

NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE
18 NOV 2023 – 24 MAR 2024

TROPICAL

Stories from Southeast Asia and Latin America

SINGTEL SPECIAL EXHIBITION GALLERY AND VARIOUS LOCATIONS

nationalgallery.sg/tropical

LET Art SURPRISE YOU

nationalgallery.sg/tropical

LET Art SURPRISE YOU

TICKETS

GALLERY PASS TYPE	STANDARD	LOCAL ^a
SPECIAL EXHIBITION PASS <i>TROPICAL</i>	\$25	\$15
ALL ACCESS PASS GENERAL ADMISSION + <i>TROPICAL</i>	\$30	–

CONCESSION (\$5 OFF)
For children aged 7–12 | Seniors aged 60 and above | Full-time National Servicemen (NSFs) excluding foreign personnel | Overseas students and teachers*

FREE ADMISSION
For Gallery Insiders | Children aged 6 and below | Local/locally-based students and teachers* | Persons with disabilities (PWD) and their caregiver

* Rates for locals apply to Singaporeans and PRs. ^a From qualifying institutions only. Valid verification is required.

Purchase your passes online at nationalgallery.sg/tropical to enjoy 10% off.

OPENING HOURS
Daily 10am–7pm
General ticket sales end 30 minutes before closing time

ENQUIRIES
6271 7000
info@nationalgallery.sg

AN ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

The Gallery is committed to creating an inclusive experience that can be enjoyed by visitors with access needs.

nationalgallery.sg

SCAN FOR ACCESS GUIDE

STRATEGIC PARTNER: Singapore Tourism Board

LEAD PARTNER: Singtel

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Tropical: Stories from Southeast Asia and Latin America explores the vibrant narratives of artists, dreamers and writers who challenged conventions and fostered solidarities across these two regions. Their unwavering quest to reclaim their rightful position within the story of art forms the core of this exhibition.

Spanning the entirety of the 20th century and featuring a diverse collection of over 200 groundbreaking artworks created by more than 70 artists, *Tropical* stands as a critical and inspiring endeavour—the world's first large-scale exhibition to adopt a comparative approach towards artistic expressions in Southeast Asia and Latin America. These expressions are uniquely animated by the shared struggles against colonialism that have significantly defined their histories.

Many of these artworks are presented for the first time in Singapore and showcased through thought-provoking exhibition designs the Gallery has developed in close collaboration with internationally acclaimed architecture firm WOHA.

Come discover lively dialogues between artists from parts of the world that are seemingly far apart and join us in uncovering how art can become a story of solidarity and transformation.

GALLERY 1

THE MYTH OF THE LAZY NATIVE

The season after the arrival of European colonial rule in Southeast Asia and Latin America is said to be modern time. While colonialism persisted until the mid-20th century, dissenting voices that challenged colonial rule began to surface in the realms of art, poetry and literature by the late 1920s.

These artists embarked on a transformative journey to challenge and reshape the alluring yet distorted depiction of the “natives” living in tranquil and exotic tropical landscapes. They actively confronted such portrayals and sought to paint a more truthful representation, featuring labourers, farmers, freedom fighters and even their own mothers.



① **Mother Nature's Bounty Harvest**
VICTORIO C. EDALES, GALO B. OCAMPO AND CARLOS "BOTONG" FRANCISCO

② **O vendedor de frutas (The Fruit Seller)**
TARSILSO DO AMARAL

The artworks in this section are presented on “crystal easels,” a groundbreaking approach for the presentation of paintings developed by the Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi in 1968 for the São Paulo Museum of Art.

LIBRARY OF THE TROPICS

The *Library of the Tropics* is a special zone within the exhibition that showcases an intriguing collection of books, films, paintings, posters and cultural objects on and from two remarkable islands: Bali and Tahiti. The islands hold a pivotal role in the narrative of 20th-century art, especially when it comes to depictions of paradise and stories of untouched cultures that are equal parts intriguing and exotic. Today, both Bali and Tahiti have become renowned tourist destinations, drawing visitors from around the world. As you browse through the materials, we invite you to reflect upon the fascinating and troubling intersections that persist between modern art, mass tourism and their combined desire for the exotic.

③ **Portrait of Ayu Kutut**
MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS

GALLERY 2

THIS EARTH OF MANKIND

During the 1940s, a shift of seismic proportions was underway in Southeast Asia and Latin America. Many regions were either gaining full independence or teetering on the brink of transformation. Amid these tumultuous times, artists were grappling with a pressing question: How could they truthfully depict themselves?

