

REPETITION EVERYDAY REPETITION ENDURANCE REPETITION EVERYDAY REPETITION ENDURANCE

# EVERYDAY PRACTICES

## LEARNING RESOURCE

This educational resource features selected artworks  
and guiding questions suitable for ages 13 and up.

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# EVERYDAY PRACTICES

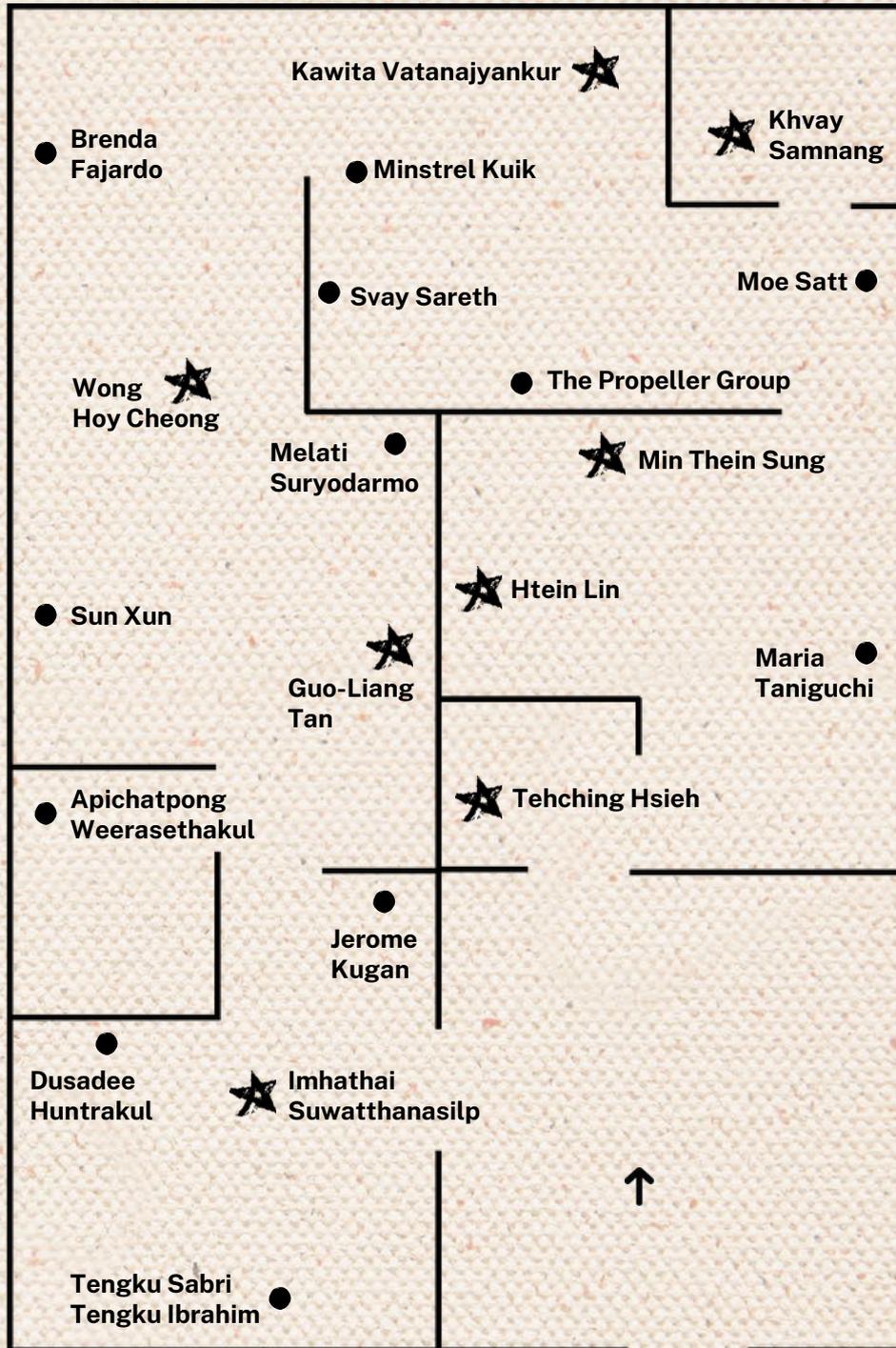
Inspired by Tehching Hsieh's idea of turning everyday life and the passage of time into art, *Everyday Practices* explores how artists transform daily routines and lived experiences into acts of resilience and endurance. Their works reflect ongoing conflicts, humanitarian crises and power struggles, where simple, repeated actions become small forms of resistance. Art, in this context, helps make sense of and cope with adversity.

