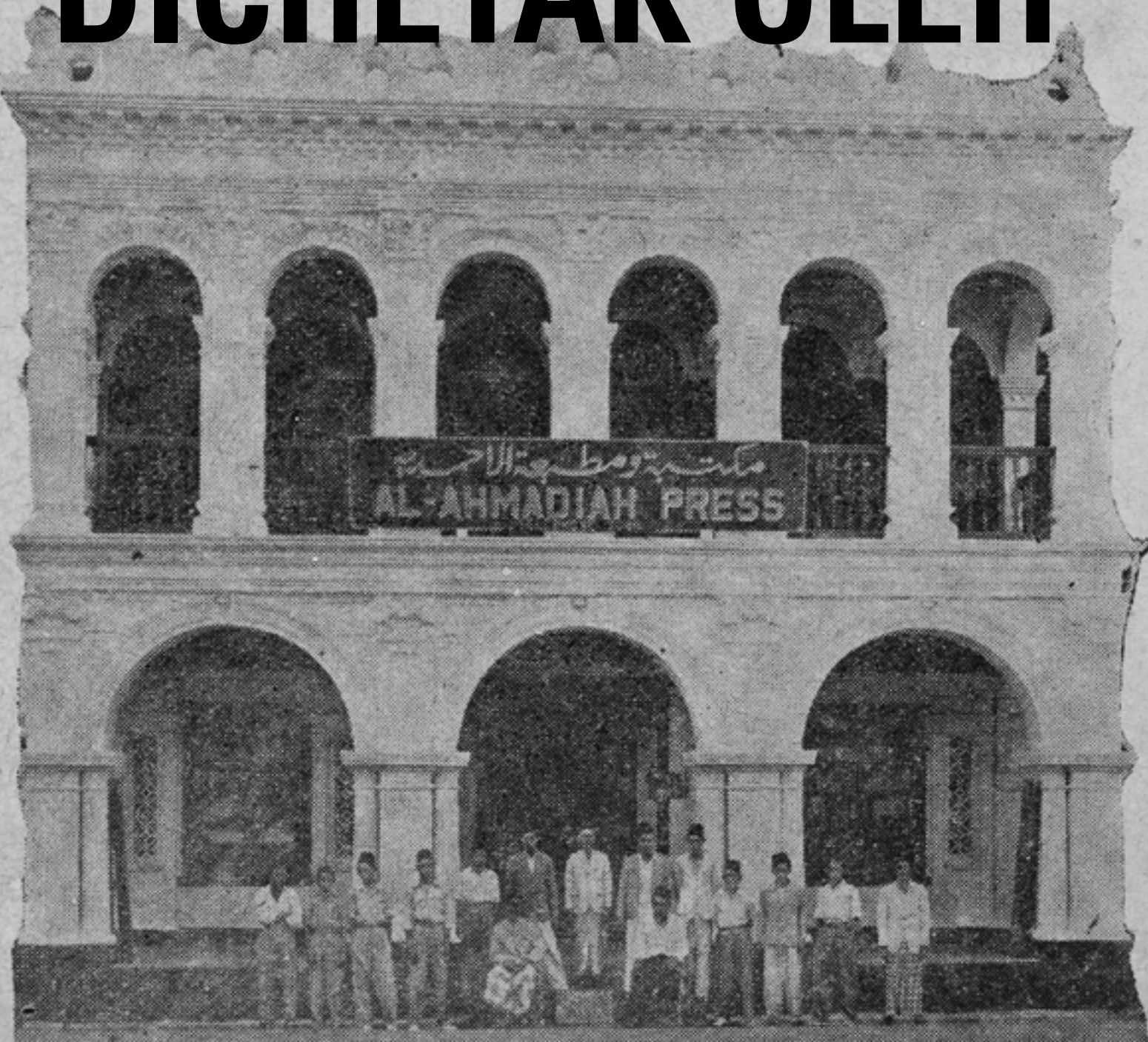
While Joseon regarded China as the bastion of civilisation in East Asia, and much of its art and culture

took reference from its continental neighbour, the kingdom also adapted other foreign influences, and developed its own distinct style and identity. For example, not only were traditional Chinese painting themes reinterpreted by Joseon artists, the 18th century also saw the flourishing of true-view landscape painting that emphasised actual native scenery. Prior to this new movement, Joseon painters tended to portray idealised landscapes drawn from Chinese cultural references or generic images of nature.

Despite the political and economic strife of the 19th century, many of the socio-cultural changes introduced by the Joseon dynasty have enjoyed an enduring legacy. Much of what is considered traditional, as well as the social customs and beliefs that are a prominent part of life in South Korea today, emerged during the Joseon era. Examples include the emphasis on filial piety, as well as respect for seniority and age – both of which characterise social relations in contemporary South Korea. Much of Korea's rich cultural heritage, including its cuisine, architecture, performing, visual and literary arts, and even alphabet – were created during the Joseon dynasty.

Visit Joseon Korea: Court Treasures and City Life at the Asian Civilisations Museum from 22 April to 23 July. Co-organised with the National Museum of Korea (NMK), the exhibition features artefacts from the collections of NMK and the National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul. For more information, please visit acm.org.sg/exhibitions/Joseon-korea.

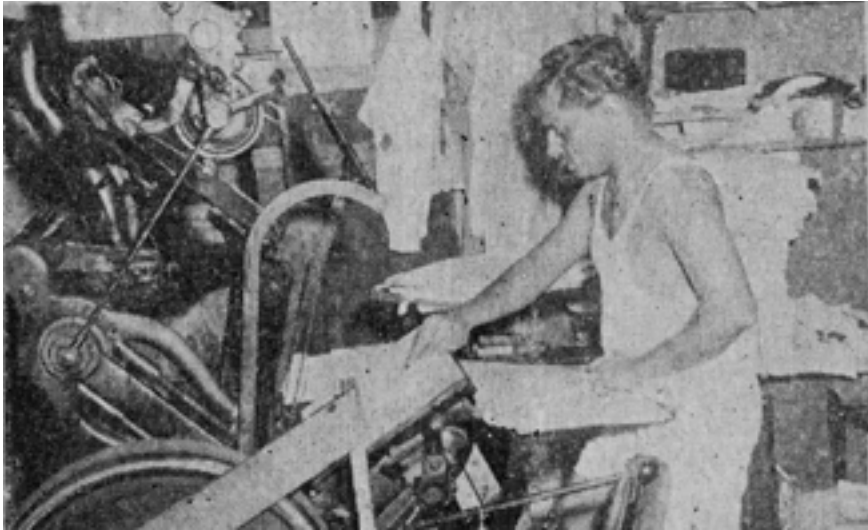
DICHETAK OLEH



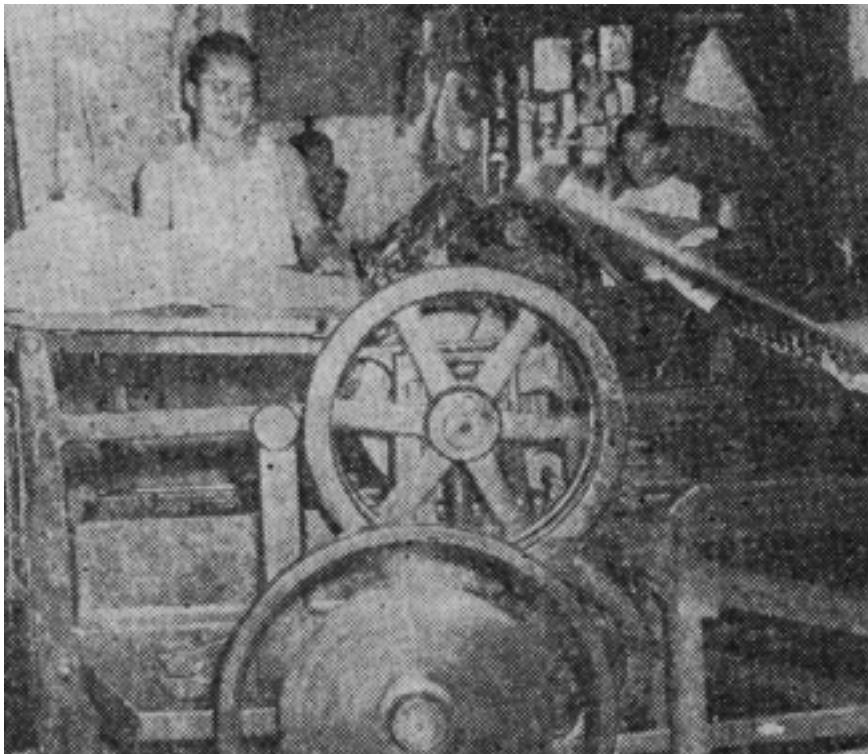
A WALK THROUGH KAMPONG GELAM

Text by Nasri Shah

*Photo on this page
101 Jalan Sultan, where
HARMY Press and
Al-Ahmadiyah Press
were based, c. 1950s.
Published by Qalam
Press.*



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01 & 02. Photographs of the Royal Press Printing office at 745 North Bridge Road, c. 1946 to 1956. Published by Qalam Press.

The task of mapping the historical area of Kampong Gelam (often spelled as “Kampong Glam”) is a daunting one. One has to consider not only its labyrinth of former side streets and alleyways, but also the numerous paths and shortcuts traversed by the many that once worked and lived in the area. Although Kampong Gelam was gazetted as a conservation area in 1989, many of these routes and pathways had by then become a thing of the past. Various roads were expunged through the 1960s and 1970s, and business owners – including various printers and publishers – had already begun moving out or closing down their offices. To chart a trail through Kampong Gelam to better understand its history, it appears, is therefore always to be trailing behind its history, always a step too late to the scene of what was before.

Mereka Utusan: Imprinting Malay Modernity, 1920s–1960s is the Malay Heritage Centre’s (MHC) fifth special exhibition, and seeks to recover the oft-forgotten history of the Malay language print and publishing industry in Singapore. In line with MHC’s theme for the year, *Bahasa* (Malay for “language”), the exhibition considers not only the language of the Jawi script used by Malay publishers of the time, but also the visual language of advertisements, editorial cartoons and comic strips prevalent in these Malay publications. More importantly, it restores the importance of Kampong Gelam as a node within a regional network of Malay printers, publishers and readers. The district’s importance reached a peak in the period between the 1900s to the 1950s, when no less than six printers and publishers could be found in various spots around Kampong Gelam.



