



**PRESIDENT'S
YOUNG
TALENTS 2018**

4 OCT 2018 - 27 JAN 2019
SAM AT 8Q



Singaporeartmuseum
#PresidentsYoungTalents
www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

© 2018 Singapore Art Museum
© 2018 Individual contributors

All artworks are © the artists unless otherwise stated.
Information correct at the time of the publication.

Artwork captions by:
Andrea Fam

All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for purposes of private study, research, criticism, or review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior consent from the Publisher.

Printer: Allegro Print Pte Ltd

Organised by



Supported by



Supporter



Official Outdoor Media





The **President's Young Talents** exhibition (PYT), organised by the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), is the nation's premier mentoring, commissioning and awards exposition. Into its seventh edition, PYT 2018 maintains its core focus as a platform that nurtures emerging artists aged 35 and below.

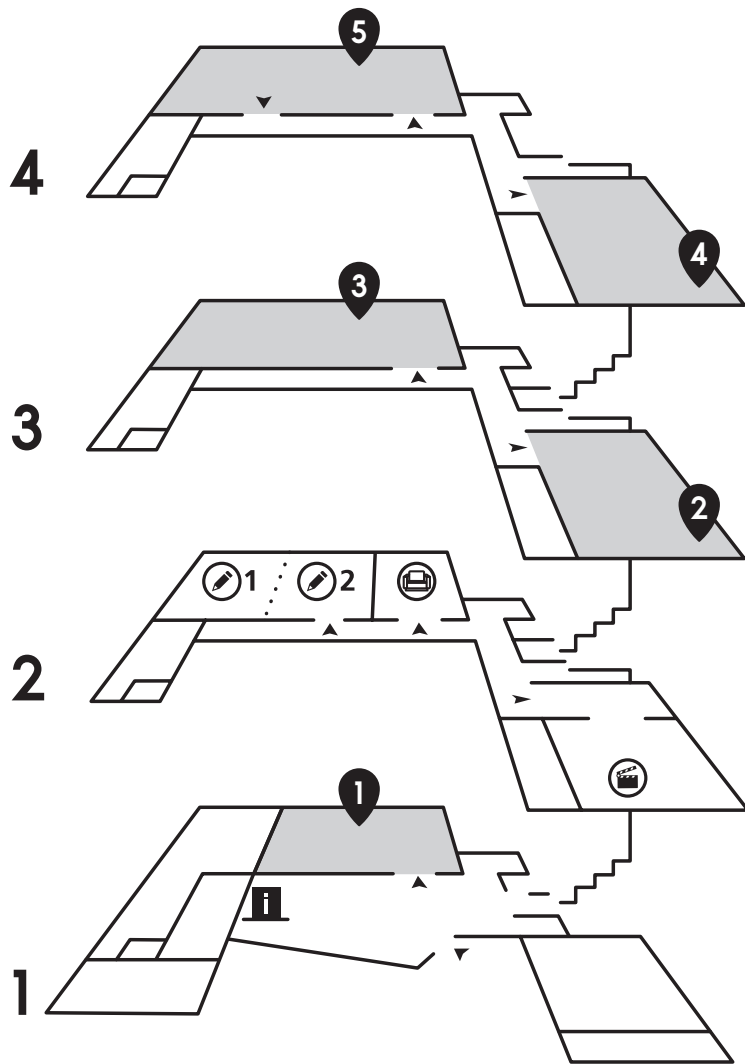
A mentoring committee comprising artists, independent curators and artist-curators, selected Yanyun Chen, Weixin Quek Chong, Debbie Ding, Hilmi Johandi and Zarina Muhammad, as the finalists of PYT 2018. A six-month mentorship followed, and through extensive dialogue, debate and development, the five artists produced the newly commissioned artworks. Across disciplines of painting, performance, new media, installation and sculpture, PYT 2018 presents some of the important strands of inquiry coming out of Singapore's emerging contemporary art practitioners.

The exhibition carries two awards: the Grand Prize, voted on by an independent jury, and a People's Choice Award, the result of which is determined by the public.

A show that highlights the energy and spirit of Singapore's contemporary art scene, PYT 2018 fittingly marks the last exhibition in SAM's calendar before both museum buildings close for a major revamp, momentarily signalling a period of preparation for a new chapter of Singapore visual art.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

Singapore Art Museum invites the public to vote for their favourite artwork from 4 October to 25 November 2018 at the lobby of SAM at 8Q. The artist whose artwork receives the most votes is conferred the People's Choice Award, as well as a cash prize of \$5,000. The President's Young Talents' People's Choice Award will be announced on 29 November 2018.



