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MEDIA RELEASE

GALLERY CHILDREN’S BIENNALE GOES GLOBAL IN FIRST “PHYGITAL” EDITION, EMPOWERS CHILDREN TO CREATE AND CONNECT THROUGH ART

- *The third edition of Gallery Children’s Biennale will feature 9 commissioned artworks by local and international artists*
- *Guided by the theme “Why Art Matters”, the Biennale takes place on-site and online offering access to children around the world and twice the fun*



Singapore, 18 May 2021 – Returning for its third edition this month, National Gallery Singapore will be bringing its popular Children’s Biennale to more children around the world through its first-ever “phygital” experience. Guided by the inquiry “Why Art Matters”, the *Gallery Children’s Biennale* seeks to empower children to navigate the changing times with empathy and confidence through playful and interactive art experiences that explore topics relevant to the times such as *Home, Diversity, Time* and *Environment*.

The Biennale’s online experience launches on 22 May 2021, making the children’s art programme accessible to local and international audiences. This is followed by on-site art installations at the museum which open to the public from September 2021. By going “phygital,” the Biennale also offers double the fun for local audiences as they

get to participate in more and new ways, from creating digital art through a finger swipe to exploring immersive installations at the Gallery. In a time of physical restrictions, the hybrid format also fosters connection between children and artists, with majority of the online works allowing children to co-create with established international artists and connect with peers around the world through the artworks.

The Biennale will feature online works and on-site installations by 9 renowned artists and art groups: Dinh Q Lê (Vietnam), husband-and-wife duo Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan (Philippines/Australia), Jeremy Sharma (Singapore), Joyce Ho (Taiwan), Khvay Samnang (Cambodia), Nandita Mukand (Singapore/India), Nona Garcia (Philippines), Sandra Lee (Singapore), and Speak Cryptic X ADDADDADD (Singapore).

Further cementing the *Gallery Children's Biennale* as a global leader in children's art experiences, the Gallery has partnered Groninger Museum in the Netherlands to launch the first Dutch KinderBiennale in June 2021. This follows its successful partnership with Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) in organising Europe's first Children's Biennale in 2018.

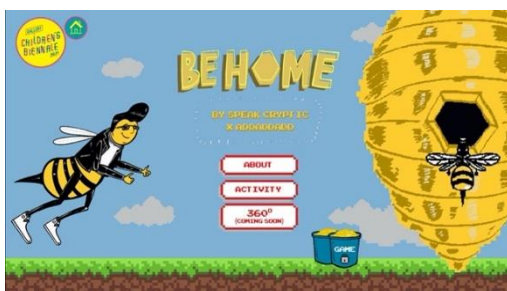
Ms Suenne Megan Tan, Director of Audience Development & Engagement at National Gallery Singapore says, "The role of art in nurturing critical thinking and building character in children is more important than ever in these changing times. Art matters, not least for children, and we are excited to be able to take the *Gallery Children's Biennale* global with our first-ever 'phygital' Biennale, as well as our international partnerships with the Groninger Museum and SKD. Our new hybrid online and on-site format makes it possible for us to reach out to children in and beyond Singapore, and connect them with international artists and each other through art."

A digital journey of creative exploration and character-building through the 4 topics



The digital experience is accessible via the microsite, where children will be able to embark on a myriad of online adventures with interactive online games, immersive animated stories and digital artmaking as they engage with the 9 commissioned artworks. Categorized according to the themes of *Home*, *Time*, *Diversity* and the *Environment*, the works look to inspire children to embrace the values of acceptance, openness and diversity, in addition to providing them with a space to unleash their creativities. On top of the 9 digital artworks, children, aged 0 to 3, 4 to 7 and 8 to 12, will also be able to participate in other online activities such as tutorials, sonic and somatic workshops, storytelling sessions and games inspired by the artworks as part of the digital experience.