03. A cover of *Fesyen* magazine from 1959. The magazine was printed at HARMY Press which was located at 101 Jalan Sultan, 1959. Published by HARMY Press.

As part of the exhibition, a guided trail consisting of stops at the sites of former printing and publishing offices in Kampong Gelam was held in March 2017. Entitled *Di-chetak Oleh* (Malay for “printed by”), the title references the small print often written at the bottom of the back of Malay magazines to denote their printing companies’ names. For example: *Di-chetak oleh Al-Ahmadiyah Press*, *Di-chetak oleh Qalam Press*, and so on. For the team involved in the exhibition,

the title also conjures memories of entire days spent close-reading and poring over hundreds of Jawi magazines kept in the MHC Collection, contributed by readers and former publishers.

In keeping with this spirit, the trail invited participants to contribute to the program by handling artefacts from this archive as well as those shared by our exhibition partners during the course of the trail. Participants then shared their reactions to these objects and

artefacts, as if they too were helping to piece together this now-lost history of Kampong Gelam.

These objects and artefacts which the participants handled consist of Jawi magazines from MHC’s education collection, and lead letterpress types that would have been used by Malay printers and publishers. A special treat for the participants was getting to experience a scent specially created by leading international fragrance company, Givaudan, whose perfumers were inspired



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04. *The Royal Press office was later renamed Pustaka Melayu (Malaysia Press) during the Merger, 1968. From the Lee Kip Lin Collection. Courtesy of Lee Kip Lin and National Library Board Singapore.*

by their trip to MHC's *Pustaka* (the term “pustaka” encompasses language, literature and publishing) gallery. The intent behind these trail aids was to create a trail that was impressionistic rather than didactic, and is reminiscent of French writer Michel de Certeau's musings of walking aimlessly in the city and being bombarded by “the chorus of idle footsteps”. For many who lived and worked in Kampong Gelam, these impressions were their guide to the area. Through speaking with Mr Abdul Aziz bin Abu Talib, a descendant of the owner of Royal Press (formerly located at 745 North Bridge Road), who is in his 60s, the curators discovered that his memories of navigating Kampong Gelam as a young printing apprentice to his father were filtered through such impressions as bicycling through the area, pulling eight-hour workdays in the printing office and wandering between the various side streets.

Such impressions of navigating Kampong Gelam provide a contrast to town plans, surveys and maps of the area which have been done as far back as the 1820s. Rather than providing clarity to the orientation of the area, these mapping projects were intended to rationalise the area for the purpose of future development and planning. It is not coincidental that such mapping projects of Kampong Gelam often preceded redevelopment projects, in which streets such as North Bridge Road and Victoria Street were paved and other streets such as Palembang Road and Jeddah Street became expunged over time. The irony, then, of such clear-eyed mapping projects and route surveys is the ultimate alteration of these very spaces.

Rapid development in the Kampong Gelam area, particularly in the past five decades, has therefore created what de Certeau refers to as “blind spots” within our field of vision

towards “space itself”. This includes the history of that particular space, the organic interactions that take place within it, as well as its activities – all of which would escape a detached overview of that space.

The printers and publishers of Kampong Gelam are just some of the many historical agents who have since slinked off into these so-called “blind spots”, particularly in the aftermath of a ban on printing factories within the area in the 1990s. Only traces of these printers and publishers remain in the physical landscape of Kampong Gelam today, barely discernible amidst the rows of textile shops, dimly lit massage parlours, watering holes and bustling family eateries. With the exception of a few architectural hints, there is nothing to indicate, for example, that a thriving KTV pub along Arab Street was once the site of a printing office for the religious magazine *Al-Imam*, or that the popular toy store along Bussorah Street once attracted a crowd of a different sort in the early 19th century as the office of Javanese printer, Haji Muhammad Siraj. In this regard, the trail aids also help participants to imagine for themselves a historical impression of the area as it would have been like at different points in time.

Continuities do, however, exist between present sites in Kampong Gelam and their past incarnations as printing offices. The site of Islamic Restaurant, currently located at 745 North Bridge Road, is still owned by the family of Abu Talib bin Ally, who previously ran Royal Press. In a different manner, the Sultan Hotel’s tours at its three-storey shophouse unit has also served to introduce visitors to the building’s previous history as the site of Al-Ahmadiyah Press and HARMY Press.

Interacting with the family of Abu Talib bin Ally and the management of the Sultan Hotel revealed a second and possibly more important aspect of the trail. Through this trail, museum practitioners were pushed to engage with the descendants and inheritors of these legacies. Whilst the trail aids filled gaps in the historical narrative of the area, it was these anecdotes from people who formerly lived and who continue to work in the area that enlivened the trail.

Engaging such individuals and families also facilitates MHC’s efforts in building itself as an institution of and for the area from which it operates. In this regard, the exhibition can be seen as expanding upon the premise established by MHC’s 2015 exhibition – *Kampong Gelam: Beyond the Port Town* which considered the cultural, economic and social histories of Kampong Gelam. This exhibition and trail continues to follow that train of thought, by looking specifically to the printers and publishers of the area, who in many ways contributed to the economic and cultural vibrancy of the area. Indeed, from the heart of a port town, one is invited to cast a closer look at the many printing and publishing offices that once called Kampong Gelam home.

Visit Mereka Utusan: Imprinting Malay Modernity at the Malay Heritage Centre until June 25. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, please visit malayheritage.org.sg/en.

This tote bag design is inspired by advertisements from the 1950s and 1960s featuring household items and beauty products. These include Bedak Chahaya Bulan (Malay for “moonlight powder”), a brand of facial powder which catered not only to ladies but teruna (Malay for “bachelors”) as well. Learn more about advertisements such as these at Mereka Utusan: Imprinting Malay Modernity, 1920s – 1960s, which runs at the Malay Heritage Centre from now till 25 June, 2017.

For more information or purchase inquiry, please contact our Retail and Merchandising Division at: nhb_museumlabel@nhb.gov.sg.



BEYOND KAYA TOAST



THE CULTURALLY COSMOPOLITAN COFFEE SHOP OF 1960s SINGAPORE

Text by Joshua Goh

Student Contribution

Photo on this page
A coffee shop in
Chinatown, 1965.
Courtesy of National
Archives of Singapore.



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01. A scene at the rear of a traditional Hainanese kopitiam, c. 1980. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

02. A serving of kaya toast prepared the traditional way, 2016. Courtesy of Joshua Goh.



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Step into any Ya Kun Kaya Toast or Toast Box outlet island-wide, and you may find yourself being transported to another era. With vintage décor and sepia-toned photographs adorning their walls, these boutique *kopi* (Malay for “coffee”) joints are not just places for diners to savour familiar, comfort food. They are also sites where the history and heritage surrounding local food is prominently displayed. Diners munching on crisp *kaya* (Malay for “coconut jam”) toast are thus invited to experience the coffee shop of the 1960s, which has been designed to invoke the feeling of a simple, laidback oasis where patrons can come to unwind. As the Toast Box website suggests, the coffee shop of the sixties “was reinvented to bring back fond memories for those who missed the good old times, and for the younger ones to experience the feel and flavours of a bygone era”.

Besides their portrayal of the 1960s coffee shop as an idyllic space, such *kopi* joints also suggest that coffee

shops were largely defined by their Chinese ownership. Valorised are the stories of early Hainanese coffee shop proprietors, who by the dint of hard work built up thriving family businesses. The central persona in Ya Kun’s narrative, for example, is Loi Ah Koon. Hailed as a simple man who first started his business with a coffee stall in Telok Ayer, Loi’s rags-to-riches story graces the walls of all Ya Kun outlets. With competitor chains such as Kiliney Kopitiam also constructing a similar narrative of Chinese ingenuity and industry, it is no surprise that the coffee shop’s past has come to be defined by the contributions of Chinese migrants who, it seems, set up shops merely for eating and socialising at a leisurely pace.

Nevertheless, such a historical imagination of the 1960s coffee shop – as a rustic eatery defined by its Chinese roots – deserves to be explored further. This is because such a static conception of the coffee shop seems to be out of joint with the dynamism of Singapore’s



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society in the sixties. Indeed, this was an age of cultural ferment, during which the everyday lives of Singapore's residents were shaped by a vibrant cosmopolitan modernity. As the term "swinging sixties" suggest, modernity in this period was closely associated with youth-based, Western cultural fads such as the The Beatles, who used new forms of technology such as multi-track recording to create higher quality records to market their music to a global crowd. Popular artistic forms catering to mass audiences were all the rage, particularly in Singapore, where local bands such as The Quests and The Silver Strings drew on influences of an international import to synthesise new strands of consumptive entertainment. To be modern, thus, was to be in sync with popular trends that integrated both Western and local elements, and to be engaged with a dynamic cultural world that was diverse and eclectic.

As an alternative "third space" away from both home and work, it is rather inconceivable that coffee

shops were merely tranquil arenas, isolated from the lively cultural verve of the day. Oral history interviews and newspaper articles from that era reveal, indeed, that there was much more to the 1960s coffee shop than *kaya* and toast. These sources also suggest that focussing on the Hainanese *kopitiam* (a mixed Malay-Hokkien term for "coffee shop") alone is insufficient. Rather, one must also examine the worlds of the Malay *kedai kopi* (Malay for "coffee shop") and Indian *teh sarabat* (a colloquial Singaporean term for "milk tea") stall, for all were equally dynamic spaces that constituted part of Singapore's public sphere in the sixties. As sites for the congregation of multiracial patrons, coffee shops of the 1960s were not only the domain of the Chinese community as we often imagine them to be. In fact, the multiracialism of the 1960s coffee shop went well beyond vernacular forms. As sites frequented by a globally cosmopolitan clientele, coffee shops were part and parcel of a flourishing cultural scene that produced a vibrant, popular modernity.