CONTENTS

- 1
ZARINA MUHAMMAD
Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold
 06

- 2
YANYUN CHEN
The scars that write us
 08

- 3
DEBBIE DING
Soil Works
 10

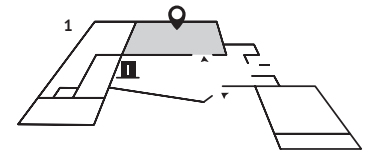
- 4
WEIXIN QUEK CHONG
sft crsh ctrl
 12

- 5
HILMI JOHANDI
An Exposition
 14

- Mentors' Biographies
 16

- Programmes
 18

- General Information
 20



ZARINA MUHAMMAD

Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold

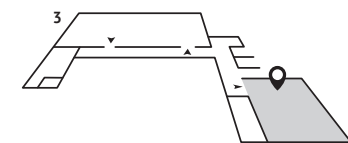
2018
Bamboo, sandalwood, clay, stone, turmeric powder, sandalwood powder, saffron, nine grains and spices, rose water, incense, glass jars and paper
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Art Museum commission

Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold by Zarina Muhammad takes the *penunggu* or 'guardian at the gate' as its departure point and charts out a space that traverses beyond the physical.

The installation is laid out as three distinct divisions that serve as the hills, land and sea of Bukit Larangan, Bras Basah, as well as Kallang and the coastal areas of Singapore, respectively. Within each designation are a selection of material objects and modes of presentation that reflect and respond to the history, culture and memories of the zones they are housed in. These objects act as coordinates in which to map the histories and paths that the spirits of these realms may have resided and roamed in.

Historic and mythic, *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold* aims to, in the artist's words, "disrupt and irrupt time and move beyond the single narrative of place".

Zarina Muhammad (b. 1982, Singapore) is an artist, educator and writer whose practice is deeply entwined with her decade-long multidisciplinary research on the shapeshifting forms and cultural translations pertaining to Southeast Asian ritual magic and its mythological roots. She is particularly interested in the broader contexts of myth-making, gender-based archetypes, and the region's tenuous and tentative relationship to mysticism and the immaterial against the dynamics of global modernity. Zarina has presented her work in Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Thailand. She lives and works in Singapore.



YANYUN CHEN

The scars that write us

2018
Charcoal, chalk, gold leaf, steel plates
(set of 10) and steel sheets (set of 6)
Steel plates 30 × 30 cm each; steel sheets
180 × 80 cm each
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Art Museum commission

The scars that write us adopts the keloid scar as its reference and offers a narrative on wounds and scars, and those that bear them.

Entering into a dark, quietened space, a visitor first perceives rather than sees the work directly, evoking a sense of anticipation, curiosity and uncertainty for what lies ahead, obscured.

The work unfolds in three types of spatial experiences: near, far and wide. The sense of proximity – or distance – alludes to the complex relationships between the audience, the person who bears the scar and the stories behind each wound. The installation also endeavours to provide a space to consider the unregistered contemplations for those who live with the ordeal of scars – the physical, and otherwise.

The scars that write us is dedicated to wounds, scars, markings, traumas of all kinds. It is an installation that speaks of the most personal of experiences that every person holds.

Yanyun Chen (b. 1986, Singapore) is a visual artist and lecturer at Yale-NUS College. Grounded in stories and philosophical readings, her drawing practice deconstructs our role as *witness-of-decay* – depicting wilting flowers as a manifestation of time passing; researching nudity embroiled in historical spectacles and censorship; investigating the fictions and operations of etymology; and reading scars on skin. She has trained in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Singapore and Sweden, and was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the 15th Japan Media Arts Festival (2012). She manages illustration and animation studio Piplatchka, and co-founded Delere Press. She lives and works in Singapore.



