

sam
singaporeartmuseum
CONTEMPORARY ART IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



LEARNING GALLERY

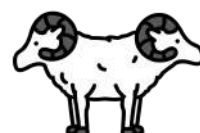


EDUCATORS' RESOURCE

This resource is designed for educators with the aim of fostering meaningful discussions on contemporary art between them and their students.



CHEN SAI HUA KUAN



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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This educators' resource is designed for use with students before, during and after your visit to the Learning Gallery at the Singapore Art Museum.

It shares key concepts and ideas associated with the exhibition to facilitate your visit and complements lessons conducted in school. This includes suggested guiding questions and activities that students may explore in the gallery, at home or in class, wherever relevant.

You may customise your visit by choosing your own preferred exhibition route.

For additional support, please refer to the additional notes for educators and facilitators when addressing the social and emotional learning aspects of the artworks during your discussion.

INTRODUCTION

LEARNING GALLERY

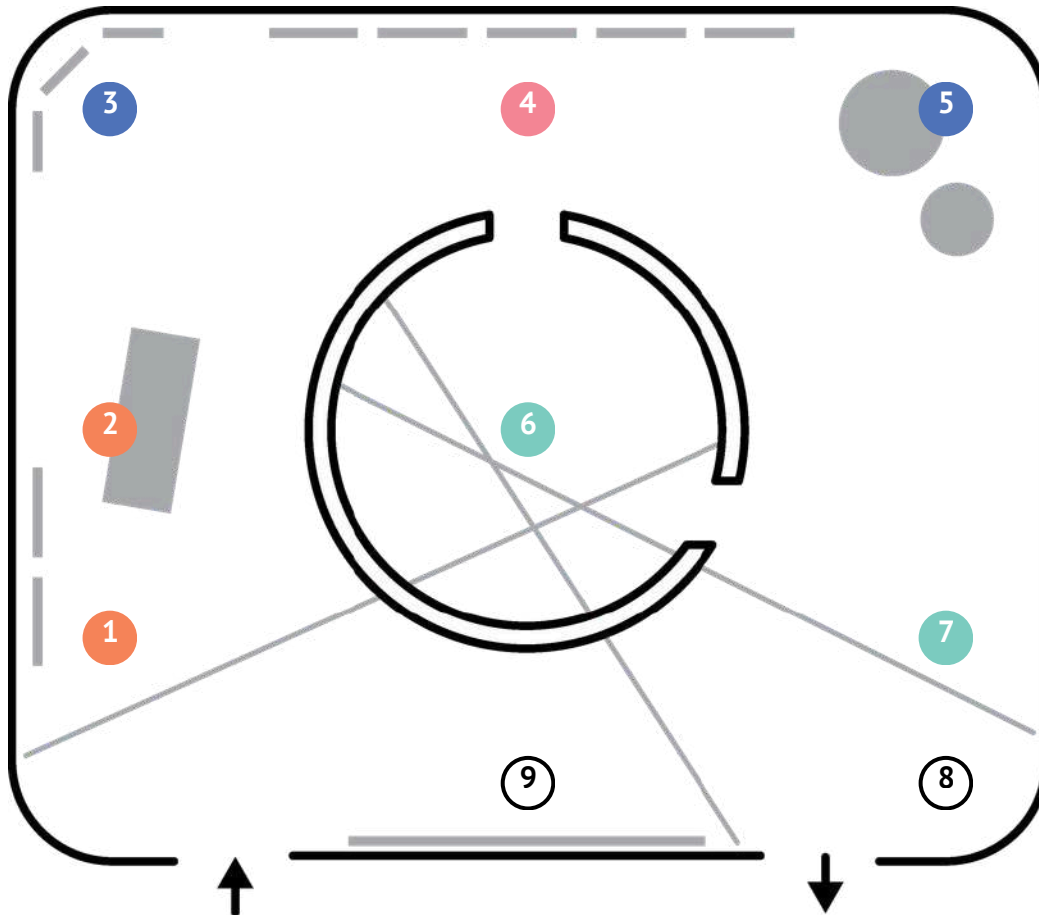
Art and childhood share a natural connection.

Both involve freedom, curiosity and fearless exploration. Many of us first create art as children, a time when we learn about the world and shape our emotions, beliefs and memories. What if we could return to that childlike spirit, open to discovery and unafraid to try something new?