03. *A snapshot of a bangsawan performance, early 1900s.* Mohd Amin bin Kadarisman Collection. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.
04. *An Indian teh sarabat stall proprietor hard at work, c. 1980.* Quek Tiong Swee Collection. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



05. *Sin Keow coffee shop, located at the junction of Syed Alwi Road and Jalan Besar, 1982. Lee Kip Lin Collection. Courtesy of the National Library Board.*

06. *Multiracial patrons in a Chinese coffee shop, 1962. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.*

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In 1960s Singapore, coffee shops that catered to patrons beyond the typical Chinese, Malay or Indian customer could be found all across the island. One notable site was the *teh sarabat* stall cluster outside Rex Cinema, where patrons as diverse as Eurasian and Jewish folk could be found mingling. Syed Alwi Road in the Rochor district was also another prominent locale where coffee shops played host to clienteles of a global nature. Mohd Buang bin Marzuki, a recruiter for a Malay *bangsawan* (a type of traditional Malay opera) troupe, even likened one particular coffee shop along Syed Alwi Road to a port, with aspiring *bangsawan* performers from as far as Manila congregating to seek artistic employment.

However, the globally diverse patrons that weaved in and out of the Syed Alwi Road coffee shop were

merely part of a bigger picture. This is because the cosmopolitanism of the Syed Alwi Road coffee shop was linked to new forms of consumptive entertainment that were popularised by three "worlds" of mid-twentieth century Singapore. In the sixties, three amusement parks – Happy World in Geylang, New World in Jalan Besar and Great World in River Valley – were at the forefront of popular entertainment in Singapore, with performances infused by a syncretic, East-meets-West flavour. Yet they had an unexplored connection to the coffee shop, for travelling troupes performing in the "worlds" would often head out from the Syed Alwi Road coffee shop and return again past midnight to rest before heading home at three or four in the morning. There was even a billiard table at the coffee shop over which the *bangsawan* performers,

comedians and musicians of the travelling troupes would bond. After the Syed Alwi Road coffee shop was closed, another coffee shop at the intersection of Geylang Road and Joo Chiat Road took over this function.

Apart from the coffee shop's links with the three "worlds", new pop-culture forms that emanated from the confines of the 1960s coffee shop also demonstrate how closely intertwined it was with a cosmopolitan and outward looking society. One advertisement placed in the Singapore Free Press on 21 November, 1961 by a local band called The Rhythmnares bears testament to this. Billed as "one of the top Latin rhythm bands in the district", the band's lead musician, Mr Earl da Silva, called for a girl to join the eight-man team, while proudly highlighting the fact that



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the band was formed at “a coffee shop meeting of eight music crazy young men”.

Oral history interviews with prominent musicians of the 1960s further confirm that coffee shops were favoured as meeting sites for members of Western-style rock-and-roll bands. Particular appealing, it seems, was the convivial atmosphere surrounding Indian *teh sarabat* stalls, which were a distinctive feature of Singapore’s food-scape of that period. In the 1960s, prominent clusters of *teh sarabat* stalls could be found near present-day Newton Hawker Centre, Cathay Cinema and along Albert Street. For local bands such as The Checkmates that dominated this golden age of local music, such stalls provided spirited spaces that were inherently conducive to the new, modern forms of music that they sought to popularise. At *teh sarabat* stalls such as the one near Golden Venus bar, musicians such as Henry Suriya, a member of The Boys, could be found chatting and gossiping about the local music scene into the wee

hours of the morning. The 4th mile *teh sarabat* stall in Bukit Timah was also popular, for it brought together musicians and university students from the nearby Dunearn Hostels. Long before 24-hour fast-food restaurants made its way to Singapore’s shores, *teh sarabat* stalls were already catering to nocturnal youths, who represented a restless, pulsating society, eager to experiment with novel cultural forms.

Besides Western-style music, other mass cultural forms of a popular nature were also birthed from within the coffee shop. Activities performed in and around coffee shops thus provided a good barometer of the rapidly changing tastes of a modern, cosmopolitan society, as hobbyists of new artistic forms gathered to further their craft. One such art form was photography. The Photographic Society of Singapore, for instance, was conceived as the Singapore Camera Club in 1950 by a group of seven men who met in a coffee shop. Picture records from the National

Archives of Singapore reveal that this was not a one-off phenomenon. A photo from 1962 (Figure 8) shows evidence of a crowded coffee shop brimming with photography enthusiasts with cameras slung around their necks.

Lastly, the creation of new culinary forms also testified to the coffee shop's role in synthesising various cultures and creeds. According to Vernon Cornelius, the popular Singaporean snack, *Roti John* (consisting of a French loaf topped with eggs and onions), was birthed when the English submarine sandwich was adapted by *teh sarabat* stalls operating along Changi Point to cater to British soldiers stationed in the vicinity. Retaining the practice of cutting up a large French loaf into manageable portions, Indian *teh sarabat* stall proprietors proceeded to give quintessential British fare a cosmopolitan twist by infusing fried eggs and tomato sauce. As stall owners hollered “hey, *roti* (Malay for “bread”) – John!” as a generic and colloquial reference to the passing European customer,



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07. Photographers congregating at a coffee shop, 1962. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

08. A general view of Dunearn Road Hostels, 1992. Lee Kip Lin Collection. Courtesy of the National Library Board.

09. Roti John, a snack much loved by Singaporeans, c. 1990. Collection of Singapore Tourism Board. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



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the term gained social currency as a reference to a scrumptious new snack.

To conclude, it is clear that contemporary historical perceptions of the coffee shop as an idyllic, Chinese-populated space merely serving up delectable *kaya* toast are rather restrictive. The story of the 1960s coffee shop is not only confined to the Hainanese *kopitiam*, but is part of a larger coffee shop world that was shared equally by its Malay and Indian counterparts. Varied as they

were outwardly, together they jointly inhabited a shared social space – one defined by a diverse, cosmopolitan identity. This cosmopolitanism, in turn, ensured that coffee shops in the 1960s were not merely spaces for gustatory consumption. Rather, they had an equally important function as sites of cultural fermentation and experimentation as Singaporeans-to-be grappled with, and embraced, a new popular modernity.

CELEBRATING JURONG AND ITS INDUSTRIOUS PIONEERS

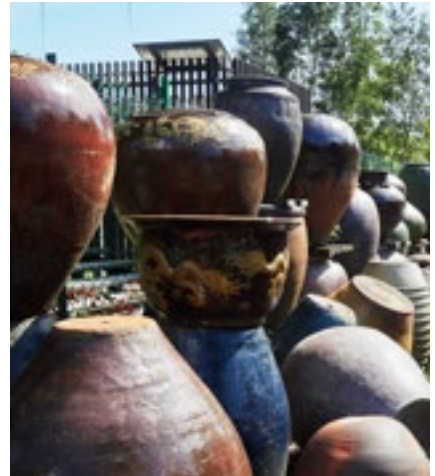


Text by Raudha Muntadar

*Photo on this page
Thow Kwang Pottery
Jungle, 2016. Courtesy of
National Heritage Board.*



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Museums are human institutions which play an important role in the public enjoyment of history, heritage, art and even science. Many of the museums we are familiar with boast wonderful repositories of national collections and artefacts. Community museums and galleries, on the other hand, play the role of documenting and conveying history and heritage through the social memories of people, be it through interviews, old photos or personal collections.

Work @ TJ – The Industrious Pioneers of Jurong is the third in a series of community co-created thematic exhibitions at Our Museum @ Taman Jurong, which chronologically charts the development of Jurong and the evolving occupations of its residents. Stories are told through residents' memories, beginning from the pre-1960s when Jurong was considered a "lost region" due to the lack of people and development, to the present day where Jurong is a major driver of the nation's industry and economy.

PRE-1960S – NO MAN'S LAND

The Jurong of yesteryear would be completely unrecognisable today. A largely undeveloped area, farms, plantations, ponds, and

mangroves could be found all around. Residents of early Jurong took on jobs as farmers and rubber tappers at the many gambier and rubber plantations found in this vast area in the 19th century. These plantations and farms, which were the main work sites in Jurong, played a major role in the area's subsequent development.

A legacy of the early 20th century which still lives on till this day is the brickworks industry. Pottery kilns were located in Jurong due to the favourable soil found in the area. Up to 800,000 bricks could be produced each month in these kilns. One of the oldest surviving pottery kilns – the Thow Kwang Pottery Jungle, also commonly known as the Dragon Kiln, is still located in Jurong today.

1960S – EVOLUTION

With the dawn of the 1960s, Jurong experienced huge changes that permanently altered its landscape. Singapore embarked on a massive industrialisation programme with Jurong as its core. Through this programme, Jurong was redeveloped with 1,600 hectares reserved for the Jurong Industrial Estate.



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01. *Sungei Jurong with mangrove swamps in the background, 1954.* Collection of Public Works Department. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

02. *Pots from Thow Kwang Pottery Jungle, 2016.* Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

03. *Madam Sandy Lee's (pictured) mother operated one of the first hair salons in Taman Jurong – Xin Toh [新都] Hair Salon. Located at the ground floor of Block 1, Taman Jurong, the salon not only provided haircuts at an affordable price, but also warm towels, comic books, and shaving services for its patrons, 2016.* Courtesy of National Heritage Board.



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The same land that once housed farms and plantations were redeveloped to make way for factories such as NatSteel, Jurong Shipyard, Jurong Wharf, Jurong Fishery Port and military camps such as Pasir Laba Camp. As the Jurong workforce grew to meet the demands of the area's development, so did its residential aspects.

Madam Sandy Lee recounts her mother's story about opening the first hair salon in Jurong: "She said, 'The government wrote a letter to us, asking us to open a salon in Taman Jurong... This place is so far and deserted. If not for the government's letter, we wouldn't have come to Taman Jurong!'"