Home



Artworks under the theme of *Home* will explore the notions of home and community, and what it means to be working together for a greater good. For example, Speak Cryptic X ADDADDADD's collaborative artwork, *BEHOME* is a series of interactive games and stories revolving around the humble bee, and how bees work and care for each other within their hive community. As they play through the different activities

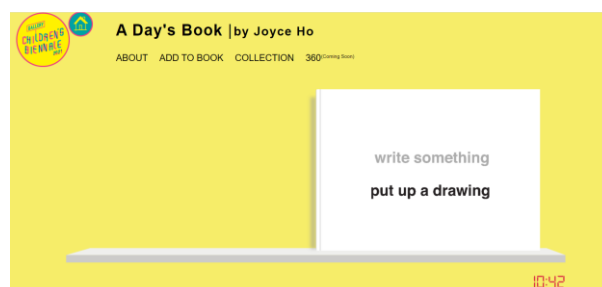
and learn more about the honey-making process, children will gain a better understanding of how every individual can make a positive impact on the community around them, regardless of their size. In a world still reeling from the effects of the pandemic, the concept of showing care and support for one's community is an important lesson that the work hopes to impart to young audiences.

Diversity



Children are empowered to creatively express themselves and tell their personal stories through artworks that touch on the theme of *Diversity*. In Dinh Q Lê's *Voices From The Centers*, children will learn to create a 60-second video in response to an artwork from the National Collection, using digital weaving techniques inspired by Lê's signature photographic weavings. There will also be an online gallery where audiences can browse through user submissions and discover interpretations of the various artworks from the National Collection by children from around the world. Through this artwork, children will not only be introduced to the National Collection in a fun and engaging manner, but also get the opportunity to creatively express themselves on a public platform.

Time



Children will also gain a better understanding of the concept of time through artworks such as Joyce Ho's *A Day's Book*. The work invites children to share their stories on

the microsite by signing up for 30-minute timeslots to access the artwork page and share their anecdotes of the day in a digital diary. At the end of each day, the 'diary' is completed, documenting a full 24-hour day through an amalgamation of 30-minute snippets contributed by young participants. To enhance the experience for children, the digital contributions will be transformed into physical books available for browsing as part of Ho's complementary on-site installation at the Gallery in September 2021. Through Ho's work, children will be able to discover what a particular time of the day looks like for other children and learn about how the passage of time is experienced differently around the world.

Environment



The artworks under the theme of *Environment* will touch on the pertinent issues of environmental damage, such as climate change, and how the use of plastics affects our environment. In Sandra Lee's *Conversations with an Octopus*, children will get to immerse themselves in a beautifully-illustrated interactive story about a girl and her wise old friend, the Octopus, as they go on various adventures such as sailing through the ocean and exploring an underwater library. Along the way, children will get to learn about environmental problems facing our world today, such as plastic litter in the oceans, and what they can do to play a part in tackling the issue through interactive elements in the story.

Spreading Gallery Children's Biennale's spirit of play to the rest of the world

Inspired by the 2019 edition of *Gallery Children's Biennale* and its mission of stimulating young, curious minds through art and imaginative play, Groninger Museum will be co-organising the inaugural KinderBiennale with the Gallery from early June to January 2022. Taking inspiration from the *Gallery Children's Biennale* 2019 theme

“Embracing Wonder”, the Dutch Children’s Biennale will feature three works from the 2019 edition by artists Eko Nugroho, Donna Ong and husband-and-wife duo Andreas and Hazel Lim-Schlegel. Groninger Museum will also be sharing the *Gallery Children’s Biennale 2021* microsite on its digital platforms to support the shared aim of connecting children around the world through art.

Andreas Blühm, Director of Groninger Museum says, “At the Groninger Museum, we believe that knowledge-sharing should be reciprocal – we have equally as much to learn from children as they have to learn from us. The extent of imaginative and collaborative play that the *Gallery Children’s Biennale* encourages is something we found especially inspiring, so we decided to introduce it to the Netherlands. We are grateful for the National Gallery Singapore’s invaluable support and expertise as we work together to launch the inaugural *Children’s Biennale*, and we look forward to further collaborations that will encourage greater engagement of art amongst children.”