This second edition of the Learning Gallery invites you to look beyond the everyday. Explore possibilities, experiment with different ideas and materials, and venture outside the familiar.

The artworks here span diverse mediums and explore themes of identity, home, nature and the environment, people and places, space and memory. They ask meaningful questions about life and inspire new ways of seeing and understanding contemporary art.

EXHIBITION LAYOUT



- 1 HAN SAI POR
Shelter
Land Deterioration
- 2 HAN SAI POR
Black Forest
- 3 DAVID CHAN
Animal Roulette
- 4 NGUAN
Untitled, from
the series 'Singapore'

- 5 EZZAM RAHMAN
Here's who I am, I am what you see
- 6 CHEN SAI HUA KUAN
Space Drawing 5
- 7 CHEN SAI HUA KUAN
Space Drawing 14
- 8 PROGRAMMES CORNER
Cloud Library
RE-Material
- 9 INTERACTIVE WALL

ARTIST

CHEN SAI HUA KUAN

b. 1976, Singapore

ABOUT THE ARTIST

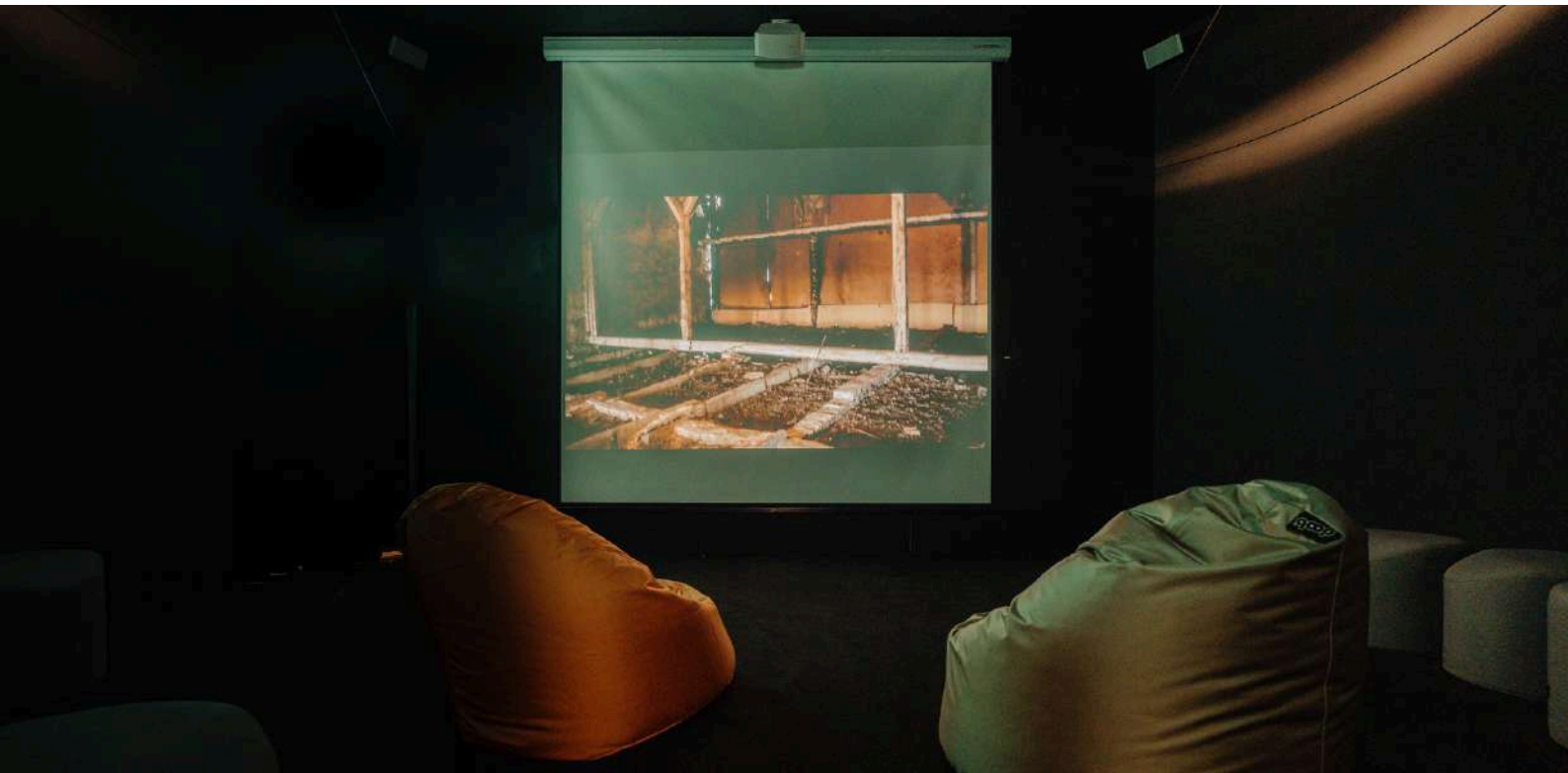
Chen Sai Hua Kuan (also known as Sai) transforms and de-constructs ordinary things and everyday situations to open them up to fresh interpretation. He sees his works as the outcomes of conditional activities determined and enabled by site and context.