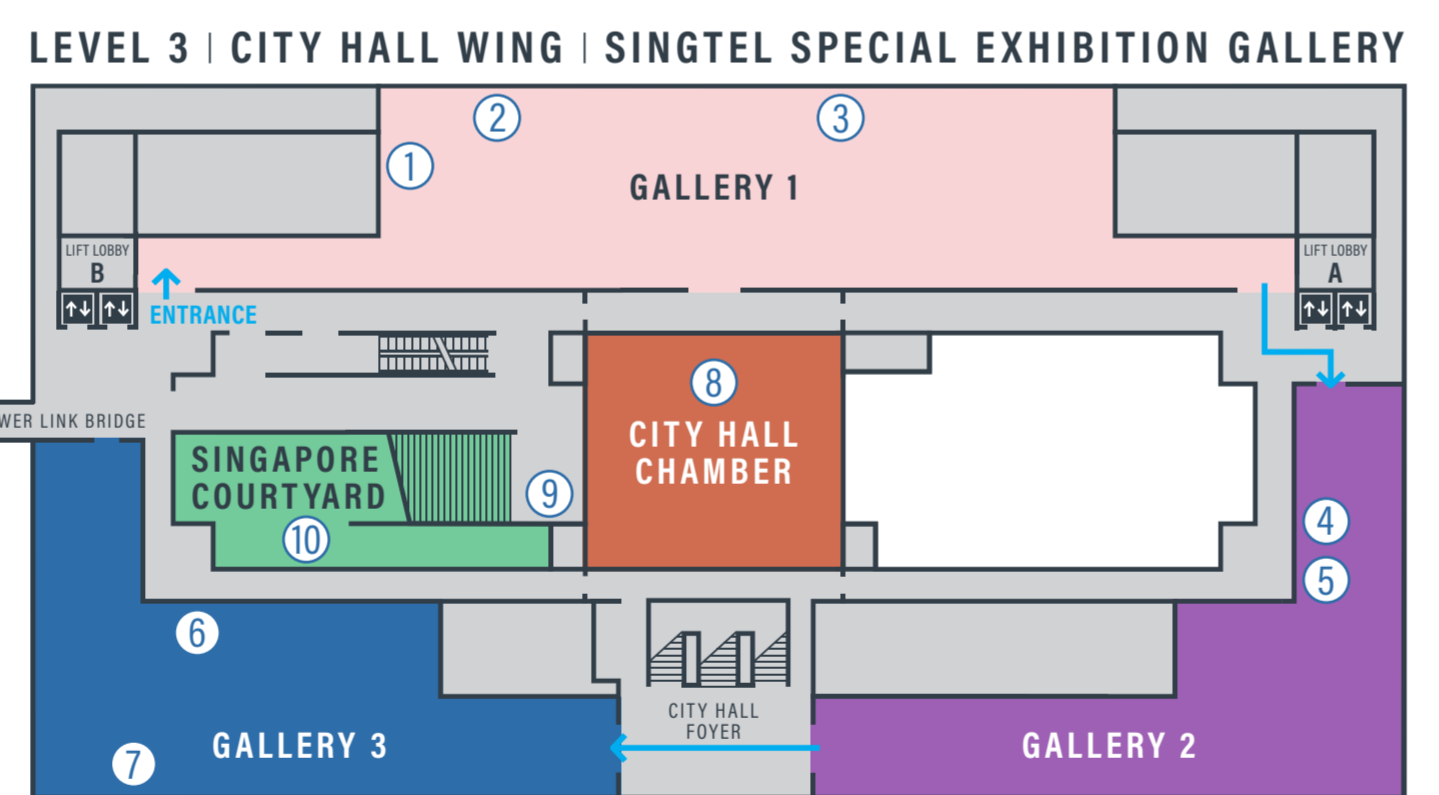
Their response was a powerful one—they turned to the self-portrait as a means to depict the shared heritage of mankind. This new world held the promise of a future that was democratic and prosperous, and where everyone was equal. Racing alongside this was a growing eagerness to pioneer and innovate with techniques like weaving, carving and batik. These methods became their tools in their quest to establish a shared earth for mankind.

④ **Self-Portrait with Monkey**
FRIDA KAHLO



TROPICAL

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⑤ **Self-Portrait**
PATRICK NG KAH ONN

The grid system in this gallery was first designed by Lina Bo Bardi for an exhibition in 1970, using locally sourced Brazilian wood. For *Tropical*, this system has been constructed with timber planks salvaged from Singapore's Jurong Shipyard in the 1980s.

As you move through the space, notice how the grid-like structures enable multiple artworks to be viewed from various vantage points, a feat that would otherwise be impossible with conventional walls!

GALLERY 3

THE SUBVERSIVE

The stories within this exhibition have depicted Southeast Asian and Latin American artists as advocates for the dispossessed and champions of reclaiming what remained in the wake of dissipating colonial shadows. Across the 20th century, they wielded modern painting and sculpture as powerful tools for instigating change, boldly breaking free from the reductive notion that all artistic endeavours must defer to Western influences.

This one-hundred-year pursuit had transformed these artists into half-rebels and half-lovers, willing to stand at the edge of creative expression, like a bridge between what we know and what we think we know. This gallery presents 15 bold propositions that epitomise this defiant and creative attitude that is considered *Tropical*.

The artworks in this section are arranged on freestanding structures resembling a constellation of ideas, dreams and aspirations.