The Gallery also has an ongoing partnership with SKD, which saw the two institutions collaborate on Germany’s first Children’s Biennale in 2018. Inspired by the success of the 2018 Biennale, which drew more than 110,000 visitors, both institutions are working on the next edition of the SKD Kinderbiennale.

Dr. Marion Ackermann, General Director of SKD says, “We are heartened by the success of our first Children’s Biennale, which not only saw encouraging visitorship numbers, but more importantly also introduced contemporary art to new audiences and provided opportunities for the public to engage in dialogue. We are excited to continue partnering with National Gallery Singapore on future editions of the Children’s Biennale.”

Gallery Children’s Biennale is proudly supported by Development Partner Tote Board, Strategic Partner Cultural Matching Fund, Major Partner Keppel Corporation and Supporter Deutsche Bank.

Mr Fong Yong Kian, Chief Executive of Tote Board says, “Tote Board is glad to continue to support the *Gallery Children’s Biennale*. The Biennale serves to develop



our younger generation through art, in the areas of creative thinking, confidence-building and self-expression. We look forward to this year's edition of the Biennale, which will bring families and children around the world together through meaningful interactions with art."

The online experience for *Gallery Children's Biennale* will be available from 22 May 2021 to December 2022 at childrensbiennale.com. The on-site installations for *Gallery Children's Biennale* will be available from 4 September 2021 to December 2022 at National Gallery Singapore. Details about the on-site installations will be announced later. Please refer to the [Annex](#) for the list of participating artists and their online artworks and visit www.childrensbiennale.com for more information about the exhibition. Media assets can be accessed via this [link](#).

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About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which oversees the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian modern art. Situated at the birthplace of modern Singapore, in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments - City Hall and former Supreme Court - that have been beautifully restored and transformed into this exciting 64,000 square metre venue. Reflecting Singapore's unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery aims to be a progressive museum that creates dialogues between the art of Singapore, Southeast Asia and the world to foster and inspire a creative and inclusive society. This is reflected in our collaborative research, education, long-term and special exhibitions, and innovative programming. The Gallery also works with international museums such as Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay, Tate Britain, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a key node in the global visual arts scene.

In 2020, the Gallery was the only museum in Southeast Asia that received a ranking in The Art Newspaper's annual global survey of attendance at art museums, taking 20th place. It was the first museum in Asia to receive the Children in Museums Award by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums in 2018. The Gallery also won the awards for "Best Theme Attraction" at TTG Travel Awards 2017, "Best Attraction Experience", "Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism" and "Best Customer Service (Attractions)" at the prestigious Singapore Tourism Awards in 2016 for its role in adding to the vibrancy of Singapore's tourism landscape.

About Tote Board

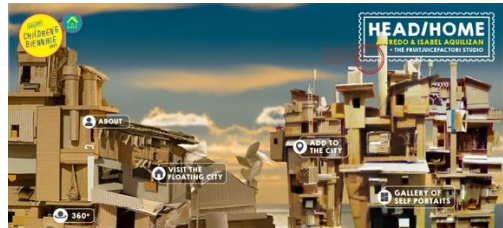
Established in 1988, Tote Board (Singapore Totalisator Board) is a Statutory Board of the Ministry of Finance. As a grant-making organisation, Tote Board works closely with stakeholders and partners, to support broad and diverse worthy projects in the sectors of Arts, Community Development, Education, Health, Social Service and Sports. Through these projects, Tote Board helps to uplift the community by giving hope to vulnerable groups and improving the lives of all in Singapore.