Sai graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts in 1997. In 2007, he received a Master of Fine Art degree from the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. He has received numerous awards and secured spots in several notable programmes from Singapore, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, Poland and Russia. Sai's artworks have been widely collected by private collectors and institutions in Singapore and abroad, including Singapore Art Museum.

ARTWORK

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- ***Space Drawing 5*** and ***Space Drawing 14*** are both part of a series by the artist Sai called *Space Drawing*. From as early as 2007, Sai has been creating these experimental and multi-disciplinary installation and film works, where he explores the idea of the simplest and most fundamental function of a line - to divide, subtract, and define a space.
 - Using a bungee rope to 'draw' a line across various spaces, Sai challenges the idea of what a drawing can be by bringing it into three-dimensional space.
 - Many of his *Space Drawings* also feature the element of time and movement. In several editions, he films ropes being stretched taut and then released across various spaces, interacting with its surroundings as it travels.
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Installation view of *Space Drawing 5*, 2009. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Space Drawing 5

2009

Video, single channel, 1 min 3 sec

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- *Space Drawing 5* was created at the construction site of a then-new contemporary art centre in Kaliningrad, Russia. Sai stretched an elastic cord through the cavernous space and released it, sending it whipping through rooms, ricocheting off walls, and darting between scaffolding and pillars.
- The high-energy multisensory experience combines movement, sound, and visuals to both highlight the features of the space and emphasise its own presence in the emptiness of the surroundings. One possible interpretation of Sai's work is that it creates a sense of energy through the space, foreshadowing the future creative energy that might fill the space once the new art centre is completed.

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 - It cleverly reinterprets the idea of "drawing" by sending a line into three-dimensional space and time in the form of the cord, captured through video instead of on paper.
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Installation view of *Space Drawing 14*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Space Drawing 14

2025

Elastic bungee rope and stainless-steel eye bolt

Collection of the artist

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- Created in response to the Singapore Art Museum's Learning Gallery at Tanjong Pagar Distripark, Sai uses the physical space of the gallery as his canvas, drawing a taut line across and through the space with a single continuous bungee rope. The path becomes a spatial drawing. This physical form contrasts against the video medium of *Space Drawing 5*, presented within the same gallery space.
- Sai intended for *Space Drawing 14* to be a loop, conveying a sense of infinity.
- Although the rope is tethered firmly on both ends, this suspended energy becomes a focal point, suggesting latent potential and unrealised movement.

- Within the context of Sai's prior works, the audience is acutely aware of the stored energy within the bungee rope, as they follow it through the Learning Gallery.
 - This is the only *Space Drawing* with no discernible end or beginning, disappearing and emerging through the various features of the Learning Gallery, including the cylindrical space that holds *Space Drawing 5*, physically emphasising their connection and differences.
 - Unlike *Space Drawing 5*, which is filled with near constant sound and movement, this work is silent and still, allowing its audience to create or imagine its unrealised potential for movement or sound.
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DID YOU KNOW?