Featuring artworks from SAM's collection, the exhibition brings together a diverse group of artists from different generations and regions in Asia. As you explore the exhibition, look out for elements in the artworks that illustrate the ideas of everyday, repetition or endurance. It highlights how individual actions, though rooted in cultural practices, can unite us in facing a universal question:

“In the face of life’s challenges, what keeps us moving forward?”

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# EXHIBITION LAYOUT



★ Artists and artworks featured in this resource.

# ONE YEAR PERFORMANCE 1978 - 1979



Installation views of *One Year Performance 1978 - 1979*, 1978-1979. Image courtesy of SAM.

## Tehching Hsieh

### *One Year Performance 1978 - 1979*

1978-1979

Artist's statement, poster and silkscreen print on paper

Gift of Hallam Chow

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

## THE ARTIST

**Tehching Hsieh** (b. 1950, Taiwan) is a groundbreaking performance artist known for his endurance-based works. Hsieh is best known for his *One Year Performances* and *Thirteen-Year Plan*, which pushed the limits of physical and mental endurance. His works have been exhibited worldwide, including at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 2013, Hong Kong's M+ Museum acquired his collection, and he represented Taiwan at the 2017 Venice Biennale.

## THE ARTWORK

- On 30 September 1978, Tehching Hsieh confined himself in a small cell he built in his New York apartment. With just basic necessities — a wash basin, light, pail and bed — he vowed to stay isolated for a year without speaking, reading, writing or using media like radio or TV.
- This was the first of his five year-long performances, focusing on time and endurance.
- To track time, Hsieh made notches on the wall and arranged for photographs to be taken of himself daily. The notches are displayed here as a silkscreen print, along with his statement and a poster showing public viewing dates, highlighting that the passage of time and his experience form the essence of his artwork.

# ONE YEAR PERFORMANCE 1978 - 1979



## Think!

1. Why do you think Hsieh let the public visit him even though he was isolating himself? How do you think this affected his performance?
2. What role do you think documentation (like making notches, photographs and posters) played in transforming Hsieh's private experience into something the public could engage with?



## Activity!

Hsieh marked the passing of time by making notches on the wall.  
List down some daily actions in your life that leave a lasting impact.

Do you think it is important to leave a lasting mark on the world? Why or why not?

A large white rectangular area with horizontal lines, resembling a piece of lined paper, held in place by two brown diagonal strips on the left and right sides.

## SOAP BLOCKED



### Htein Lin

*Soap Blocked*

2016

Soap and a poster

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

Installation view of *Soap Blocked*, 2016.  
Image courtesy of SAM.

## THE ARTIST

**Htein Lin** (b, 1966, Myanmar) is a Burmese artist who works across painting, installation, and performance. Much of his work reflects his experiences with imprisonment and Myanmar's political struggles. After joining the failed 1988 uprising, he fled his homeland and lived in refugee camps for years. He returned to Yangon in the early 1990s but was arrested and spent nearly seven years in prison, where he used materials like prison uniforms and soap to develop his art.

## THE ARTWORK

- In this installation, hundreds of soap blocks are arranged to form a map of Myanmar, with red blocks showing the locations of political prisons.
- Each soap has a tiny carved figure in a hunched and trapped pose, symbolising the time when the artist was imprisoned for political dissent.
- The soaps are from the Shwe Wah brand, the only brand that was available in Myanmar for decades when they were under military rule.
- “Shwe Wah” means “Golden Yellow” in Burmese. It is a reference to the country's nickname, “the Golden Land,” due to its many glittering pagodas.
- Htein Lin uses this work to reflect on how people lived in isolation and under control, amplifying the feeling of helplessness that many faced during that time.