DEBBIE DING

Soil Works

2018
Mixed media installation,
consisting of five parts
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Art Museum
commission

Red Landscape

PVC vinyl print, anodised
aluminium alloy light
stands, aluminium alloy
tripods, LED light battens,
colour film gels, wide
angle LED light panels
and nylon sandbags

Home without a Shelter

Nylon ripstop, mylar
and acetate film, acrylic
paint, textile paint,
cork mannequin head,
mannequin head mounts,
anodised aluminium
alloy light stands and
nylon sandbags

Topsoil

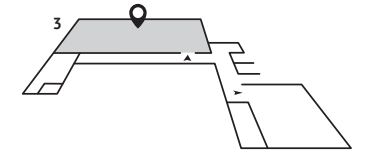
Residual granite soil,
CCTV camera with
varifocal lens, field
monitor, IR LED strips,
LED drivers, anodised
aluminium alloy light
stands, double articulating
arm, wide angle LED light
panels, acrylic, wood and
nylon sandbags

Sand Weight

Residual granite soil, LED
strip, stepper motors,
acrylic, aluminium
profiles, micro-controller,
miscellaneous electronic
components, CCTV camera
with varifocal lens and
projection

Soil Column

Residual granite soil,
water, PTFE, glass
and acrylic

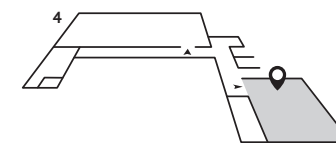


According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, soil is a “biologically active, porous medium, that has developed in the uppermost layer of Earth’s crust”. Yet what *is* soil? In *Soil Works*, Debbie Ding unearths and isolates units of the composite excavated from concealed areas under expressways, overhead bridges, road triangles, carparks – public spaces which are usually overlooked as one travels through Singapore – and proposes, in her words, “a series of artistic investigations into soil in Singapore and its visibility and invisibility”.

The installation is presented in five parts: “Red Landscape”, “Home without a Shelter”, “Topsoil”, “Sand Weight” and “Soil Column”. Each ‘station’ beckons the visitor to observe soil in a range of alternative investigative approaches.

Through *Soil Works*, Ding considers the strategies of researching the physicality of soil in Singapore by highlighting both its perceptible and less perceivable qualities. In doing so, she destabilises the concept of the scientific laboratory by staging her own multi-station ‘testing’ gallery.

Debbie Ding (DBBD.SG) (b. 1984, Singapore) is a visual artist and technologist who researches and explores technologies of perception through personal investigations and experimentation. This has led to a series of archive and map-based works under the moniker ‘Singapore Psychogeographical Society’, as well as computer-aided investigations into archaeological and historical finds. A recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate) (2013), she has presented in Singapore at The Substation (2010, 2012, 2015, 2017), NUS Museum (2016), the Singapore Biennale (2016) and National Museum of Singapore (2017). She has exhibited her work internationally in France, Germany and the UK. She lives and works in Singapore.



WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

sft crsh ctrl

2018
Silk twill, latex, wood, silicone, vinyl, faux fur,
paper, screens, aluminium and stainless steel
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Art Museum commission

Shaped by the concept of the contingency plan, *sft crsh ctrl* by Weixin Quek Chong invites visitors to engage with a range of objects and series of material encounters that seem to evade traditional inquiry. The work unfolds, unfurls, suspends and drapes in ways that challenge the visitor's understanding and expectation of materials. Its components evoke a sense of precarity and the notion of non-occurrence. It is an installation of 'surfaces' as explored through material form and transformation. *sft crsh ctrl* guides the visitor towards sensations underlined by uncertainty, persuading a disengagement from the instinct to rationalise.

Weixin Quek Chong (b. 1988, Singapore) is a visual artist whose practice explores materiality, the afterlife of images and the relationships between the digital, organic and aesthetic. The effects and methods of manipulating images across materials are core to her practice. She was a recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate) (2012) and the Tan Ean Kiam Postgraduate Scholarship. Previously an artist-in-residence at the NTU Centre of Contemporary Art in Singapore, her works have been exhibited in Carrara, Istanbul, London, Paris, Santiago, Seoul, Taipei, Vienna and Yogyakarta. She lives and works in Singapore, Spain and the UK.



HILMI JOHANDI

An Exposition

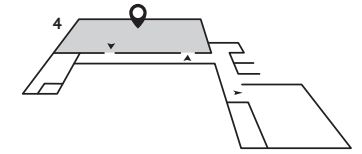
2018

Oil on canvas, three-channel video, digital print on vinyl sticker mounted on wood, synthetic polymer paint, plywood and mild steel

Dimensions variable

Collection of the Artist

Singapore Art Museum commission



An Exposition tells the story of the defunct 'World(s)' – New World, Great World and Gay World (formerly Happy World) – through fragments of material and memory. The schemas of these bygone-era amusement parks are used to introduce audiences to an assemblage of fragmentary elements. In doing so, Hilmi attempts to establish a speculative dialogue that traces the systems of production, consumption, pleasures and entertainment of these 'World(s)'.