⑥ **Tumbuhan Tropika (Tropical Growth)**
LATIFF MOHIDIN



⑦ **Objeto Emblematico 1 (Emblematic Object 1)**
RUBEM VALENTIM

CITY HALL CHAMBER

⑧ **Tropicalia**
HÉLIO OITICICA

SINGAPORE COURTYARD

Check out works by David Medalla and Zinny Maidagan, and interact with various works by Lygia Clark!

⑨ **Cloud Canyons No. 24**
DAVID MEDALLA

⑩ **Máquina (Machine)**
LYGIA CLARK

PROGRAMMES

TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS
In conjunction with the exhibition, we bring together a variety of discussions and artist talks for you to explore the dynamic artistic expressions from Southeast Asia and Latin America.

For more information about the programmes, please visit nationalgallery.sg/tropical.

WORKSHOP

Lygia Clark's Elastic Net

13–14 Jan, 17–18 Jan | 11am–noon, 2.30–3.30pm | City Hall Wing, Level 2, Singapore Courtyard | \$5 per participant

In this guided workshop, participants are invited to take part in a session of collective making as part of the activation of Lygia Clark's artwork and participatory proposition, the *Elastic Net*.

PERFORMANCES

Resonates With Residency (Jan–Mar 2024)

Performance dates: 27 Jan, 24 Feb, 23 Mar

Join Latin pianist and composer Alina Ramirez and her collaborators as she presents a series of workshops and performances responding to the shared musical histories of Southeast Asia and Latin America. For more information, please visit nationalgallery.sg/resonateswithresidency.

Hélio Oiticica's Parangolés

Sun, 3 Dec | 2.30–3pm | Level 1, Padang Atrium

Join us for a participatory performance, *Parangolés*, inspired by Hélio Oiticica's series, which was developed from 1964 to 1973. Audiences are invited to dance and move along with the sounds and rhythms of samba.

FAMILY PROGRAMMES

Art Alive!

Sat–Sun, 13–14 Jan | 2.30–3.15pm, 3.30–4.15pm | City Hall Wing, Level 1, Keppel Centre for Art Education | \$10 per adult-child pair

Immerse yourself in the world of art and let your imagination soar with Art Alive! The programme offers families a fun and exciting journey with drama and storytelling activities that bring different artworks from the exhibition to life.

Family Art Tour

Sat–Sun, 3–4 Feb | 2.30–3.15pm, 3.30–4.15pm | City Hall Wing, Level 1, Keppel Centre for Art Education | \$10 per adult-child pair

Through guided discussions led by our facilitator, families will deepen their connections with the selected paintings as they discuss the artist's inspirations and themes addressed in the exhibition.

Family Art Workshop

Sat, 17 Feb | 2–3.30pm | City Hall Wing, Level 1, Keppel Centre for Art Education | \$12 per person

Learn charcoal drawing techniques from artist Dahlia Osman and create your own masterpiece inspired by the exhibition.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

An essential compendium of the exhibition, this richly illustrated catalogue presents over 220 full-colour artwork plates, primary documents, artists' and curatorial texts and resource lists, venturing the tropical as a constellation of the material and magical, relational and radical stories.



Paperback | 260 pages
S\$50 (excluding GST)
ISBN: 978-981-18-7153-5
Available at our museum store, City Hall Wing, Level 1

MERCHANDISE

Elevate your style with a curated collection of high-quality, art-inspired merchandise from The Gallery Store by Abry, including postcards, cushion covers, bucket hats and umbrellas. The *Tropical* merchandise have been produced with environmentally conscious sources and eco-conscious practices, ensuring your choices align with your values.

City Hall Wing, Level 1



Postcards, cushion cover and bucket hat are designed and sold by The Gallery Store (managed by Abry Pte Ltd).

BECOME A GALLERY MEMBER

Unlock the world of art with National Gallery Singapore members. Enjoy admission privileges, free parking and discounts on dining and shopping. Join a community of art enthusiasts and elevate your art experience.

For more information, please scan the QR code or email membership@nationalgallery.sg.



MEMBERSHIP TYPES

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	FREE	STANDARD: \$35 / \$30 [^]	INSIDER LOCAL: \$20 / \$15 [^]
EXPLORER	FREE		
INSIDER		STANDARD: \$35 / \$30 [^]	LOCAL: \$20 / \$15 [^]

Over \$100 worth of vouchers upon sign-up!

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	1-hour	2-hour
Free parking daily	✓	✓
Stay updated on seasonal offers	✓	✓
Unlimited free access to all exhibitions	✓	✓
Pre-opening and after hours exhibition viewing	✓	✓
Exclusive festival film screenings and workshops	✓	✓
Members-only concierge for enquiries	✓	✓
Shopping and dining discounts		Up to 20%
Earn points and redeem for rewards		✓

* Rates for locals apply to Singaporeans and PRs. [^] Concessions are available for students, children aged 7–12 and seniors aged 60 and above. Offers are accurate at time of print.