To encourage workers to stay in Jurong, then Finance Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee set up a toll gate which charged lorries and buses \$50 a month for transporting workers into Jurong. As a result, companies began to set up living quarters for their workers within Jurong. Thus, as Jurong grew in its capacity for the nation's economy, so did its



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04. *NatSteel*, 2016. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

05. *Workers of the National Iron and Steel Mill at the opening of a new steel rerolling plant in Jurong Industrial Estate, 1963.* Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



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06. *Jurong Shipyard, 1964.* Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



07. *Queen Elizabeth II, with Defence Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee and Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip beside her, receiving the royal salute from a 68-strong honour guard during her visit to SAFTI, 1972.* Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

09. *Minister For Culture, Jek Yeun Thong leading press to see the loading and unloading of rice at the Jurong Port godown, 1973.* Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

10. *A cargo ship berthed at the wharf at Jurong Port, 1973.* Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

08. *As some of the first residents to move into Taman Jurong in the 1970s, Mr and Mrs Quah Kim Poh were witnesses to the many changes that took place as Jurong industrialised. Until today, their entire family continues to reside in Taman Jurong, demonstrating the strong ties that envelop this community, 2016.* Courtesy of National Heritage Board.



population. Mr Quah Kim Poh, a long-time resident of Jurong, shares: “Jurong then was very inaccessible and many Singaporeans refused to reside in this area. It was due to industrialisation that made Jurong an international metropolis [sic].”

1970S – FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The 1970s is widely known as the prime decade for Jurong, with its tremendous growth and plentiful job opportunities. In 1970, Jurong

Port hit the million-tonne mark for the amount of cargo handled in a year. At the same time, many multinational companies from all over the world were coming to invest. By 1976, there were 650 factories operating in Jurong, and tens of thousands of workers being employed.

Farms and plantations which were a major part of the 1960s had to make way for growing industrialisation. Residents here were employed in various fields

of work. Madam Halijah binte Sulaiman, for example, worked at the WMF Flatware Factory at 7 Gul Avenue, where her daily tasks included polishing high-quality cutleries to a shine before they were shipped for exports. The industrialisation programme proved to be a success as unemployment dropped to under 3% in the 1970s from 14% in 1964. The military also expanded its capabilities with specialised training schools for



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different vocations being set up in the Singapore Armed Forces Training Institute (SAFTI), which was located in Jurong.

**1980S – PRESENT DAY:
INTO THE NEW WORLD**

In the 1980s, developments in Jurong shifted towards technology and knowledge-based industries. This change was reflected in Jurong’s landscape as heavy manufacturing companies began to move out, and chemical and technological industries, along with light manufacturing started to move in. Workers had to equip themselves with new skills to keep up with the changing demands of the job.

During this decade, Jurong also became key to another aspect of Singapore – waste management. The Tuas Incineration Plant heralded this new era with its completion in 1986. Subsequently, Tuas South Incineration Plant and Keppel Seghers Tuas Waste-to-Energy Plant were added in 2000 and 2009 respectively. Combined, they make up more than half of Singapore’s incineration capacity.



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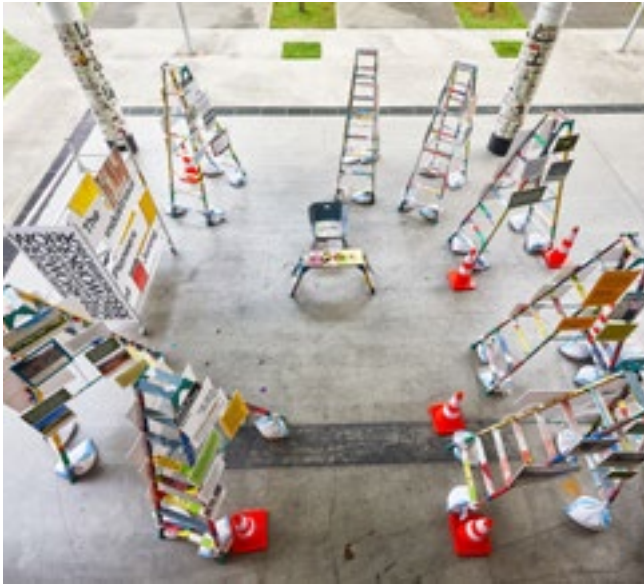


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11. *Jurong Port & Shipyard*, 2015. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

12. *SAFTI MI*, 2015. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.

13. *National Day Observance Ceremony at Jurong Shipyard*, 1985. Collection of Ministry of Information and the Arts. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.



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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

There is no doubt that Jurong will continue to play a significant part in driving Singapore's industry and economy. As it continues to evolve, two new additions are expected to add to its changing landscape. These are the planned Kuala Lumpur–Singapore High-Speed Rail terminus, as well as a second Central Business District. With a peek into the future, the workers and residents of Jurong can certainly be expected to continue transforming the landscape of Singapore.

Work @ TJ – The Industrious Pioneers of Jurong runs till end-July 2017 at the foyer of Taman Jurong Community Club. To provide an immersive multi-sensory experience, this exhibition features unique scents specially developed and generously supported by Givaudan, the global leader in the creation of flavours and fragrances that 'engage your senses'. These scents include that of oil at a shipyard, brickworks at a pottery kiln, tyres in a car workshop, mangroves and even National Servicemen in training. While Givaudan generally works

with food, beverage, consumer product, and fragrance partners, their passion for understanding consumers' preferences and their relentless drive to innovate has enabled them to create these special scents, which will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on visitors both young and old. Visitors will be able to imagine what it was like to work and live in Jurong in the past or to reminisce about the good old days. For more information, visit *Our Museum @ Taman Jurong's* Facebook page.

Visit Work @ TJ at the foyer of Taman Jurong Community Club till July 31. Open Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 9 pm, Saturday from 10 am to 9 pm and Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, please visit [facebook.com/OMATTJ](https://www.facebook.com/OMATTJ).

15 & 16. *Work @ TJ exhibition at the foyer of the Taman Jurong Community Club.*

#GALLERY 10 – AN EYE ON TOMORROW

THE DIGITAL REALM IN
MUSEUMS TODAY

Text by Jervais Choo

Photo on this page
Gallery 10, 2016. Courtesy
of National Museum of
Singapore.



01 & 02. *Gallery 10*, 2016. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

03. *Visitors peering at the installation*, 2017. Courtesy of Sarah Choo Jing.

04. *Close-up of the installation*, 2017. Courtesy of Sarah Choo Jing.

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The embrace of digital technology into popular culture can be traced back to some 30 years ago, when the introduction of the personal computer revolutionised how information and content could be received, recorded and transmitted. The exponential increase in processing power, and thus practical utility, has seen digital as a broad encompassing term permeating all aspects of societal and personal space. Today, consciously or otherwise, many of us exist in dual or even multiple realities, with crafted personas for different digital platforms. Those of us who are not part of these realities are nonetheless affected, and sometimes afflicted by it.

CONFRONTING COMPLEXITY

In recognising these quantum shifts in societal habits and patterns, it is necessary and even critical for museums of collections to understand the complexities and dynamics of current and infinitely enduring mediums of expression. Invariably, we will need to confront the question of what do we

collect in the future, and for that matter, how do we collect for the future? In a complex environment of networks that connect and intertwine both the abstract and the real, the challenges of venturing meaningfully into the binary universe are substantial.

The often used popular culture phrase: “the internet never forgets”, despite its ominous undertone, presents a false assurance of digital archival minions that somehow scurry around the digital cloud collecting, cataloguing and preserving all human knowledge. This misrepresents the reality that, amidst the deluge of information the inter-webs offers, information has itself now become even more subjective and is in greater need of curation than ever before. People do in fact selectively remember – and just as conveniently forget – what they read online. Shorter attention spans and the penchant for headlines rather than the rigour of content and debate, are worrying trends. Fiction often overrides fact, and many often find what they want

to know rather than what they need to know online. The digital sphere is often self-validating rather than enlightening. Corporations pretty much dictate the choices that are presented to you in your searches by leveraging on “Big Data”, and often arbitrarily filter out “noise” that they perceive as less likely to translate to revenue for them.

THE VALUE OF AN OBJECT

Undergirding these conundrums is the attendant measure of relevance and connection with the people we collect for – the public. With digital content proliferated widely, what incremental value is there for a museum of collections to present the same stories that can be accessed and consumed from the comfort of home, the bus or over dinner with friends and family? Even as museums contest the salience of presenting virtual and created objects alongside reconstructed and reimaged ones, the digital frontiers are being relentlessly pushed further

afield. The widespread adoption of hyper-realistic modelling coupled with 3D printing is gaining traction from all sectors. New media art that has the ability to change and react in response to environments create a new domain for artistic creation. Virtual and augmented reality solutions have the potential to recreate immersive and sensory-engaged environments better than what original pictures or drawings can convey. What then is the value of an original object, photograph or painting beyond mere sentiment and the socio-digital validation of having taken a selfie with it? These are difficult questions for a museum of collections to confront, but it would be imprudent for us to set it aside indefinitely.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR DIGITAL IN MUSEUMS

Most museums are not equipped to deal with the digital medium as it exists today, much less with taking strides towards areas beyond the audio-visual sphere and into the

multi-disciplinary domain. Are we prepared to acquire and collect source codes from pioneering software rather than simply acquire an empty shell in the form of an object or hardware? In 2013, Cooper-Hewitt acquired the source codes to an iPad application written in C++ known as Planetary, including its changes between versions. In 2014, the International Center for the History of Electronic Games (ICHEG) acquired into its collection complete source codes from Atari’s coin-operated arcade games. Are we prepared to do the same for digital technologies moving forward?

Navigating a world without borders can be daunting as the digital space also brings to the fore questions of authenticity and originality. While these are already being confronted daily in museology, developments on the digital front have forced us to readdress age-old “truths” and sacred cows. Copyright, ownership, appropriation and attribution are



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just a few areas which are susceptible to sheer volume and propensity of content creation within the digital sphere. Building capacity to deal with these issues is not only the responsibility of the collections front, but should also be addressed by the collectors. This can be done by equipping museum professionals with the knowledge and tools to address these gaps, rather than shunning them completely.

As a nation, Singapore has invested significantly in research and development in technology, and continues to advance the argument that we cannot lack behind in these areas in order to ensure continued economic growth. Perhaps the same argument could be made for cultural growth, and the need for the arts and culture industry to acknowledge that there is much more we can do to move beyond our traditional comfort zones in collecting and collections, presenting and presentations.