## SOAP BLOCKED



### Think!

1. How did the artwork make you feel when you first saw it? After learning about the artist's story and his experiences, did it change the way you see or interpret the piece? If so, how?
2. Recall a moment in life where you have felt isolated, confined or helpless. What symbols or items from your daily life represent these feelings or experiences for you?



### Activity!

Take a close look at the tiny carved figures. How do you think their postures express emotion?

Now, imagine other body postures that could show different feelings such as fear, hope or sadness. Draw your ideas in the space below.





Installation view of *Time: Dust*, 2017–2019. Image courtesy of SAM.

## Min Thein Sung

### *Time: Dust*

2017–2019

Dust on canvas and cotton

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

## THE ARTIST

**Min Thein Sung** (b. 1978, Myanmar) creates art inspired by everyday life in Myanmar, exploring the country's complex history of isolation. His works, often playful and poetic reflect the creativity and imagination that was present despite the fact that the country experienced restrictive political conditions. Many are based on his childhood memories and a desire to find peace in the present.

## THE ARTWORK

- *Time: Dust*, is a series of paintings in which the artist worked with the unpredictable forces of nature such as time, light, humidity and dust as a medium.
- Under his control, the dust forms precise geometric shapes, with gradients in tone where it thickens and fades into lighter textures.
- The playful shapes seem to dance, reflecting the passage of time.
- Like much of his work, this series offers a poetic escape from the present, contrasting with Myanmar's political history.



**Think!**

1. Describe what you see. How do you think the various shades in each “painting” were created?
2. What do you think of using dust — something often seen as dirty or unwanted — as an artistic medium?
3. Both Min Thein Sung and Tehching Hsieh make use of time as a medium in their artwork. Compare the similarities and differences in the way time is being presented in their artworks.



**Activity!**

Try writing a haiku about dust in Singapore.

A haiku is a short, three-line poem that originates from 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan. Haikus often describe nature and share insights about life.

While writing, use these prompts to help you:

Line 1: Five syllables (Where were you?)

Line 2: Seven syllables (What did you see?)

Line 3: Five syllables (Add a surprise!)



Installation view of *Untitled*, 2011–2013. Image courtesy of SAM.

## Khvay Samnang

### *Untitled*

2011–2013

5-channel HD video installation with sound

Dimensions variable

Collection of SAM

## THE ARTIST

**Khvay Samnang** (b. 1982, Cambodia) is a Cambodian artist who graduated from the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. His work includes performance, photography, video and installation. He often uses humour and symbolism to explore the effects of colonialism and globalisation on people and the environment. He co-founded the art collective Stiev Selapak, which aims to preserve and rethink Cambodian history and visual culture. Khvay lives and works in Phnom Penh.

## THE ARTWORK

- In Cambodia, the illegal sale of state-owned lakes to private investors has forced thousands of families from their homes.
- Urban development has destroyed once-thriving communities, leading to protests which were quickly suppressed.
- Kvay Samnang has secretly entered five of these illegally sold lakes in Phnom Penh. While standing in the water, he poured a bucket of sand over himself. This symbolic act is shown in videos and represents the helplessness of displaced communities who are left powerless and forgotten.



**Think!**

1. How would you describe the background in these videos? How do you think they have helped audiences to understand the artist's intention?
2. Do you think the artist's action of pouring a bucket of sand over himself in the video effectively conveys his feeling of helplessness? Why or why not?



**Activity!**

Reflect on situations in your own communities or other parts of the world where people have been displaced. Think of ways you can use to help these people and write your ideas down below.

# THE DUSTPAN, THE BASKET, WET RAG AND THE ROBES



Installation view of *The Basket*, *The Dustpan*, *Wet Rag* and *The Robes*, 2012–2014. Image courtesy of SAM.

