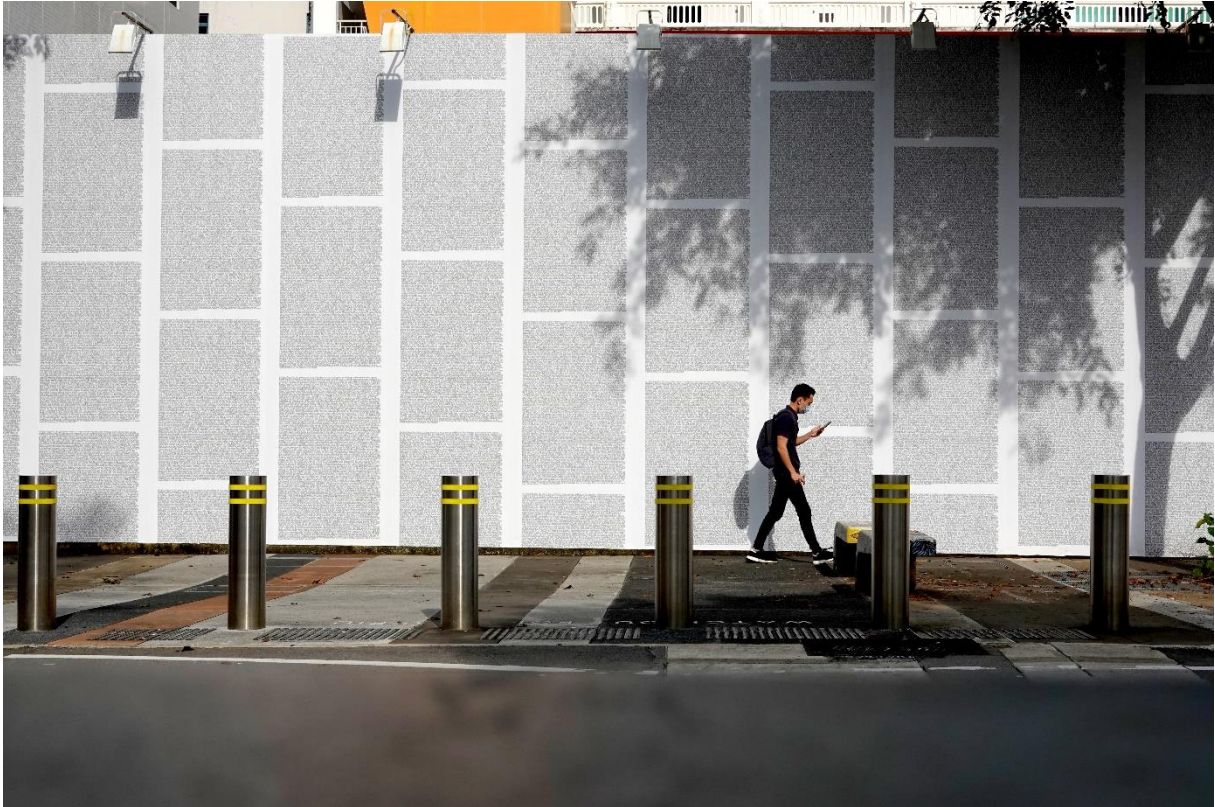


MEDIA RELEASE

**SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM BRINGS CONTEMPORARY ART TO THE STREETS
WITH A NEW COMMISSION BY SINGAPOREAN ARTIST HEMAN CHONG**

The commissioned artworks are part of the Walking in the City series on

SAM's hoardings and will be on display until 6 December 2020



Heman Chong, *Writing While Walking And Other Stories*, 2020, Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum;
Image courtesy of the artist

Singapore, 15 July 2020 – While Singapore Art Museum (SAM) undergoes a major building redevelopment, SAM continues to collaborate with Singapore artists to present contemporary artworks. The *Walking in the City* series presents specially commissioned artworks on the hoardings currently installed around the perimeter of the museum buildings along Bras Basah Road and Queen Street. Engaging with themes such as the history of the SAM buildings and the island, society, urban development, and the environment, the second commission is by Singaporean artist Heman Chong, who represented Singapore at the 50th Venice Biennale.