GALLERY 10

The recently launched Gallery 10 at the National Museum of Singapore (NMS) is a first step towards cultivating a greater awareness and understanding of how museums can navigate the digital medium. As an experimental space dedicated to digital creation, Gallery 10 allows visitors the opportunity to work with artists, professionals and experts in the field by jointly exploring and curating meaningful experiences. It encourages us to expand our span and understanding in the definition of objects, to perhaps consider digital assets as a part of our collection strategy in the future. As the first permanent gallery dedicated to the digital realm, it marks a step forward in allowing curators to take ownership of the medium.

ART OF THE REHEARSAL

The first work presented in Gallery 10 is entitled Art of the Rehearsal, and it brings together

multi-disciplinary artist Sarah Choo Jing and traditional dance practitioners from Apsaras Arts Limited, Era Dance Theatre and the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Dance Theatre. Supported by the National Arts Council and commissioned by NMS, the resulting three-channel immersive video installation provokes thought and introspection on the essence and preparation behind form and presentation. Visitors entering the gallery are confronted by a large-scale panoramic video of traditional dancers rehearsing in back alleys and organic spaces, which draws them into the intimate psyche of preparation that each dancer enters before a performance.

Through a digital medium, Art of the Rehearsal captures varying perspectives of a rich and vibrant form of our intangible cultural heritage that would otherwise be hidden from our eyes. It disproves the notion that digital necessarily



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equates to impersonality. Within a complex network of nodes and algorithms, we aim to acknowledge that our technology mirrors as much as shapes our culture. Gallery 10 is a move in this direction, challenging our notions of what a museum represents in an age that sometimes appears determined to make museums less relevant. It advances the position that even more so than before, the role of museums is critical in providing context, understanding, perspective and space for us to make sense of a data-driven, digitally enhanced world that tolerates us.

See Art of the Rehearsal at Gallery 10 at the National Museum of Singapore from 10 am to 5 pm daily.



06

05. Video still. Courtesy of Sarah Choo Jing.

06. Gallery 10, 2016. Courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

HERITAGE TRAIL ADOPTION SCHEME



Text by Joanne Chen

*Photo on this page
CJC student sharing
with his peers about
the former Shaw Malay
Film Studios. Courtesy of
National Heritage Board.*



01

Walking from one historic site to another is what many tourists enjoy doing whenever they visit a new country. The exploration and discovery of historically significant places enhances one's understanding of a place's past, heritage, culture and people.

Since 1999, the National Heritage Board (NHB) has researched and developed a series of heritage trails in our heartlands that aims to bring heritage closer to the public, and help residents understand and appreciate the place in which they live, study, work and play in. These heritage trails range from heartland areas such as Toa Payoh, Yishun and Bedok to well-known heritage estates such as Balestier, Kampong Glam and Little India.

In 2013, NHB piloted the Heritage Trail Adoption Scheme with Henderson Secondary School. The then newly launched Tiong Bahru Heritage Trail was adopted by the school and 12 pupils were trained by NHB to be student guides. These student guides would later go on to guide the VIP entourage during the trail's launch.



02

To promote the use of existing heritage trails and to document the social memories of the estate that we live in, the Heritage Trail Adoption Scheme gives schools the platform to adopt either an NHB heritage trail or a school developed trail for a period of three years. Schools participating in the scheme may choose to undertake the guiding training programme for students or the how-to-teach-guiding training programme designed especially for teachers. The programme also encourages schools to teach heritage in a fun and meaningful way by using the trail for orientation or camp programmes, and to integrate cross-subject learning elements to

01. *CJC student sharing with his classmates about the water kiosk situated at the corner of Boon Teck Road. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.*

02. *A student from Manjusri Secondary sharing with his/her peers about the religious site along the school-developed Interfaith Heritage Trail. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.*



03

ensure that the young appreciate the continued relevance of heritage.

Since the programme's launch, more than 25 schools have adopted either an NHB Heritage Trail or a school developed trail, and more than 600 students and 30 teachers have been trained under the programme. Today, the scheme is a robust one with a good spread of participation from primary schools, secondary schools and even tertiary institutions.

Suitable for all ages and student profiles, this scheme has benefited both high-potential and average students by equipping them with life skills that go beyond heritage knowledge. The scheme's flexibility to be integrated into curriculum has also brought out teachers' creativity in designing heritage trails that engage students through meaningful exploration and discovery of heritage.

Mrs Phyllis Lim, Principal of Catholic Junior College shares, "The programme has benefited

our teachers by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to make learning of heritage and the Mother Tongue Language fun. The programme has also changed our students' perspectives and understanding towards Balestier. They are now more appreciative of the estate that they study in."

Download a step-by step guide on how to develop a heritage trail at nhb.gov.sg/education/resources-for-schools-and-students.

For more information or to sign up for the programme, please email our Education team at NHB_educationprogrammes@nhb.gov.sg.

03. *Students from ITE College Central experiencing a fun-filled heritage trail about Ang Mo Kio Heritage Trail. Courtesy of National Heritage Board.*

TREASURES RETOLD @ ACM



*Photo on this page
Surrounded by beauty
and history, 2016.
Courtesy of Asian
Civilisations Museum.*

Text by Wynnie Kwok



01. Comparing notes and inspiration, 2016. Courtesy of Asian Civilisations Museum.

01

In the spirit of an interconnected curriculum anchored in the arts, *Treasures Retold @ ACM* was designed by the Literature in English Faculty of the School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) in collaboration with the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) as an Enrichment Programme for its Year 3 cohort.

Borrowing from the phrase “Treasures Untold”, *Treasures Retold @ ACM* suggests that when we engage and interact with treasures and cultural artefacts, we learn more about our ancestry, and new breath is injected into the stories which surround our past.

Through learning about selected objects during the first part of the programme, students were able to gain a deeper understanding of how cross-cultural interactions happen, and recognise the results of such intermingling as evident in the objects’ purpose, provenance and creative impetus.

Directed by their inspiration, students would then revisit an object of their choice and pen a poem inspired by it. In doing so, students found themselves exploring the ekphrastic poetic form. Meaning “description” in Greek, an ekphrastic poem is commonly based on a work of art, whereby a poet extrapolates the meaning of the work by reflecting on its central theme and creative interpretation.

In retelling the stories of these objects through poetry, students were challenged to firstly, put themselves in the shoes of a voyager, craftsman, servant or emperor to imagine their various hopes and dreams; secondly, perceive objects through the various lenses of anthropology, history, literature and the arts; and finally, make adaptations from the original medium (sculpture, ceramic, painting) into literary form.

For example, using the structure of a haiku, student Faith Lee wrote

the following poem, which was inspired by Bodhisattva (Accession number: 2014-00570):

The Enlightened One

*Abandoned princehood
Exchanging a golden crown
For pearls of wisdom*

She explained that as a visual arts student, she really appreciated and enjoyed seeing all the reliefs and sculptures in the gallery. “They were so intricately carved, and because I know how difficult it is to sculpt, my admiration of the artists’ works was further heightened. It was also interesting to learn about the context of the various artists’ creations, such as how wealthy sailors would commission sculptures as an act of gratitude for protection on the seas,” said Faith.

She added: “I was surprised to learn how each depiction of Buddha evolved depending on which country the belief spread to.



02

The sculptors carved some of the statues with features or poses that resembled those of deities already worshipped in the native country. This helped Buddhism to be accepted more readily and spread faster.”

“Learning about how Siddhartha Gautama gave up his princship and everything he possessed, I was inspired to write a poem to express my feelings. It was a unique experience for me to write a poem based on another older artistic creation. This added a further layer of meaning to the sculpture, and writing my interpretation on it was almost like bringing it to life.”

In addressing the interweaving art forms, Faith observed that poems and artworks could be experienced by the viewer in two ways. Firstly, through a quick glance to admire its beauty, and secondly, through close analysis, which uncovers deeper details and meanings that may not have been noticed before.

“Examining a turn of phrase in a poem, or the composition and brushstrokes used in an artwork can therefore allow one to fully appreciate the intention and skill of the poet or artist,” she concluded.

Wynn timer Kwok is a teacher from the Faculty of Literature in English, School of the Arts, Singapore.

If you have a project that you would like to explore in collaboration with ACM, please email sharon_chen@nhb.gov.sg.

02. *Noting the finer details in the Trade Gallery, 2016. Courtesy of Asian Civilisations Museum.*

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR ANITHA DEVI PILLAI

Text by Matthew Lim and
Dr Anitha Devi Pillai

*Photo on this page
Dr Anitha Devi Pillai
with her book. Courtesy
of Binod Therat.*



The Singaporean Malayalee Story was a research project that was spearheaded by Dr Anitha Devi Pillai, a lecturer at the National Institute of Education, with the support of a National Heritage Board (NHB) grant back in 2013. The project resulted in the 2017 publication of *From Kerala to Singapore: Voices from the Singapore Malayalee Community*, which features a historical and linguistic overview of Malayalees who moved from Kerala to Singapore in the 19th century.

According to the 2010 Census of Population, there are 26,348 Malayalees amongst the 348,119 Indians in Singapore. They are the second largest group amongst the Indians after the Tamils. However, existing literature on the Singapore Malayalee community is largely limited to studies on the Malayalee language and targets an academic audience.

From Kerala to Singapore aims to reach out to the general public. Apart from charting the history of the community, it also examines how members of the community have contributed to Singapore, which in turn has shaped their identity as Singapore Malayalees.

MUSE SG talks to Dr Anitha about the story behind the book and her experience researching on the Singapore Malayalee community.

Q1. How did you come to be interested in the heritage of your community?

I have always been interested in understanding my community and identity as a fourth generation Malayalee in Singapore. Before the internet became widely available, I often had to explain Malayalee festivals and practices to my peers. Even amongst my Indian

classmates, there was very little understanding or awareness about Malayalees.

In school, I spoke English and Tamil, while at home, I spoke Malayalam to my mother and a mix of Malayalam and English to my father. Over the years, it has become increasingly apparent that the younger generation of Malayalees are beginning to use more English within the community setting. This was the motivation for my master's thesis. As an applied linguist, I focused on the language use, literacy practices and language shifts within the community.

During the course of my research, I found very little documentation on the Malayalee community's arrival and presence in Singapore. Published studies indicated that the majority of Malayalees arrived in the 1930s and 1940s, but many members of the community told me that their ancestors arrived in Singapore at the turn of the 19th century. It was clear that this was a topic that needed to be explored further.