Tote Board channels gaming surpluses of its agents - Singapore Pools (Pools) and Singapore Turf Club (STC) – as well as the collection of casino entry levy – to grantmaking projects that help build an inclusive, resilient and vibrant community. Tote Board also ensures that Pools and STC conduct their businesses in a socially responsible manner, to provide legal and safe gaming, and to counter illegal gambling.

For more information, please visit www.toteboard.gov.sg

ANNEX: DIGITAL ARTWORKS FROM 2021 GALLERY CHILDREN'S BIENNALE: WHY ART MATTERS

Artworks under the theme of Home



Head/Home by Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan (also known as Fruitjuice Factory)

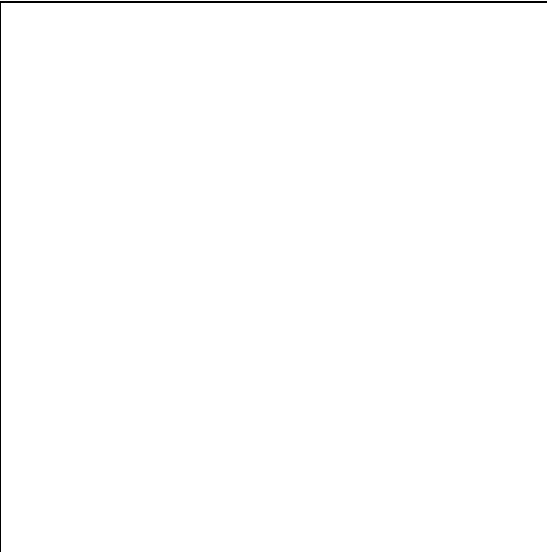
Head/Home is the Singapore iteration of Alfredo and Isabel's ongoing work, 'Project Another Country', which finds a new sphere in the building of imagined and perceived community in the worldwide web. Inspired the landscape and formation of Singapore's HDB blocks, the work offers a view of the floating city comprising empty buildings, which invites children to build and present their idea of home.

Through this activity, children can dream up a home and work with their hands to create it using cardboard boxes and everyday materials, then add it to the floating city. These homes also double up as wearable masks.

The ability to explore the floating city and visit other's creations also introduce the children to diverse cultures and lived experiences through replication of homes from other cultures in Singapore and around the world.