It features two artworks – *Safe Entry* and *Writing While Walking And Other Stories* on the hoardings around the SAM buildings along Bras Basah Road and Queen Street respectively. *Writing While Walking And Other Stories* is currently on display, while *Safe Entry* will be installed in the coming weeks, and both works will be on view until 6 December 2020. The two commissioned artworks reflect Chong's practice that is located at the intersection between image, performance, situations and writing.

This edition of *Walking in the City* is curated by SAM Assistant Curator, John Tung. Sharing his thoughts on how Chong's practice lends itself to the theme of the hoardings, Tung explains, "What drew me to reaching out to Heman for this edition of *Walking in the City* was his long history of working with eye-catching text and images, and I was interested to see the manifestation of his idea on the much larger scale of the SAM hoardings. I had also learned that Heman was an avid long-distance walker. Having walked thousands of kilometres in both Singapore and other cities around the world, this past-time in conjunction with his extensive art practice made him ideal for responding to the ideas I wanted to share in the series of commissions."

The hoarding commission can be seen as a continuation of Chong's practice, namely the aspects of writing and image-making, on an expanded scale, and draws upon the act of walking as the activity that is also the means of his capture of public spaces and the everyday. The artist's practice thus resonates deeply with *Walking in the City's* curatorial premise which references French philosopher Michel de Certeau's seminal text, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, as a philosophical starting point, and looks to present artistic expressions of research on various thematic areas in relation to current affairs and on-goings in Singapore.

About *Safe Entry*

Safe Entry, presented on the hoarding along Bras Basah Road, is a mural produced by repeating a single, enlarged QR code, which has become ubiquitous in Singapore as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The final image is an ambiguous, dynamic and unfathomable landscape, created from one of the many representations of the digital data that surrounds us and permeates our lives.

The original QR code used in this mural links to a video of the artist on a long walk in Changi Airport's Terminal 2 during Singapore's "circuit breaker," a term for the country's COVID-19

lockdown. Terminal 2, which is currently being renovated, parallels the ongoing refresh of SAM behind this hoarding, and members of the public are invited to take a virtual walk through Terminal 2 with the artist by scanning the original QR code, featured alongside the artwork caption on the hoarding.



Scan the QR code to access the video

About *Writing While Walking And Other Stories*

Writing While Walking And Other Stories, presented on the hoarding along Queen Street, comprises 2,581 words which were written on the move by the artist on his iPhone during an eight-hour meander around Singapore. In this work, Chong compresses the acts of walking and writing into a single process. Each frame is presented in a staggered tile pattern across the hoarding and appears to become animated as the viewer traverses the length of the image, lending the work a filmic quality and sense of the infinite.

The newly commissioned outdoor artworks by Heman Chong are part of the *Walking in the City* series featuring artworks on the hoardings surrounding SAM's heritage buildings. *Walking in the City* will continue throughout the period of the museum's redevelopment.

For more information on the artist, please refer to [Annex A](#).

Images are available for download at: <https://bit.ly/SAM-Hoardings>

Image credits as per file names.

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About the Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum 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 buildings are currently closed for a major building redevelopment, with museum programming continuing at partner venues until the buildings re-open.

SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019. 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.singaporeart-museum.sg

Annex A: Artist Biography



Photo by Nguan; Image courtesy of the artist

Heman Chong is an artist whose work is located at the intersection between image, performance, situations and writing. His practice can be read as an imagining, interrogation and sometimes intervention into infrastructure as an everyday medium of politics. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Jameel Arts Center, Swiss Institute New York, Art in General, Artsonje Center, Rockbund Art Museum, South London Gallery, amongst many others. Chong is the co-director and founder (with Renée Staal) of The Library of Unread Books, a library made up of donated books previously unread by their owners. He is currently working on a novel, *The Book of Drafts*, which will be published by Polyparenthesis in 2020.