- *Space Drawing* was first created in 2007 in University College London, England.
 - The artist shared that it is the space or environment that guides his process, as though the space itself tells him what to create.
 - *Space Drawing 5* was recorded in actual speed and sound. The artist also chose a specific time in the day to record the video in order to utilise natural light.
 - In the *Space Drawing* series, the artist chose not to create a 13th edition and skipped directly to the 14th, out of superstition that the number 13 was connected to bad luck.
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More information on other artworks in the *Space Drawing* series

- *Space Drawing No. 7* was created at an abandoned warehouse in the city centre of Limerick, a major city in Ireland, in 2010. Like many other forsaken urban spaces in the city, this is a place where emptiness and decay are slowly taking place within a manufactured and civilised urban landscape. *Space Drawing No.7* captures the social life of the warehouse through the energy released from a black bungee rope. The rope bounces from wall to wall, mapping out the features of the space in an energetic and dynamic way, revealing the emptiness and decay of the site.
- *Space Drawing No. 9* is an experimental film by Sai, which was created during his residency at La Roche, France in 2008. You may find a short snippet of the film on the artist's YouTube channel linked [here](#).
- *Space Drawing No. 12* was created at 155 Middle Road, Singapore. 155 Middle Road was established in the 19th century, between 1870 and 1875, and stands as one of the few remaining examples of gothic architecture in Singapore. Over the years, this space has taken on various identities, serving various purposes and communities in different periods of Singapore history. The site consists of two main buildings: the Chapel Gallery and Lower Gallery. Similar to many repurposed buildings in urban spaces, these buildings have stood the test of time and are witness to the years of changes that have taken place in Singapore. They are the reflections of the economic, political and cultural conditions of Singapore providing tangible links to our roots and people. Playing with the erupted energy released by bungee ropes from the walls, floors, ceilings both from the inside and outside of the buildings, *Space Drawing No.12* is drawing, film, performance, spatial sculpture all in one, capturing the living memory of the site. You may find a short snippet of the film on YouTube linked [here](#).

PRE-VISIT QUESTIONS

PART ONE

- Why do people draw? How important is drawing in everyday life?
 - What can you use to make a drawing? Make a list of all the possible materials.
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PRE-VISIT QUESTIONS

PART TWO

- Find out more about two other artists in SAM's Collection with similar practices.
 - **Untitled** (2017) by Maria Taniguchi



Detail view of Maria Taniguchi's 'Untitled' (2017) as part of 'Everyday Practices' at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Is this a painting or sculpture, an abstract or representational work? Maria Taniguchi's untitled canvas subverts these conventional categories of art. The painted plane is propped against the wall at an incline, insisting on its three-dimensionality. Follow the brickwork covering the surface; the pattern runs on, seemingly endless. It is a visual and conceptual device that Taniguchi has devised to connect this painting to the others in the series. Over and over, she painstakingly outlined each brick in pencil and washed it with black acrylic. The paint's varying dilutions create subtle tonal shifts, annotating the monochromatic surface with temporal records of Taniguchi's process. The brick, a modular building block in our everyday environment, and Taniguchi's steady production carry associations to labour.