Visitors are welcomed to traverse a space marked out by components that together appear to resemble a deconstructed theatrical set. These range from paintings, wooden sculptures and silent animated videos to wall and wood mounted vinyl prints.

The installation is immersive whilst reminding the viewer of the void that exists within the theatricality of set designs and amusement parks. In a presentation of decontextualised signs and symbols, *An Exposition* engages with the local history and collective memory of Singapore.

Hilmi Johandi (b. 1987, Singapore) primarily works with painting and explores interventions with different mediums that are associated within the domain of framing, fragmentation (deconstruction) and compression (reconstruction). Set in the context of Singapore, he composes and synthesises images from film, archival footages and photographs into a fragmented montage that hints at the social effects of rapid development. He was a recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate) (2017), LASALLE Scholarship (2017) and the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award. He has been involved in exhibitions in Japan, London, New York, Paris, Singapore and Thailand. He lives and works in Singapore.

MENTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID CHAN

David Chan (b. 1979, Singapore) is an artist and art educator. Working mainly in sculpture and painting, Chan produces works that explore human behaviour and comment on social conventions. He obtained his BFA from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia.

Chan has exhibited internationally in several countries, including America, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea and Malaysia. He also exhibited as part of the 54th Venice Biennale (2011) and was commissioned for an outdoor work at the Singapore Biennale (2016). He was a recipient of the UOB Painting of the Year award (2004) in the representational medium category. Chan also lectures at the National Institute of Education and the School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He lives and works in Singapore.

ROGER NELSON

Roger Nelson (b. 1982, Australia) is an art historian, independent curator and postdoctoral fellow at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research considers images, texts and urban spaces in relation to discourses of modernity and contemporaneity in Southeast Asia. He is co-founding co-editor of *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia*, a journal published by NUS Press.

Nelson completed his PhD at the University of Melbourne, Australia on "Cambodian arts" of the 20th and 21st centuries. He has contributed essays to numerous scholarly journals, as well as specialist art magazines such as *Artforum*, several books and exhibition catalogues. He has curated exhibitions and other projects in Australia, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, most recently *People, Money, Ghosts (Movement as Metaphor)* at Bangkok's Jim Thompson Art Center, in 2017. He lives and works in Singapore.

GRACE TAN

Grace Tan (b. 1979, Malaysia) is a multidisciplinary artist whose works often blur the lines between design and art. Stemming from her fashion design background, her practice began as an exploration of wearable structures based on the study of rectangles and construction methods for the 'kwodrent' series. It has since evolved into sculptural objects, site-specific installations and large-scale public art commissions.

Tan holds an MAFA from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. She has exhibited within Singapore and internationally, including at the Singapore Biennale (2013), Setouchi Triennale (2013), President's Young Talents (2013) and London Design Week (2006). She was a recipient of the President's Design Award in 2012 and the Young Artist Award in 2013. Most recently, she presented her solo exhibition *Materials & Methods* at POLA Museum Annex, Tokyo (2018) and *A Common Thread: Archiving a Practice* at FOST Gallery, Singapore (2018). She lives and works in Singapore.

JASON WEE

Jason Wee (b. 1979, Singapore) is an artist and a writer working between urbanism, queer feelings, poetry and photography. His art practice contends with sources of singular authority in favour of polyphony and difference. He transforms these source histories and spaces into various visual and written materials. He is keenly interested in their secrets and their futures, their idealisms and their conundrums.

Wee has postgraduate degrees from the New School, New York, USA and the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Massachusetts, USA. He is the founder and director of Grey Projects, an artists' library and residency, and an editor of the poetry journal *Softblow*. His work has been exhibited in Bangkok, New York, Paris, Shanghai and Singapore. He has been an artist-in-residence at Artspace, Sydney; Gyeonggi Creation Center, South Korea; Tokyo Wonder Site; and ZK/U, Berlin. He lives and works in Singapore and New York, USA.

ZAKI RAZAK

Zaki Razak (b. 1979, Singapore) is an artist and art educator. His practice began as a street artist and now spans a variety of genres, including graphic design and performance art to challenge assumptions about social languages and rituals.