## Kawita Vatanajyankur

### ***The Basket***

2014

Video: single channel, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, 2 min 13 sec

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

### ***Wet Rag***

2012

Video: single channel, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, 1 min 54 sec

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

### ***The Dustpan***

2014

Video: single channel, 9:16 aspect ratio, colour, 2 min 8 sec

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

### ***The Robes***

2014

Video: single channel, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, 4 min 17 sec

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

## THE ARTIST

**Kawita Vatanajyankur** (b. 1998, Thailand) uses her body to explore and challenge the roles of womanhood, labour and consumerism. She performs strenuous, repetitive tasks with domestic tools, blending human and machine in a cyborg-like role. Her striking videos resemble colourful ads, taking inspiration from the global visual language of consumerism. However, beneath the appealing visuals, her work highlights human strength and female resilience, making it both captivating and challenging to watch.

## THE ARTWORK

- In these works from the TOOLS/WORK series, the artist transforms her body into everyday objects.
- While the bright, playful background colours add humour to these scenes, the works have a deeper message. Kawita likens her body to household objects to highlight the physical strain and violence tied to routine tasks often associated with femininity.
- By pushing her body to its limits, she reflects the pressure women face to meet societal expectations.

# THE DUSTPAN, THE BASKET, WET RAG AND THE ROBES



## Think!

1. What was your initial reaction to seeing the human body transformed into these objects?
2. How does the use of bright colours affect your perception of the performance?
3. How does Kawita's physical effort in her performances relate to the pressure women feel in society?



## Activity!

Create a visual representation of how you would symbolically represent a person turning into this object. You should think about posture, body position and the societal expectations attached to the task that object represents.

My chosen everyday object

Visual representation of my answer

# TAPESTRY OF JUSTICE



## Wong Hoy Cheong

### *Tapestry of Justice*

1999–2004

Thumbprints, petals and leaves

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

Installation view of *Tapestry of Justice*, 1999–2004.  
Image courtesy of SAM.

## THE ARTIST

**Wong Hoy Cheong** (b. 1960, Malaysia) is one of Malaysia's leading contemporary artists, known for his focus on socio-political activism and Malaysia's post-war history and development. His work spans various styles and mediums, including drawing, painting, installation, photography, performance and film. He explores Asian and global history, society and politics, particularly through Malaysia's colonial and post-colonial experiences and examines themes like politics, culture and ethnicity.

## THE ARTWORK

- Over 10,000 photocopied thumbprints are woven into this delicate tapestry, mixed with leaves and petals from plants like the hibiscus (Malaysia's national flower), rose and beech.
- The artist created this installation as a response to the Reformasi movement in the late 1990s, which focused on addressing social and political injustices.
- Over six years, the artist collected these thumbprints which symbolises both criminal evidence and personal identity. This work highlights the extreme difference in how thumbprints can be used and the power of collective action to push for a change.

# TAPESTRY OF JUSTICE



## Think!

1. Why do you think the artist chose to collect thumbprints?
2. What do the flowers and leaves symbolise?
3. What does this artwork say about the power of community and collective voices in addressing injustice?



## Activity!

Research on a cause that you care about and brainstorm how you could use art to raise awareness.

How will I use art to raise awareness?

## PERIPHERAL RITUAL I-III



Installation view of *Peripheral Ritual I-III*, 2018. Image courtesy of SAM.

### Guo-Liang Tan

#### *Peripheral Ritual I-III*

2018

Acrylic on aeronautical fabric stretched over wood

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

### THE ARTIST

**Guo-Liang Tan** (b. 1980, Singapore) is a visual artist who mainly focuses on painting but also explores text, collage, and video. His work uses surfaces to express emotions and evoke a sense of haunting, often engaging with abstract themes. His process involves gaps, overlaps and fragments, reflecting on how these elements shape our experience of time, body and memory.

### THE ARTWORK

- *Peripheral Ritual I-III* is a set of three paintings originally made separately but is shown together as a triptych.
- In these works, paint that is thinned down, flows and spreads naturally on water-resistant aeronautical fabric, creating stains that seem accidental but are actually carefully controlled.
- The artist compares his process to choreography, using his body to shift, tilt and turn the paintings. The wooden stretcher bars are visible through the fabric, adding to the physical presence of the works.
- The soft, shifting colours resemble bruised skin, hinting at the body's resilience.