Q2. What is this book about and why did you choose the medium of print to promote your heritage?

The book consists of an overview of the community's migration of Malayalees from Kerala to Singapore from 1900 to 2016, and their subsequent evolution as Singapore Malayalees through more than 100 personal narratives. Photo portraits, personal family memorabilia and detailed family trees complement each narrative. It also includes special interviews with prominent personalities such as former President SR Nathan, Associate Professor Rajesh Rai, Arun Mahizhnan and Chelva Rajah for an etic or external perspective

of the community. As outsiders and experts in their respective fields, their observations of the Malayalee community provided a valuable source of insight into the community's practices and culture.

This is the first extensive research project on Singapore Malayalees and I thought it would be important to capture it in a form that was convenient and accessible. Judging from readers' comments, the book form seems to be the most impactful. Books are a convenient form that can be easily shared amongst family members as well.

Q3. What was the most memorable part of producing this publication?

There were several memorable moments in producing this publication, such as the hours spent in the National Library and National Archives of Singapore (NAS) researching the topic, the long interviews and elaborate tea sessions that the interviewees insisted we stay for, and also the drawing up of family trees.

But I do think that seeing the book in print was pretty special and emotional for all of us. It had been a long journey with several tense moments, but when I finally held the book in my hand, it was like a dream come true.

The most memorable moment for me was having the book launched by Professor Tommy Koh (Ambassador-at-large) at The Arts House to a packed hall. Members of the community and well-wishers who had heard of our journey or who were part of our journey came in troves to lend us their support. The launch was made possible thanks to support from the Singapore Indian Association (SINDA), the Singapore Malayalee Association, The Arts House and other patrons.

01. Book cover of *From Kerala to Singapore*.
Courtesy of Dr Anitha Devi Pillai.



01

Q4. What would you tell other heritage enthusiasts about documenting and preserving history?

My first advice is to have a clear focus on what they would like to achieve. There are several ways of documenting and preserving history. A clear focus on the selection criteria of primary and secondary data sources will enable heritage enthusiasts to achieve far more in a shorter span of time.

Projects like *From Kerala to Singapore* are social history projects where the voice of the interviewee dominates the narrative. When embarking on similar projects, heritage enthusiasts should identify members of the community whom they would like to interview. They will also have to make a decision on whether they would like to speak only to prominent members

in the community or to people from various social backgrounds as well.

They should spend sufficient time with the interviewees and not be in a rush to get through their interview questions. Do consider staying and chatting for a while after the interview. We found that it was during these moments when interviewees were most relaxed that they would remember pertinent details. These informal sessions are an excellent way of connecting with the interviewees. Heritage enthusiasts should also be prepared to speak with the interviewee several times before they begin to start writing. Often, there are gaps that will need clarification.

Aside from the interviews, heritage enthusiasts will also need to examine and analyse government records such as statistics of the community,

published studies, relevant theses, newspaper reports, and oral narratives from the NAS and Registry of Societies. They are also strongly encouraged to speak to research staff from both the National Library and the NAS.

Finally, I will also advise writing early in a form that is suitable for the intended audience. One crucial decision, therefore, that they would need to make is who the intended audiences are. For example, if they wish to give an academic perspective, they will then need to supplement the narratives with an academic essay to provide a deeper and broader perspective.

From Kerala to Singapore is available for purchase at Museum Label shops for \$49.

THE SINGAPORE WAR CRIMES TRIALS



A WEB PORTAL FOR ALL

Text by Joshua Goh

Student Contribution

Photo on this page
A scene from the
Singapore War Crimes
Trials, 1947. Tham
Sien Yen Collection.
Courtesy of the
National Archives of
Singapore.



01



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For the average Singaporean, the Japanese Occupation (1942 to 1945) is associated with tales of local heroism and courage. Speak to any member of our pioneer generation and chances are you will encounter personal stories that speak of fortitude in the face of brutality.

Yet, we do not often hear about the post-war fates of the Japanese occupiers, whose rule came to an abrupt end on 15 August, 1945. With the return of the British, what happened to the men and commanders of the Imperial Japanese Army who had ruled over *Syonan-to* (Japanese for “Light of the South”) for three years and six months? Was justice meted out to the alleged perpetrators of war crimes such as the *Dai Kensho* (Japanese for “great inspection” – referring to a general screening conducted in early 1942 to eliminate anti-Japanese elements in Singapore)?

Supported by the National Heritage Board's (NHB) Heritage Participation Grant and the Singapore Academy

of Law, the Singapore War Crimes Trials web portal (www.singaporewarcrimestrials.com) aims to plug these gaps in our often under-examined legal heritage. Conceived three years ago by National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Law's Assistant Professor, Dr Cheah Wui Ling, and NUS Law alumni and legal counsel, Ms Ng Pei Yi, this ambitious endeavour was born initially as a research project to uncover Singapore's own version of the Nuremburg and Tokyo trials. The aim: to shed light on the 131 cases that were heard by British military officials between 1945 to 1948 at the Supreme Court Building on St. Andrew's Road, whose original records have thus far been hived away in the British National Archives at Kew. The result: a comprehensive website featuring individual case-files and summaries, which was launched on 29 August, 2016 to a crowd that included members of the law fraternity, historians, and even representatives of civic organisations such as the International Red Cross.

01. Professor Walter Woon, Senior Counsel, graced the launch of the portal on 29 August, 2016. Courtesy of the Singapore Law Review.

02. A typical case profile page on the portal.

WHAT'S ON



CHILDREN'S SEASON SINGAPORE 2017

Various venues
May 27 to June 25

NHB's annual Children's Season Singapore returns in 2017, presenting cultural and educational experiences that will inspire, engage and educate our young audience. This year's edition goes beyond museums and will encompass all aspects of art, culture, heritage and education. With a wide range of programmes, exhibitions and engaging family activities for children of all ages, Singapore will be the place to be for children and families to create special memories together this June!

Highlights this year include a wonderland of discovery and play at the National Museum of Singapore, where you can pick your favourite mode of

traditional transport and embark on a trail to "join the dots" and experience "connections" as you discover popular family hangouts of the 1970s and 1980s and historical landmarks along the Singapore River; as well as *Ghost Nets of the Ocean – Au Karem ira Lamar Lu* at the Asian Civilisations Museum, featuring an ocean-scape inhabited by marine creatures, all made with ocean debris and recycled plastic materials that raises awareness on the dangers of ocean pollution.

For more information, please visit museums.com.sg/cs17



JOSEON KOREA: COURT TREASURES AND CITY LIFE

Asian Civilisations Museum

Ongoing to July 23

Saturdays to Thursdays | 10 am to 7 pm

Fridays | 10 am to 9 pm

\$8 for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents, \$15 for Foreigners

Intrigued by sets and costumes from Korean historical dramas and films? Then you will want to see actual furniture, fashion and decorative arts from Korea's Joseon era (1392–1897). Spanning some 500 years, Joseon was Korea's last dynasty, and the legacy of its courtly culture and vibrant city life lives on in South Korea today. Treasures from the National Museum

of Korea, the National Palace Museum of Korea, Seoul and the Deagu National Museum will be displayed for the first time in Singapore.

The exhibition will be accompanied by programmes and talks relating to Joseon Korea and contemporary Korean culture; as well as a work by South Korean contemporary artist Ran Hwang, best known for using pins, buttons, and thread to create large-scale installations.

For more information, please visit acm.org.sg



EXHIBITION AT FORMER FORD FACTORY

Former Ford Factory

Ongoing

Monday to Saturday | 9 am to 5.30 pm

Sunday | 12 pm to 5.30 pm

\$3 for adults

Free admission for children under 6, Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, Singapore student pass holders and Museum Roundtable members

The exhibition recounts the events and memories surrounding the British surrender, the Japanese occupation of Singapore, and outlines the legacies of war. Through oral history accounts, archival records and published material that tell the story of the period, this exhibition highlights the diverse experiences of people during this crucial time in our history.

For more information, please visit nas.gov.sg/formerfordfactory



ISTANA HERITAGE GALLERY

The President's Office and the Preservation of Sites and Monuments Division

35 Orchard Rd, Istana Park

Ongoing

Thursday to Tuesday | 10 am to 6 pm

Free admission

This Gallery presents the history and heritage of the Istana (a National Monument of Singapore), and its significance in Singapore's evolving political context. It also showcases a selection of artefacts – including state gifts which are lasting testimonies of Singapore's friendship with other countries – and photographs that show how the Istana, which is set in one of the most beautiful natural locations in Singapore, is an important site of social memory.

For more information, please visit istana.gov.sg/the-istana/istana-heritage-gallery/visitors-information

ARCHAEOLOGY LIBRARY

NUS Museum, Archaeology Library

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 7.30 pm

Sunday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

Bringing together finds from past and newer excavations from Fort Canning in Singapore to Changsha in China, these finds from the pre-colonial and colonial periods sample the materials produced and used in Singapore and beyond. Further, as part of an evolving body of artefacts, they provide a glimpse into the dynamics between material culture and history, and its making.

For more information, please visit museum.nus.edu.sg



MEREKA UTUSAN: IMPRINTING MALAY MODERNITY

Malay Heritage Centre

Ongoing to June 25

Tuesday to Sunday | 10 am to 6 pm

Free admission

The Malay Heritage Centre's fifth special exhibition, titled *Mereka Utusan: Imprinting Malay Modernity*, launched together with the Malay CultureFest, affirms the importance of language to a community by tracing the development of Malay modernity and identity through print, advertisements and editorial cartoons. Gain insights into how the Malay community in Singapore used the power of the mass media to discuss and respond to historical events such as the Great Depression, World War II and the nationalist movements that swept across Southeast Asia afterwards.

For more information, please visit malayheritage.org.sg/en



CHINESE ART COLLECTION FROM THE LEE KONG CHIAN MUSEUM

NUS Museum, Lee Kong Chian Gallery

Monday | Visits by appointment for schools and faculties only

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

The Chinese Art collection consists of bronzes, ceramics and paintings, gathered to represent the expansive history of Chinese art. The nucleus of this collection was established and developed at the Nanyang University in the 1970s with significant expansion in the 1980s under the newly inaugurated National University of Singapore (NUS).