Zaki received his MFA from the Open University, UK. He was part of the President's Young Talents 2013 exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum, as well as the associate artist (2012-2014) of The Substation's Associate Artist Research Programme. He was the recipient of the Young Artist Award in 2013. His work has been exhibited in Australia, Hong Kong, Spain and Thailand. He lives and works in Singapore.

PROGRAMMES

PERFORMANCES

Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold by Zarina Muhammad

Wednesday, 3 October 2018
Sunday, 27 January 2019
SAM at 8Q

Free with museum admission

Delve deeper into Zarina Muhammad's artwork, *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold*, with an opening and closing artwork performance.

Dictation 3.1 by Weixin Quek Chong

Saturday, 20 October 2018
3pm to 3.25pm and 3.35pm to 4pm | SAM at 8Q

Free with museum admission

The artist will read to a group of up to twelve at a time who will take dictation from the reading. This exercise continues a series of variations on the dictation format, which the artist sees as a communicative state of mutual suspension.

Artwork Response: Gamelan Performance

Friday, 26 October 2018
7pm | SAM at 8Q

Free with museum admission

Explore themes of honouring ancestors and offering gratitude to the land in Zarina Muhammad's artwork, through Central Javanese songs performed by Indonesia's Singa Nglara Gamelan Ensemble featuring Soerya Soemirat.

KAMI

Friday, 25 January 2019
8pm–8.30pm | SAM at 8Q
Free with museum admission

KAMI is a play by theatre-maker Irfan Kasban, which centres around a wandering deity on a journey of self-discovery. The work is seen as a response to Zarina Muhammad's *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold*, where many questions are raised. What is our present-day relationship to the land, the otherworldly, to the seen and unseen? Do ghosts and gods exist because we believe in them? Is their survival dependent on the frequency in which we fervently speak of and to them?

TOURS

Artist and Curator Tour

Saturday, 6 October 2018
7.30pm | SAM at 8Q

\$20. Tickets available at SAM at 8Q and APACTIX.

Join a closed-door tour of the exhibition with the *President's Young Talents 2018* artists and curator Andrea Fam.

A Tour of the Atmospheres and Microclimates of the Civic District, Singapore

Saturday, 13 October 2018
4pm–5.30pm | SAM at 8Q

\$15. Tickets available at SAM at 8Q and APACTIX.

Join artist Debbie Ding in this talk and mapping tour of the microclimatic of the civic district. Using the exaggerated solar environment of *Soil Works* as a starting point, Debbie will talk about the spatial apparatus of atmospheres, museological and air-conditioning systems, and outdoor urban environments.

Seniors Day Out: Kopi, Teh and Contemporary Art

January 2019 | SAM at 8Q

Free with registration through www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

This tour of the exhibition has been created specifically with senior citizens in mind. Guided by students from Nanyang Girls' High School, this multilingual tour will focus on elements in artworks that resonate with the seniors. Refreshments will be provided.

ARTIST TALKS & PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Artist Talk: Yanyun Chen on Working with Scars

Tuesday, 30 October 2018
6pm–7.30pm | SAM at 8Q, Moving Image Gallery

\$10. Tickets available at SAM at 8Q and APACTIX.

Come join PYT 2018 artist Yanyun Chen as she discusses her artwork *The scars that write us* during this in-depth artist talk. You will learn more about the process behind her work and the stories of those living with keloids and scars.

In Conversation: Skin, Scars and Trauma

Wednesday, 23 January 2019
7:30pm–8:30pm | SAM at 8Q, Moving Image Gallery

\$15. Tickets available at SAM at 8Q and APACTIX.

Join this panel discussion with artist Yanyun Chen, writer Jeremy Fernando and an art therapist, as they discuss the relationship between keloids, scars, trauma, images, narratives and healing.

The PYT Alumni Talks

Various dates in November and December 2018
SAM at 8Q

Discover the artistic journeys and current projects of alumni artists from the *President's Young Talents* programme, which is now in its 7th edition.

WORKSHOPS

Artist-led Workshops

Various dates | SAM at 8Q

Gain a deeper appreciation of *President's Young Talents 2018* artworks through workshops conducted by the artists. Through these workshops, the finer details of their artistic processes will be unveiled, from their thoughts when making the artwork to the decisions for using specific materials and mediums.