PRE-VISIT QUESTIONS

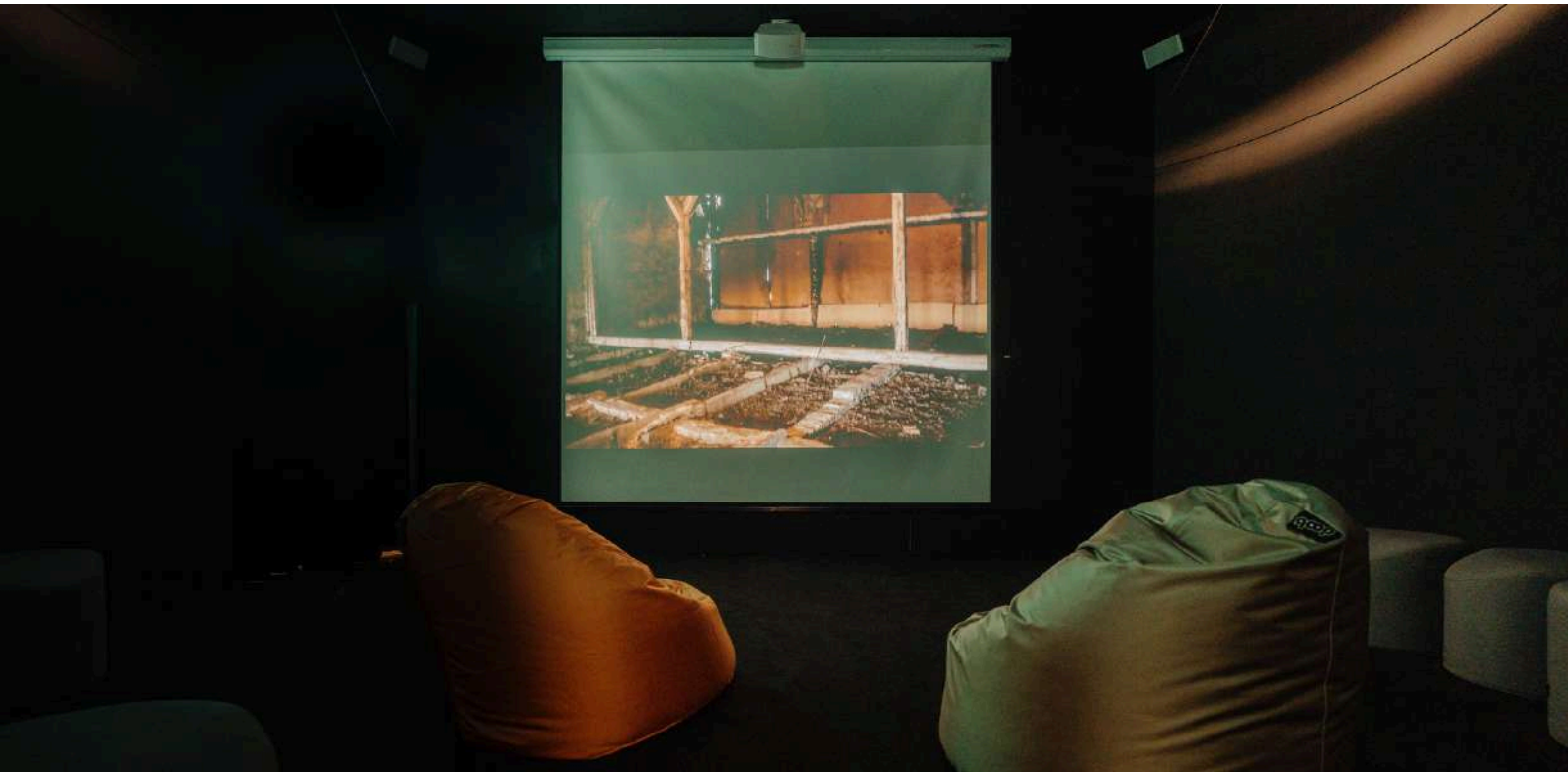
- ***Time: Dust*** (2017-2019) by Min Thein Sung



Installation view of 'Time: Dust' by Min Thein Sung, as part of 'Everyday Practices' at Singapore Art Museum, Tanjong Pagar Distripark. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Min Thein Sung transforms a pollutant in our everyday environments — dust — into art, allowing the fine particles to accrue on canvases under the tropical humidity of his studio in Yangon, Myanmar. Under conditions determined by the artist, the dust coalesces into precise geometrical shapes. Tonal gradients arise where the dust has settled thickly and then disperses into lighter textural layers. As a result, the playful shapes seemingly dance and waver, a quiet ode to the unstoppable march of time. Min Thein Sung seeks to create poetic works, such as this series, that offer us respite in the present moment, sharply contrasting with the troubled political history of his country.

VIEW AND DISCUSS



Installation view of *Space Drawing 5*, 2009. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.



For *Space Drawing 5*

- Look closely at the artwork.
 1. Watch and listen quietly. Let your ears wander and take in the sounds of the artwork as much as possible.
 2. List 5 words or phrases about any aspect of what you see or hear.
 3. Watch and listen again. This time, focus your eyes on the bungee rope and where it leads.
 4. Add 5 more words or phrases to your list.
- Share what you have written down with your friends and pick out the similarities and differences.
- Discuss and explain the effect of experiencing this work the first and second time.

VIEW AND DISCUSS

For Space Drawing 5 & 14



SEE

- What do you see?
 - List 5 things in the artwork that stand out to you.
 - Where does the bungee rope lead?
 - How does the artwork interact with what is in its environment?



