



JASON WEE

Self-Portrait (No More Tears, Mr. Lee)

2009

Plastic shampoo bottle caps

380 × 324 × 30 cm

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

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Did You Know?

1. The artist has used a combination of 8,000 opened and unopened plastic shampoo bottle caps to make this portrait. The bottle caps are arranged in a grid formation to create the portrait of the late Lee Kuan Yew, who is often regarded as the founding father of modern Singapore.
2. Artists often use art to document or respond to significant moments in history. In this work, Wee alludes to a historical and emotional moment in Singapore's history of independence, during which Lee broke down in tears publicly following a televised announcement on Singapore's separation from Malaysia on 9 August 1965.
3. The artist has used plastic shampoo bottle caps, a non-traditional material, to create this work. The choice of material is a tongue-in-cheek reference to Johnson & Johnson's well-known shampoo tagline "No More Tears."

Visit the [SAM Learning Gallery](#) to find out more about this artwork.



Let's Talk!

1. Why do you think the artist chose to use shampoo bottle caps to create this work? How does it help to reinforce the message he is trying to convey?
2. Portraiture is an old art form that dates back to ancient Egypt and, prior to the advent of photography, portraits were commonly painted, drawn or sculpted. In contemporary art, the use of non-traditional materials to create portraits has become prevalent. If you were to create a portrait, what materials would you choose to use? Why?
3. If you could interview the artist, what three questions would you ask him about his work and practice? Why?
4. The artist has made a reference to a specific moment in history through this work. How important is it for artists to document or respond to history through their works?
5. How does documenting or responding to history through art differ from more traditional records of history, in books, newspaper articles, photographs, documentaries, etc.?



About the Artist:

Jason Wee (b. 1979, Singapore) is an artist and writer working in the areas of contemporary art, architecture, poetry and photography. His art practice critically examines sources of singular authority, favouring alternative readings that privilege polyphony and difference, which he transforms into visual and written materials that provide insight into the secrets, futures, ideals and conundrums behind them. Wee is the founder and director of Grey Projects, a studio, gallery, library and residency space. Wee has participated in group and solo exhibitions locally and internationally in venues including Para Site, Hong Kong (2021); the Chelsea Art Museum and Asia Society Museum, New York, USA (2006, 2020); and ArtScience Museum, Singapore (2019). Wee was a 2005–2006 Studio Fellow at the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program and was awarded the Young Artist Award (Visual Arts) in Singapore in 2008 and the Voters' Prize from the Singapore Art Museum in 2009.



Find Out More:

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