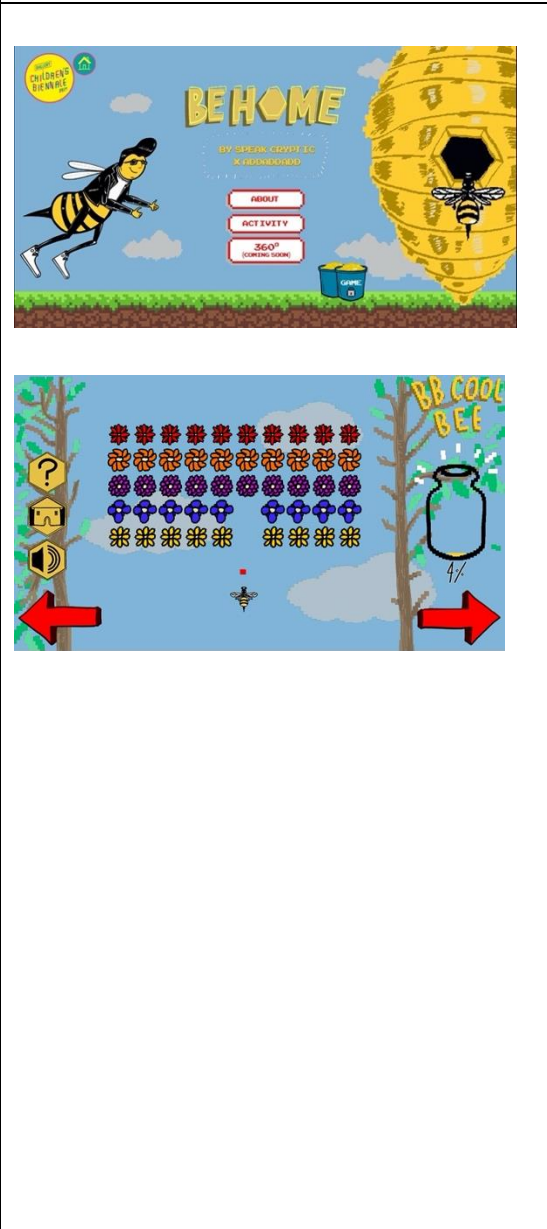
About the artist

Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan have exhibited extensively in galleries and institutions worldwide, such as at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Japan), Auckland Art Gallery (New Zealand), Immigration Museum (Australia), Queensland ArtGallery| Gallery of Modern Art (Australia), Singapore Art Museum. They have participated in the Busan Biennale (2019); Thailand Biennale (2018); Gangwon International Biennale, South Korea (2018); Sharjah Biennale, UAE (2013); Asia Pacific Triennale, Australia (2009); Singapore Biennale (2008); Biennale of Sydney, Australia (2006); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea



(2004), Venice Biennale, Italy (2003), amongst others.

Their works are included in major collections such as the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (Australia); Singapore Art Museum; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art; MAIAM Contemporary Art Museum (Thailand); and Lopez Museum Foundation (Philippines). In 2019, the Aquilizans (Fruitjuice Factori Studio) were commissioned to create a site-specific work at Facebook’s headquarters at Menlo Park, California, USA.



BEHOME by Speak Cryptic X ADDADDADD

BEHOME is an animation/gamified story featuring holograms, GIF animation and novel audio experience about the humble bee. Drawing inspiration from the hardworking honey producer and its iconic hive structure, *BEHOME* teaches children about topics of gratitude, support, community, and the building of connections in a world reeling from the effects of a pandemic.

About the artist

Farizwan Fajari, professionally known as Speak Cryptic, is an artist currently working and living in Singapore. Endless manifestations of the self are a feature of Speak Cryptic's work – identity rippling forth through texts and phrases extracted from punk lyrics, intricate patterns and figures with their eyes closed. His constellation of drawings, paintings and installations stem from personal inquiries into ancestral migration, ethnic dislocation, gentrification and alternative subcultures. Arriving at the realm of contemporary art via urban art origins, Speak's distinctive style has amassed a large fan base and taken on a painterly quality.

ADDADDADD, a collective comprising Khai Hori and Deborah Lim, is a newly formed Singapore art collective invited as guests of Speak Cryptic.

Artworks under the theme of Time



***Superstar* by Jeremy Sharma**

Created in collaboration with his two sons, Singaporean artist Jeremy Sharma creates a clickable, speculative world through *Superstar*.

The online artwork invites audiences to primarily use their eyes, ears and fingers to engage with over 300 clickable and animated creatures, objects and spaces to let their imagination run wild and create their own version of a make-believe world.

About the artist

Born in 1977 in Singapore, Jeremy Sharma is a multidisciplinary artist who works around ideas of aesthetics and production. His practice investigates various modes of enquiry in the information age, addressing our present relationship to modernity and interconnectivity in the everyday, as well as our place in an increasingly fragmented and artificial reality. He has a BA in Fine Art from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia and an MA in Fine Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. Jeremy has exhibited widely at major exhibitions including Fundación Sebastián, Mexico City (2015); Busan Biennale, Korea (2014); Singapore Biennale, Singapore (2013); Grey Projects, Singapore (2013); *Apropos*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore (2012); *14th Asian Art Biennale*, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, (2010); The 5th Bangkok Experimental Film Festival, Thailand (2008); The Singapore Season London 2005 by Theatre Works; and The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2005).