THINK

- What do you think is going on?
 - What do you think the artist is trying to say through his artwork?
 - Why do you think the artist made certain decisions about how he directed the bungee rope?



WONDER

- What does it make you wonder?
 - How would the artwork change if it were presented somewhere else?
 - What are some questions you would you ask the artist if they were here?
-

POST-VISIT QUESTIONS

- Drawing is traditionally confined to a two-dimensional plane. Why do you think the artist chose to use a three-dimensional object in their work?
 - Consider *Space Drawing 5* & *Space Drawing 14* together. How do the works interact with one another in the gallery space? What is unique about each of them?
 - *Space Drawing 14* builds upon the previous works in this series. What can you observe about how this work relates to the ones before it?
 - Conduct research on other artists who uses an unconventional method of drawing in their artwork. How do their drawings differ from Sai's work? How are they similar?
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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY 1 — ONE LINE, TWO TIMES

A drawing is made of marks on paper; long marks can become lines. Students will explore what a line is and how it can move and discover how objects can change how a drawing takes shape.

Students should have the following materials:

- 2 same sized pieces of paper or 1 double-sided paper
- Pencil (or other drawing tools)
- Small objects (eraser, leaf, ruler etc.)

Round 1

Drawing a Continuous Line

- Students place their pencil on the paper and draw one continuous line without lifting their pencil.
- They will have one minute to complete their drawing.

Observe and Reflect

- Did your line move fast or slow?
- Did your line change direction?
- Which part of the line is your favourite?

Round 2

Second Drawing Interacting with the Object

- On a new piece of paper, students may take a small object and place it on their paper anywhere they like.
- They place their pencil on the paper again and draw another continuous line without lifting their pencil, this time moving around the small object.

Observe and Reflect

- Did your line speed change this time around?
- Compare the two lines drawn. How did interacting with the object change the shape of the line? If you remove the object, is there any proof that it was once there?
- Which of the two lines do you prefer, and why?

ACTIVITY 2 — LINES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In Sai's work, his lines are actively moving and interacting with their surroundings. What lines can you find in everyday life? How do they interact with their environments?

Students should have:

- Access to a photo-taking device like a phone or a camera

1. Photo-taking Activity

- Go on a walk around a familiar area and observe your surroundings. Do you see any lines?
- Take photographs of at least three different lines around you and keep an eye out for any three-dimensional lines.

2. Discussion and Reflection

- Students may gather in small groups to share their photographs and discuss.

Suggested questions:

- Where did you find your lines? How did the lines you saw interact with their environment?
 - Describe the lines you found. What do you observe?
 - What were the lines made of? Were they created through positive space, negative space or both?
 - What were the characteristics of your lines? Were they static or moving, defined or diffused, sharp or curved?
 - Compare your lines with the ones found by your classmates. How are they similar or different?
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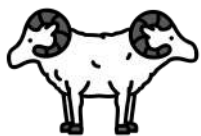
FIND OUT MORE!

ARTIST

- *Chen Sai Hua Kuan, artist*, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://saistudio.org/>
- “*Hua Kuan Sai*”, *Youtube*, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/@upontree>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Mousavizadeh, Philip and Kazakoglu, Gamze, “Yale-NUS Artist-in-residence talks sculpture, projects”, *Yale Daily News*, 5 Nov 2020, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2020/11/05/yale-nus-artist-in-residence-talks-sculpture-projects/>
- Press release on Space Drawing 07, Osage Gallery, 26 Feb 2014, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://www.osagegallery.com/PressRelease/CHEN%20SAI%20HUA%20KUAN%20PR%20ENG.pdf>
- Pure ArtLab, [Little Artists Talk 童言艺语] Series 2 with Sai (a.k.a Chen Sai Hua Kuan), YouTube, 11 Feb 2025, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://youtu.be/3cByY8vF4Ko?si=Q6xLPKGKk1Xyaw7S>
- Roots, “Space Drawing 5”, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://www.roots.gov.sg/Collection-Landing/listing/1263959>
- Singapore Art Museum, “If the artwork could speak, what would it say?”, Facebook, 5 Sep 2025, accessed 25 Aug 2026, <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1FdsQvBhcG/>



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