## PERIPHERAL RITUAL I-III



### Think!

1. Identify the different types of marks on the artwork and reflect on the gestures or movements that might have produced them. How do these marks hint at the physical actions behind their creation?
2. What techniques do you think were used in this artwork? In what ways does it resemble or differ from more traditional paintings in terms of style, process and materials?
3. What do you think is the meaning behind the artwork?

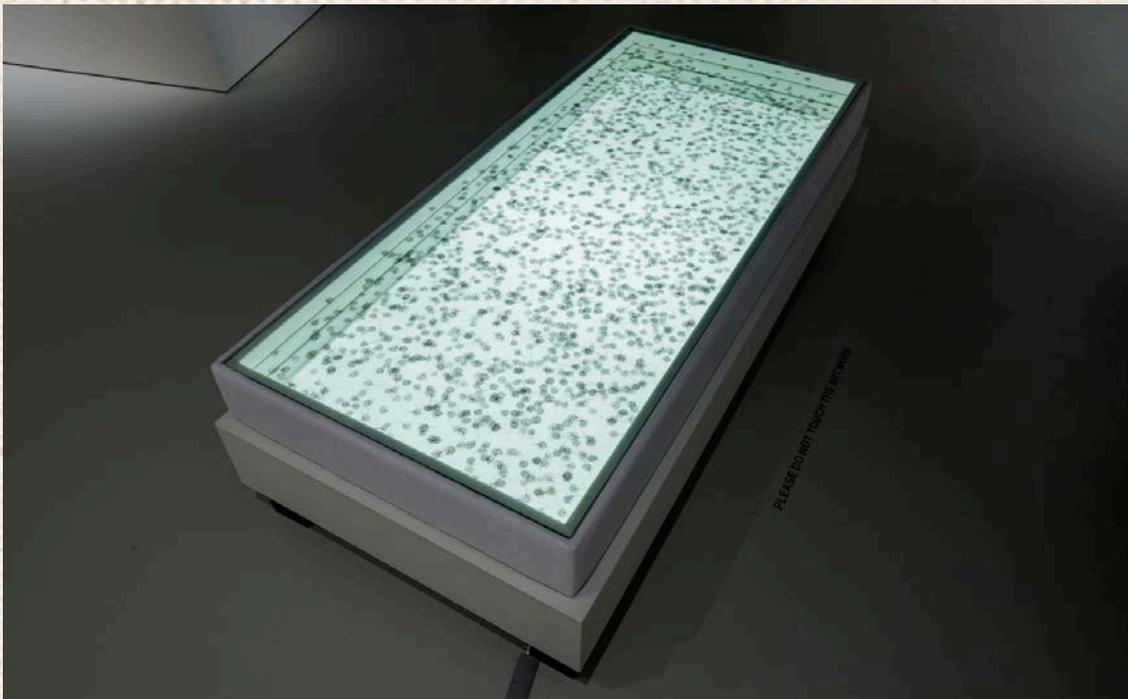


### Activity!

Take on the role of an observer for a day and look for random marks or patterns in your surroundings. Record these marks on the canvas below, and reflect on how you think each mark was created. What movements, actions or natural processes might have led to their formation?



## THE FLOWER FIELD



Installation view of *The Flower Field*, 2012. Image courtesy of SAM.

### Imhathai Suwatthanasilp

#### *The Flower Field*

2012

Hair, bed frame, acrylic sheets and LED lights

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

### THE ARTIST

**Imhathai Suwatthanasilp** (b. 1981, Thailand) is known for her unique use of human hair in her art, which she weaves, crochets, embroiders or laces into intimate two- and three-dimensional pieces. Her work connects hair to human experiences and explores themes like gender, mortality, beliefs and rituals, reflecting the character and behaviour of people in Thai society.

### THE ARTWORK

- In a field of bright white light, thousands of delicate flowers seem to float, creating a peaceful, dream-like scene.
- On closer inspection, the flowers are actually handspun balls of hair, taken from cancer patients, survivors and donors from the Hair for Hope charity program.
- These hairballs are arranged on a lightbox made from a repurposed bed frame. The backlit strands serve as a tender tribute to human resilience.
- Through her careful craftsmanship, Imhathai Suwatthanasilp sends a message of hope for a brighter future.