For more information, please visit museum.nus.edu.sg



RESOURCE GALLERY

NUS Museum, Resource Gallery

Monday | Visits by appointment for schools and faculties only

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

The *Resource Gallery* provides an encounter with the NUS Museum's collections and their histories as an open-storage display. Objects are organised to accommodate material categories, area classifications, as well as contingencies of collecting

and its strategies. Their roots lie in the shifting curatorial positions and museum practice since the mid-1950s, with the formation of the University of Malaya Art Museum and Nanyang University, both in 1955, and the Lee Kong Chian Art Museum in 1969.

For more information, please visit museum.nus.edu.sg



FROM THE ASHES: REVIVING MYANMAR CELADON CERAMICS

NUS Museum, Archaeology Library

Ongoing until December

Monday | Visits by appointment for schools and faculties only

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

The exhibition introduces the experiments with celadon, a low temperature ash glaze pottery. They are displayed alongside celadon ware, which was an export product of Lower Myanmar in the 15th century. Also an ash glaze ware but fired at a higher temperature, its discovery at historical kiln sites inspired a revival of the tradition in the pottery community.

For more information, please visit museum.nus.edu.sg



BUAYA: THE MAKING OF A NON-MYTH

NUS Museum, Resource Gallery

Ongoing until July

Monday | Visits by appointment for schools and faculties only

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

This prep-room project presents simultaneous research and practices by conservator Kate Pocklington and artist Lucy Davis on the crocodile in Singapore. Activated by the conservation of the century old specimen for exhibition in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, the heuristic and scientific research has expanded to uncover the animal's eclipsed history. By virtue of the Straits' ambivalent relations with the crocodile, the materials on display reckon with its population and circulation in habitat and encounters, folklore, colonial enterprise, industry and violence.

For more information, please visit museum.nus.edu.sg



RADIO MALAYA: ABRIDGED CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ART

NUS Museum, South and Southeast Asian Gallery

Monday | Visits by appointment for schools and faculties only

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

As a backdrop to the evolving discussion on Malayan culture which Hsu was part of, the exhibition introduces selected writings by T.K. Sabapathy and S. Rajaratnam, the former pertains to Southeast Asian art historiography, and the latter as a call for a cultural history that forms part of a shaping of community and nation. These frames provide ways to consider the Museum's collection whose collecting histories may be associated with Malaya's period of formation, and the evolving project of art history.

For more information, please visit museum.nus.edu.sg



ART OF THE REHEARSAL

National Museum of Singapore, Gallery 10

Ongoing to July 31

Daily | 10 am to 5 pm

Free admission

Art of the Rehearsal is a three-channel immersive video installation by multidisciplinary artist Sarah Choo Jing. This artwork depicts Singaporean dancers across various cultures practicing along the back lanes of cultural districts in the city. Reflecting on the rigorous and intense training behind the performance, the artist seeks to bring out the consistent determination of the performers. The emphasis of the installation work is on the process rather than on the final outcome. The dance performance in the video is presented by Apsaras Arts Ltd, Era Dance Theatre and Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Dance Theatre.

For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg



STORY OF A FOREST BY TEAMLAB AND SINGAPORE, VERY OLD TREE BY ROBERT ZHAO (AN INSTALLATION)

National Museum of Singapore

Glass Rotunda, Level 2

Ongoing

Daily | 10 am to 7 pm

\$15 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors with valid ID

Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents (unless otherwise stated) and visitors aged 6 years and below

The Singapore History Gallery has been enhanced by two new immersive art installations that greet visitors before they enter the main gallery. The first work is a digital art installation inspired by the William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings, titled *Story of the Forest*. Visitors will experience the treasured collection of the National Museum brought to life through a spectacular digital presentation, and be transported to 20th century Malaya as viewed through the eyes of the artists of that time and reimagined today by interdisciplinary art collective teamLab.

At the end of their multimedia journey, visitors are able to see a photography installation titled *Singapore, Very Old Tree* by Singaporean artist Robert Zhao that explores the discourse of nature in Singapore, before they continue to explore the Singapore History Gallery.

For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg

SINGAPORE HISTORY GALLERY

National Museum of Singapore

Ongoing

Daily | 10 am to 7 pm

\$15 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors with valid ID

Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents (unless otherwise stated) and visitors aged 6 years and below

The Singapore History Gallery's updated narrative charts the development of the island as it was known through the years as Singapura, a Crown Colony, Syonan-To, and finally, Singapore. This gallery chronicles Singapore's journey from our earliest beginnings 700 years ago to the colonial days, to the Japanese Occupation and post-war struggles, and to the global city we enjoy today.

For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg

GOH SENG CHOO GALLERY: DESIRE AND DANGER

National Museum of Singapore

Ongoing

Daily | 10 am to 7 pm

\$15 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors with valid ID

Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents (unless otherwise stated) and visitors aged 6 years and below

Discover the fine line between *Desire and Danger* at this stimulating new exhibition at the Goh Seng Choo Gallery. Featuring a selection of drawings from the William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings, the gallery explores the complex and sometimes uneasy relationship between man and nature.

For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg

WE BUILT A NATION

National Museum of Singapore

Stamford Gallery, Level 1

Ongoing

Daily | 10 am to 7 pm

\$15 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors with valid ID

Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents (unless otherwise stated) and visitors aged 6 years and below

Through a selection of more than 100 artefacts, and archival images and documents, this exhibition explores the first ten pivotal years of independence (1965–1975) that shaped Singapore's history, and the important roles and leadership of Singapore's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his team who laid the foundations for modern Singapore.

For more information, please visit nationalmuseum.sg



WORK @ TJ: THE INDUSTRIOUS PIONEERS OF JURONG

National Heritage Board

Foyer, Level 1, Taman Jurong Community Club

Ongoing until July

Monday to Friday | 3 pm to 9 pm

Saturday | 10 am to 9 pm

Sunday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

Work @ TJ: The Industrious Pioneers of Jurong showcases the changing landscape of Jurong through its changing trades and occupations. It is the third in a series of community co-created thematic exhibitions incorporating the community memories of Taman Jurong residents.

For more information, please visit [facebook.com/OMATTJ](https://www.facebook.com/OMATTJ) or email raudha_muntadar@nhb.gov.sg

GUIDED TOUR OF WORK @ TJ EXHIBITION

National Heritage Board

Foyer, Level 1, Taman Jurong Community Club

Ongoing until June

Monday to Friday | 3 pm to 9 pm

Saturday | 10 am to 9 pm

Sunday | 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Public Holidays

Free admission

Join the free guided tours of Our Museum @ Taman Jurong's new exhibition and learn more about the development of Jurong and the evolving occupations of its residents. For large groups, please email us for bookings.

For more information, please visit [facebook.com/OMATTJ](https://www.facebook.com/OMATTJ) or email raudha_muntadar@nhb.gov.sg



SINGAPORE NIGHT FESTIVAL 2017

National Heritage Board

Bras Basah Bugis Precinct

August 18 to August 26

7.30 pm to 12 midnight

Performance nights are on August 24, 25 and 26

Take a walk down memory lane with the Singapore Night Festival as it celebrates ten magical years this August! This year's edition will rekindle the romance and beauty of night lights and exhilarating performances, bringing back previous crowd favourites in a refreshing retrospective, while looking forward to its bright future as Singapore's largest outdoor performing arts festival.



A LITTLE MAGIC SUNDAY

Singapore Philatelic Museum

May to October

Daily | 10 am to 7 pm

\$8 for adults; \$6 for children (from 3 to 12 years)

Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

Enter the fantastical realm of fairy tales through beautiful stamps from all over the world and engage your senses with interactive and hands-on exhibits. Relive the magic woven by Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault and more. For children aged 4 years and above and all who believe in magic. Held in conjunction with Children's Season Singapore.

For more information, please visit spm.org.sg



PRECIOUS EGGS: OF ART, BEAUTY AND CULTURE

Singapore Philatelic Museum

Ongoing to October 8

Daily | 10 am to 7 pm

\$8 for adults; \$6 for children (from 3 to 12 years)

Free admission for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

The exhibition showcases a collection of 148 precious eggs from the Liechtenstein National Museum. The egg's unique form and life-giving symbol have inspired artists and craftsmen, resulting in historical pieces like the Russian Imperial porcelain eggs, Fabergé egg pendants

and other works using materials ranging from crystal to horn.

For more information, please visit spm.org.sg



STITCHES OF LOVE – HIDDEN BLESSINGS IN CHILDREN'S CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES

(慈母手中线 – 儿童服饰里的祝福)

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

May 27 to March 4, 2018

Tuesday to Saturday | 10 am to 5 pm

Free admission for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents

A collaboration between Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall and the Memorial Museum of Generalissimo Sun Yat-sen's Mansion in Guangzhou, this special exhibition highlights the secret motifs embedded in children's clothing and accessories from the late Qing to early Republican period. The collection on display includes clothes, hats, ear muffs, bibs and shoes that feature a variety of motifs derived from the natural world, history, literature and folklore.

Some of these motifs seek to bestow blessings of good fortune, longevity and health on the young wearer, while others confer protection from harm. By wearing clothing and accessories which are imbued with auspicious blessings, children thus carry these unspoken messages of love, hope and affection.

For more information, please visit sysnmh.org.sg



BY
APPOINTMENT
ONLY



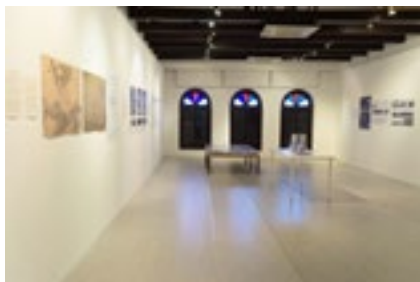
NUS BABA HOUSE

NUS Baba House

Free admission

Now conceived as a heritage house facilitating research, appreciation and reflection of Straits Chinese history and culture, the NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road was built around 1895 and was once the ancestral home of a Peranakan Chinese family. During the one-hour tour, guests will be introduced to the history and architectural features of the House, and experience visiting a Straits Chinese family home in a 1920s setting, furnished with heirlooms from its previous owners and other donors.