Kneading Kala: An Artist-led Workshop on the Genius Loci and Shapeshifting Stories on Space

Saturday, 24 November 2018
2pm–3pm | SAM at 8Q, Workshop Space 2

\$20. Tickets available at SAM at 8Q and APACTIX.

In this artist-led workshop, participants will be invited to write a letter or create little effigies in remembrance of the stories of imagined, mythic or historical guardians of the hills, land and seas.

Suitable for ages 16 and up. Participants are welcomed to bring additional materials.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Tour for Educators

Friday, 5 October
4pm–5.30pm | SAM at 8Q

Free for educators with registration through www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/learn. One tour per educator only.

Join curator Andrea Fam as she shares the ideas and concepts behind the artworks in this specially-tailored preparatory tour for educators planning to bring students to visit the PYT 2018 exhibition.

Workshop for Educators

Fridays, 19 October and 9 November 2018 | 3pm–5pm
SAM at 8Q, Workshop Space 2

Free for educators with registration through www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/learn. Registration closes one week before each workshop.

Join art educator Adrian Tan as he shares the pedagogical strands in this exhibition and how to use the activity sheets.

Gallery Sessions

Weekdays
10.30am or 2.30pm
SAM at 8Q

Free for schools with booking by the 7th of the month prior to the date of visit through <https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/learn/school-visits>. A maximum of 20 participants per session.

Engage in lively conversations with museum educators about the *President's Young Talents 2018* exhibition and selected artworks.

School Workshops

Weekdays

10am or 2:30pm | SAM at 8Q
\$15–\$30 per student.

Bookings are required through www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/learn/workshops

These educational workshops have been specially developed to offer students a multidisciplinary and holistic contemporary art experience through a wide range of workshop content.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Suitable for young adults and students of different age groups, the *President's Young Talents 2018* activity sheet covers the five artworks featured in the exhibition, which can be downloaded free at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/learn/resource-center.

For more information on all programmes, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/programmes

GENERAL INFORMATION

SAM at 8Q

8 Queen Street, Singapore 188535

OPENING HOURS

Mondays to Sundays | 10am to 7pm
Fridays | 10am to 9pm

ADMISSION

Singaporeans and Free
permanent residents

Adults.....\$6
Students, seniors and NSFs.....\$3
Children under six.....Free

Free museum entry every Friday from 6pm to 9pm and on Open House days.

Tickets can be purchased from the Information and Ticketing Counter at SAM at 8Q or at www.apactix.com.
20% off adult admission tickets for 20 or more persons.

ENQUIRIES

(65) 6589 9550

enquiries@singaporeartmuseum.sg

STROLLERS, WHEELCHAIR ACCESS AND LOCKERS

Lifts provide easy access to galleries.
Lockers are available for visitors' use.

GETTING TO SAM at 8Q

By bus

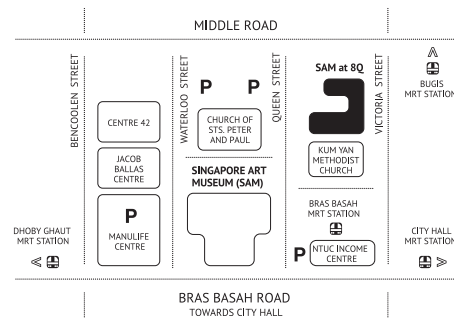
7, 14, 16, 36, 77, 111, 131, 162, 167, 171, 175, 502, 518, 700

By MRT

2-minute walk from Bras Basah MRT station. 10-minute walk from Dhoby Ghaut, Bugis or City Hall MRT stations.

By car

Carparks are available at NTUC Income Centre, Manulife Centre, Hotel Grand Pacific and Singapore Management University.



ABOUT SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art-thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges.

SAM occupies two buildings: the old St Joseph's Institution on Bras Basah Road, built in 1855 and now a National Monument; and SAM at 8Q, a conservation building across the road on Queen Street that was the old Catholic High School. The museum building along Bras Basah Road is currently closed in preparation for a major revamp, with museum programming continuing at SAM at 8Q and partner venues.

SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013 and 2016, and will continue to organise the next two editions in 2019 and 2022. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

To find out more, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

SAM ONLINE

www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

[f](#) [@](#) singaporeartmuseum

[t](#) sgartmuseum

[v](#) samtelly

ORGANISED BY

sam
singaporeartmuseum
CONTEMPORARY ART IN SOUTHEAST ASIA