## THE FLOWER FIELD



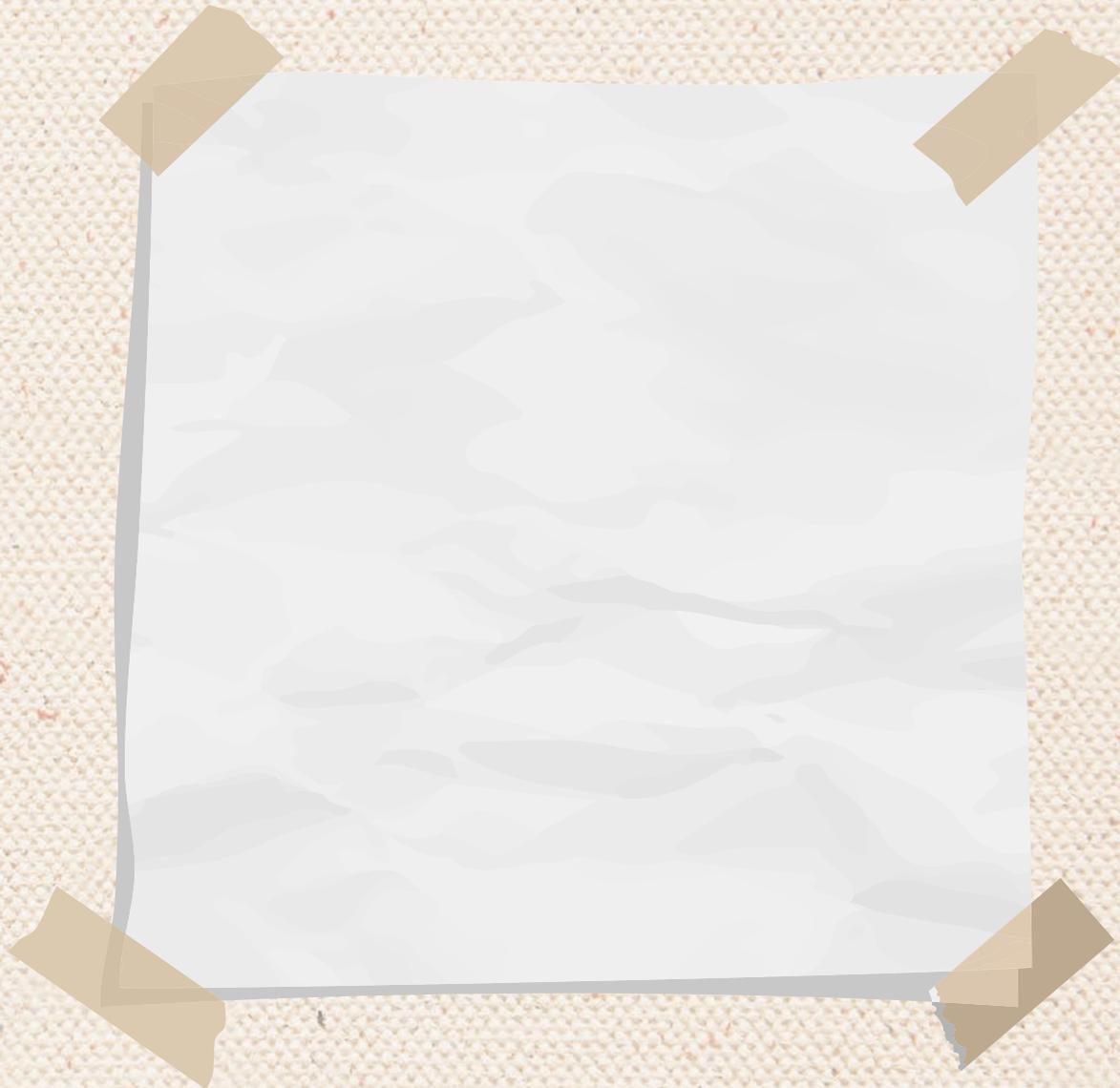
### Think!

1. How do you feel about the use of hair in art? What does it represent?
2. What themes of resilience and hope do you think are important to explore in our own lives or communities?