Free-of-charge tours five times a week. Email babahouse@nus.edu.sg to reserve spaces.



PRESERVE/CONSERVE/RESTORE: STUDIES AT 157 NEIL ROAD

NUS Baba House

Free admission

The initiative seeks to tap the under explored potential of 157 Neil Road as an asset for engaging with the disciplines of urban development and technical conservation of built heritage. The gallery is repurposed as a laboratory in which a few studies run simultaneously, presenting field notes, test results, illustrations, images and artefacts.

Free-of-charge tours five times a week. Email babahouse@nus.edu.sg to reserve spaces.



The Museum Roundtable (MR) is an initiative led by National Heritage Board since 1996. It represents and comprises a collective of public and private museums, heritage galleries, and unique attractions of science and discovery in Singapore. With more than fifty members currently, the MR strives to develop a stronger museum-going culture in Singapore while positioning museums as unique and fascinating destinations.

Please visit museums.com.sg for more information.

* By Appointment Only

¹ Free

² Free for Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents

³ Opening soon

A THE ARMY MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE²
 520 Upper Jurong Road,
 Singapore 638367
 +65 6861 3651
http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef_websites/atozlistings/army/microsites/armymuseum/index.html

ART RETREAT MUSEUM*¹
 10 Ubi Crescent, Lobby C,
 #01-45/47, Ubi Techpark,
 Singapore 408564
 +65 6749 0880
artretreatmuseum.com

ARTSCIENCE MUSEUM
 10 Bayfront Avenue,
 Singapore 018956
 +65 6688 8826
marinabaysands.com/museum.html

ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS MUSEUM²
 1 Empress Place,
 Singapore 179555
 +65 6332 7798
acm.org.sg

B BABA HOUSE*¹
 157 Neil Road, Singapore
 088883
 +65 6227 5731
nus.edu.sg/museum/baba

BATTLEBOX³
 2 Cox Terrace, Singapore
 179622
 +65 6338 6133
<http://www.battlebox.com.sg/>

THE BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY GALLERY*³
 Building Construction & Authority
 200 Braddell Road,
 Singapore 579700
 +65 6248 9930
bcaa.edu.sg/learning-journey-sites/bca-gallery

C CHINATOWN HERITAGE CENTRE³
 48 Pagoda Street,
 Singapore 059207
 +65 6224 3928
chinatownheritagecentre.com.sg

CHINESE HERITAGE CENTRE²
 Nanyang Technological University,
 12 Nanyang Drive, Singapore 637721
 +65 6790 6176
chc.ntu.edu.sg

CIVIL DEFENCE HERITAGE GALLERY¹
 62 Hill Street, Singapore
 179367
 +65 6332 2996
www.scdf.gov.sg

THE CHANGI MUSEUM¹
 1000 Upper Changi Road North,
 Singapore 507707
 +65 6214 2451
changimuseum.com.sg

E EURASIAN HERITAGE CENTRE
 139 Ceylon Road,
 Singapore 429744
 +65 6447 1578
www.eurasians.org.sg/eurasians-in-singapore/eurasianheritage-centre

F FORT SILOSO
 Sentosa Island, Siloso Point,
 Singapore 099981
 1800 736 8672
sentosa.com.sg

FU TAK CHI MUSEUM^{2,3}
 76 Telok Ayer Street,
 Singapore 048464
 +65 6580 2888

G GAN HERITAGE CENTRE*²
 18 Bukit Pasoh Road,
 Singapore 089832
 +65 6223 0739
ganclan.sg

GRASSROOTS HERITAGE CENTRE¹
 National Community Leaders Institute,
 70 Buona Vista Road,
 Singapore 118176
 +65 6672 5200
nacli.pa.gov.sg/grassroots-heritage-centre.html

H HDB GALLERY¹
 HDB Hub, Basement 1,
 480 Toa Payoh Lorong 6,
 Singapore 310480
hdb.gov.sg/hdbgallery

HEALTHZONE
 Level 2, Health Promotion Board,
 3 Second Hospital Avenue,
 Singapore 168937
 1800 435 3616
hpb.gov.sg/healthzone/

HOME TEAM GALLERY*¹
 501 Old Choa Chu Kang Road,
 Singapore 698928
 +65 6465 3726

I IEXPERIENCE CENTRE
 B1-10/18 Esplanade Xchange,
 90 Bras Basah Road,
 Singapore 189562
 +65 6820 6880
iexperience.sg

INDIAN HERITAGE CENTRE²
 5 Campbell Lane,
 Singapore 209924
 +65 6291 1601
Indianheritage.org.sg

THE INTAN *¹
 69 Joo Chiat Terrace,
 Singapore 427231
 +65 6440 1148
the-intan.com

IRAS GALLERY¹
 Revenue House, 55 Newton Road,
 Level 1, Singapore 209924
 +65 6351 2076

www.iras.gov.sg/irashome/About-Us/Our-Organisation/IRAS-Gallery

L LAND TRANSPORT GALLERY¹
 1 Hampshire Road, Block 1
 Level 1, Singapore 219428
 +65 6396 2550
lta.gov.sg/ltgallery/index.html

LEE KONG CHIAN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
 2 Conservatory Drive,
 Singapore 117377
 +65 6601 3333
lkcnhm.nus.edu.sg

M
MALAY HERITAGE CENTRE²
 85 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198501
 +65 6391 0450
malayheritage.org.sg

MARINA BARRAGE¹
 8 Marina Gardens Drive, Singapore 018951
 +65 6514 5959
www.pub.gov.sg/marina

MEMORIES AT OLD FORD FACTORY²
 351 Upper Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 588192
 +65 6332 3255
nas.gov.sg/moff

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HERITAGE CENTRE
 402 Commonwealth Drive, Singapore 149599
 +65 6838 1614
moeheritagecentre.sg

MINT MUSEUM OF TOYS
 26 Seah Street, Singapore 188382
 +65 6339 0660
emint.com

N
NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP POLYCLINICS' GALLERY OF MEMORIES¹
 Level 3 of Bukit Batok Polyclinic, 50 Bukit Batok West Avenue 3, Singapore 659164
 +65 6355 3000
nhgp.com.sg

NATIONAL LIBRARY GALLERY¹
 100 Victoria Street, Singapore 188064
 +65 6332 3255
nlb.gov.sg/golibrary/exhibitions.aspx

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE²
 93 Stamford Road, Singapore 178897
 +65 6332 3659
nationalmuseum.sg

NEWATER VISITOR CENTRE¹
 20 Koh Sek Lim Road, Singapore 486593
 +65 6546 7874
www.pub.gov.sg/water/newwater/visitors

NGEE ANN CULTURAL CENTRE¹
 97 Tank Road, Teochew Building, Singapore 238066
 +65 6737 9555
ngeeann.com.sg/en/ngee-ann-cultural-centre

NUS MUSEUM¹
 University Cultural Centre, 50 Kent Ridge Crescent, Singapore 119279
 +65 6516 8817
nus.edu.sg/museum

P
PERANAKAN MUSEUM²
 39 Armenian Street, Singapore 179941
 +65 6332 7591
peranakanmuseum.org.sg

POLICE HERITAGE CENTRE*¹
 28 Irrawaddy Road, Singapore 329560
 +65 6478 2123
police.gov.sg/spfheritage

R
RED DOT DESIGN MUSEUM¹
 Ground Floor, Red Dot Traffic Building, 28 Maxwell Road, Singapore 069120
 +65 6327 8027
museum.red-dot.sg

REFLECTIONS AT BUKIT CHANDU²
 31-K Pepys Road, Singapore 118458
 +65 6375 2510
www.nhb.gov.sg/museums/reflections-at-bukit-chandu

REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE NAVY MUSEUM¹
 112 Tanah Merah Coast Road, Singapore 498794
 +65 6544 5147
www.mindef.gov.sg/navy

REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AIR FORCE MUSEUM¹
 400 Airport Road, Singapore 534234
 +65 6461 8504
www.mindef.gov.sg/rsaf

SCIENCE CENTRE SINGAPORE²
 15 Science Centre Road, Singapore 609081
 +65 6425 2500
science.edu.sg

S
THE SGH MUSEUM¹
 Singapore General Hospital, Bowyer Block Clock Tower, Outram Road, Singapore 169608
 +65 6326 5294
www.sgh.com.sg/museum

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM²
 71 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189555
 +65 6589 9580
singaporeartmuseum.sg

SINGAPORE CITY GALLERY¹
 45 Maxwell Road, The URA Centre, Singapore 069118
 +65 6321 8321
www.ura.gov.sg/uol/citygallery

SINGAPORE COINS AND NOTES MUSEUM
 20 Teban Gardens Crescent, Singapore 608928
 +65 6895 0288
scnm.com.sg

SINGAPORE DISCOVERY CENTRE
 510 Upper Jurong Road, Singapore 638365
 +65 6792 6188
sdc.com.sg

SINGAPORE MARITIME GALLERY¹
 Marina South Pier, Level 2, 31 Marina Coastal Drive, Singapore 018988
 +65 6325 5707
maritimemuseum.sg

SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM²
 23-B Coleman Street, Singapore 179807
 +65 6337 3888
spm.org.sg

SINGAPORE SPORTS MUSEUM²
 6 Stadium Walk, Singapore 397698
 +65 6653 9710
sportshub.com.sg/venues/Pages/singapore-sports-museum.aspx

SUN YAT SEN NANYANG MEMORIAL HALL²
 12 Tai Gin Road, Singapore 327874
 +65 6256 7377
wanqingyuan.org.sg

T
TAN TOCK SENG HOSPITAL HERITAGE MUSEUM¹
 11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng, Level 1, Singapore 308433
 +65 6357 8266
ttsh.com.sg/TTSH-Heritage-Museum

TAN SWIE HIAN MUSEUM
 460 Sims Avenue, Singapore 387601
 +65 6744 3551
www.tanswiehian.sg

W
WOODBRIE MUSEUM¹
 10 Buangkok Green, Buangkok Green Medical Park, Singapore 539747
 +65 6389 2000
www.imh.com.sg



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