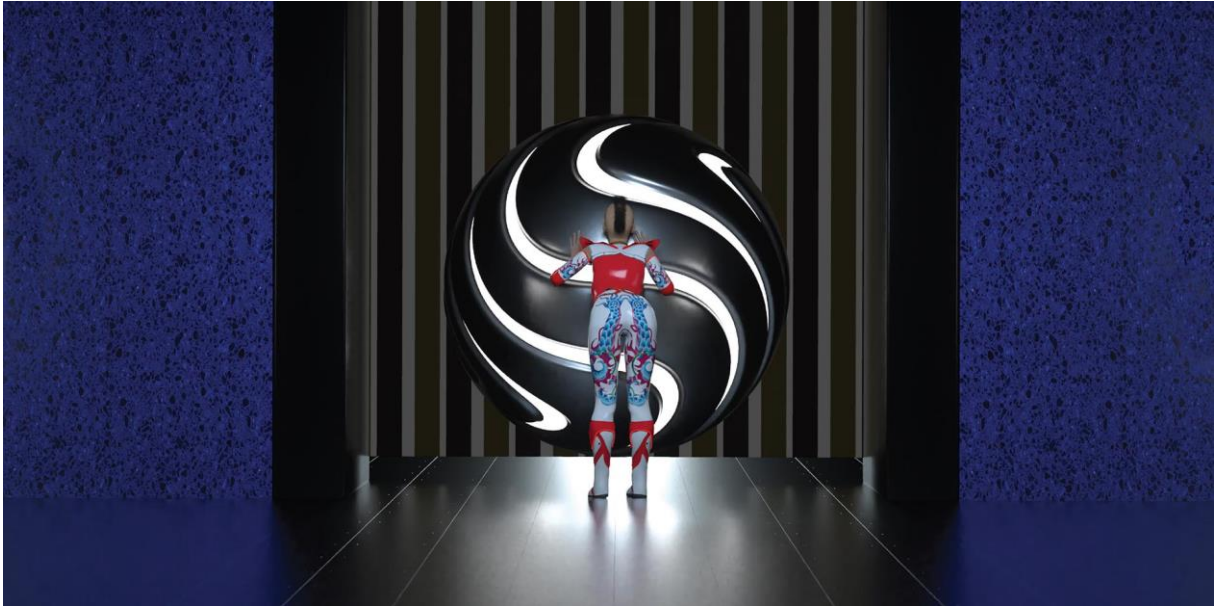


MEDIA RELEASE

**SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM KICKS OFF THE NEW YEAR WITH
*COSMICWANDER: EXPEDITION BY CHOY KA FAI***

*The exhibition opens at Tanjong Pagar Distripark and is one of
several SAM offerings as part of Singapore Art Week 2021*



Choy Ka Fai, 'The Wanderer' (video still), 2020; image courtesy of the Artist

Singapore, 14 January 2021 — Singapore Art Museum (SAM) presents *CosmicWander: Expedition* by Berlin-based Singaporean artist Choy Ka Fai from 16 January to 21 February 2021 at Tanjong Pagar Distripark. SAM's first exhibition of the year kicks off its 2021 programme calendar, which will see the museum continue to actively offer contemporary art experiences across Singapore at satellite venues and on virtual platforms, while SAM's buildings undergo redevelopment. Audiences can look forward to a line-up of exhibitions, public and education programmes, art residencies and community outreach initiatives island-wide.

CosmicWander: Expedition, which is also part of Singapore Art Week 2021, is a work-in-progress presentation of Choy's ongoing research into the metaphysics of the human body, taking the body as a conceptual device for explorations into "post-human" choreographic ideas and alternative states of consciousness.

“*CosmicWander: Expedition* offers insight into Choy Ka Fai’s artistic process, highlighting his multi-faceted art practice, which situates itself at the intersection of dance, media art and performance. Ka Fai’s practice resonates with SAM’s commitment to present multi-disciplinary and innovative exhibitions that combine technology, multimedia and performance. As an experiential platform, *CosmicWander: Expedition* offers audiences an immersive art experience that challenges and opens up new ways of how we perceive the world, an undertaking SAM is committed to as a contemporary art museum,” says Dr Eugene Tan, Director, Singapore Art Museum.

The exhibition is an investigation into the human desire for transcendence, through exploring shamanic dance cultures in Asia. Having ventured into the region in search of spectacular trance experiences, the artist has met over 50 shamans and filmed extraordinary dance rituals, from the wilderness of Siberia to the mythological practices in Java.