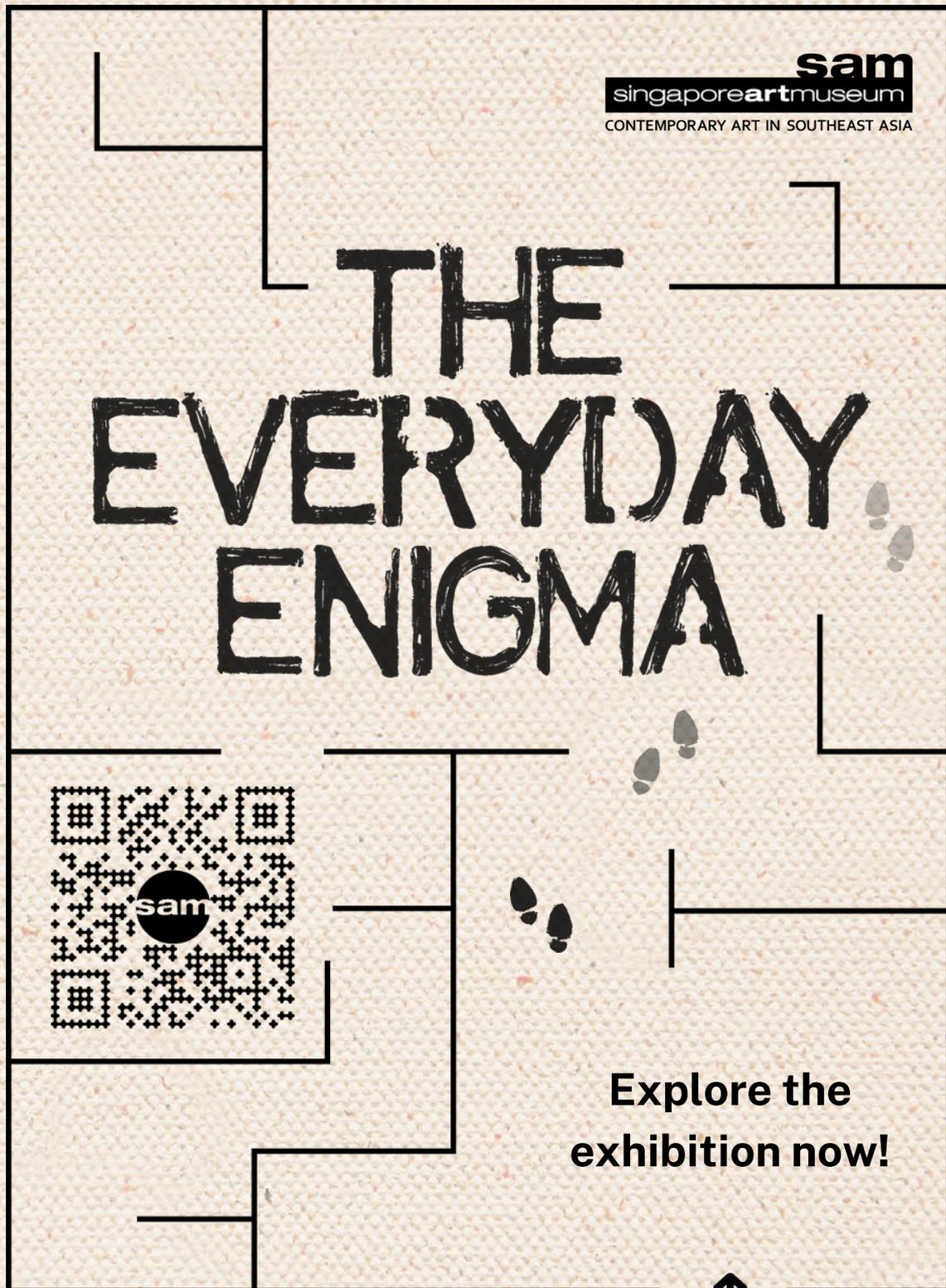
### Activity!

Art can be used to honour personal and shared experiences.  
Draw another pattern that can convey the same message of hope.



# SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Crack the code and win an exclusive prize as you explore the exhibition through this puzzle-filled trail!



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