Set up as an experiential installation, it features the artist’s perspective on humanity’s attempt to connect, to question, and to perceive and interact with different states of reality. Stories and images composed from his invigorating encounters with “altered states” are weaved with the artist’s speculations, resulting in a choreographic sequence of moving images, text and spectacle, inspired by practices observed in Singapore, Indonesia, Siberia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Elaborating on his research and practice, Choy explains, “I imagine new futures of the body by appropriating technologies and narratives where lines between the spiritual and the secular, the virtual and the material, are blurred to project a new choreography of the body. *CosmicWander: Expedition* invites you to commune with us, and to think about our bodies and our spiritual states in these strange times.”

For *CosmicWander: Expedition*, Choy presents his project in three parts — an exhibition comprising video installations and a costume; a multimedia performance; and a lecture.

The Wanderer, a six-channel video installation, is an omnibus of supernatural dance experiences of contemporary shamanic practices in different parts of Asia, each corresponding to a natural element such as metal, wood, water, fire and earth. ***Getai of Virtual Gods***, a five-channel video installation, presents a fictional band of spiritual beings of various Asian descent

dancing to hit songs and familiar tunes, in a show of cultural harmony. This alternative virtual concert interweaves the secular world of pop culture with speculations of future spiritual entertainment. ***Uncle Ho who can recall your future lives***, is a hypothetical design of the Vietnamese Len Dong Shaman's ritual costume, inspired by the revolutionary "Uncle Ho", in anticipation for his imminent immortalisation as the newest God in the celestial system of the Dao Mau belief.

CosmicWander: Vogue is a tele-presence performance experiment based on Choy's research into the possible co-existence of divine embodiments of different lineage within one spirit medium. The multicultural voguing party will be led by Norwegian-Thai dancer Sun Phitthaya Phaefuan, with music performed by local artists NADA (Rizman Putra and Safuan Johari) and Cheryl Ong. ***CosmicWander: Destination*** is a lecture by supernatural dance explorer and founder of *CosmicWander*, Choy Ka Fai, who will trace his creation of an agency which provides spiritual journeys and conceptual travel, and discuss his encounters of bodily transformation in trance.

In addition, the exhibition will feature materials from Choy's *CosmicWander* research, such as video interviews and readings. Audiences can also tune in to a conversation with the artist and a panel of speakers titled *CosmicWander: Transcendence*, where they will discuss the desire for self-transcendence and the influence of digital technology on systems of belief.

CosmicWander: Expedition runs from 16 January to 21 February 2021 at Tanjong Pagar Distripark. It is presented as part of Singapore Art Week taking place from 22 to 30 January 2021, and supported by the National Arts Council Creation Grant and Goethe Institut. Programmes will be livestreamed on SAM's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) channels and a virtual gallery of the exhibition with excerpts from the video works will be available online on [SAM's website](#) from end January.

For more information, please refer to the following annexes:

Annex A: Artist Biography

Annex B: Exhibition and Programme Details

Images are available for download at: bit.ly/CosmicWander-MediaKit

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 is 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 Katja Illner; Image courtesy of the artist

Choy Ka Fai

b. 1979, Singapore

Choy Ka Fai's multi-disciplinary art practice situates itself at the intersection of dance, media art and performance. At the heart of his research is a continuous exploration of the metaphysics of the human body. Through research expeditions, pseudo-scientific experiments and documentary performances, Choy appropriates technologies and narratives to imagine new futures of the human body. His projects have been presented in major institutions, exhibitions and festivals worldwide, including *Escape Routes*, Bangkok Art Biennale (2020); Taipei Arts Festival (2019 and 2020); Liveworks Festival, CarriageWorks, Sydney (2019); Kyoto Experiment (2019); Sadler's Wells, London (2016), ImPulsTanz Festival, Vienna (2015 and 2018) and Tanz Im August, Berlin (2013 and 2015). He was the resident artist at tanzhaus nrw in Düsseldorf (2017–19) and Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin (2014–15). In 2010, he was awarded the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council, Singapore. Choy lives and works in Berlin.

ANNEX B: Exhibition and Programme Details

For the latest updates, please visit bit.ly/CosmicWander-Expedition

Programme Title	Date	Venue / Platform
<i>CosmicWander: Expedition</i>	16 January – 21 February 2021, 12.00pm – 9.00pm daily* (12.00pm – 5.00pm on 16 January)	Tanjong Pagar Distripark, 39 Keppel Road, #01-02 to 04
A Tele-Presence Performance Experiment <i>CosmicWander: Vogue</i>	Saturday, 16 January 2021, 7.00pm – 7.30pm	This event will be live-streamed on SAM's Facebook and YouTube channels
A Lecture by Choy Ka Fai <i>CosmicWander: Destination</i>	Friday, 22 January 2021, 7.00pm – 7.30pm	This event will be live-streamed on SAM's Facebook and YouTube channels
Panel: <i>CosmicWander: Transcendence</i>	Saturday, 30 January 2021, 7.00pm – 8.30pm	This event will be live-streamed on SAM's Facebook and YouTube channels