***A Day's Book* by Joyce Ho**

In Joyce Ho's *A Day's Book*, the artist will see the building of a repository of stories across the globe in 24 hours over 20 months. Kids are invited to write and draw their own narratives and stories in the "book of the day", which can be accessed and continued by the next participant who enters the digital space. As soon as the day ends, the book is archived and can only be read by visitors in the days that follow. As the storytelling and writing continue, Ho will present the



full collection of books in an installation as part of the physical *Gallery Children's Biennale* experience.

About the artist

Born in 1983 in Taipei, Joyce Ho is an interdisciplinary artist, focusing specifically on painting, sculpture, and theatre. Ho has worked as a scriptwriter and theatre director since 2010.

Ho has exhibited internationally, including NOON: Joyce Ho Solo Exhibition, TKG+, Taipei, Taiwan(2019); 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2018); Inhabiting the World, Busan Biennale, Busan Museum of Art, Korea (2014); and Everyday Life — Asian Art Biennale, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung (2013).

Artworks under the theme of Environment

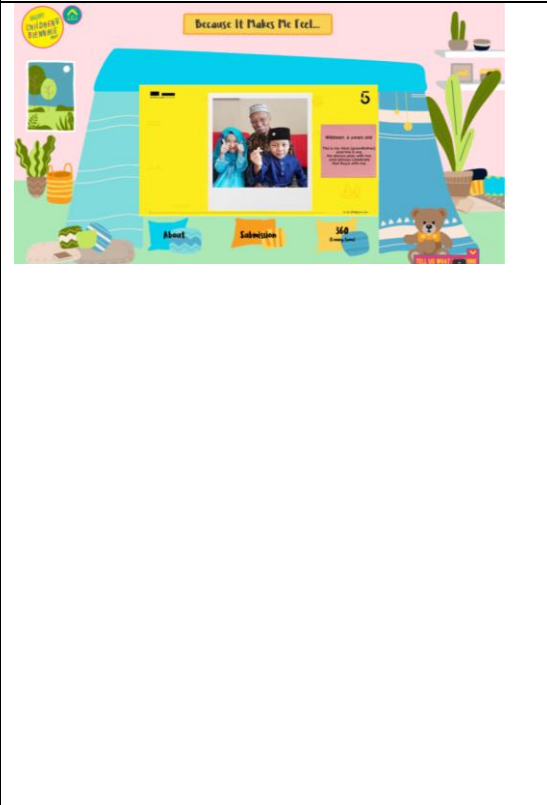



Calling for Rain by Khvay Samnang

Calling for Rain is a short film inspired by Reamker, the Cambodian version of the epic poem Ramayana. The film takes us on a journey through the landscapes of Cambodia as it follows The Monkey on his quest to save the dying forest and its surrounding environment. The story starts after he meets and falls in love with The Fish, and depicts the struggles he must overcome after the loss of his home in the forest. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the problems of the forest and its surrounding fields and rivers are linked to the irresponsible behaviours of the Fire Dragon.

About the artist

Born in Svay Rieng, Cambodia, Khvay Samnang currently lives and works in the capital, Phnom Penh. He graduated from the Painting Department at the Royal University of Fine Art in Phnom Penh. His practice draws attention to social, cultural, economic and environmental issues in Cambodia, with himself as the protagonist, raising questions about land, its use and the rights to the land. Samnang's multidisciplinary practice offers new views on historic and current events, as well as on

	<p>traditional cultural rituals using humorous symbolic gestures. In his work, which includes all media, he focuses on the humanitarian and ecological impacts of colonialism and globalisation.</p>
	<p><i>Because it makes me feel...</i> by Nandita Mukand</p> <p>Through a series of online and on-site art tutorials and programmes, Mukand seeks to work with children to find a sense of belonging and learn how to anchor themselves in a rapidly changing world. Children will also be able to express themselves creatively through their artwork, guided by questions such as which aspects of 2020 left the deepest impact on them, what they miss most, what questions they have about the future and what are they looking forward to.</p> <p>About the artist Nandita Mukand examines relationships and connections between city dwellers, nature and material. She questions how cities change us and impact the way we see ourselves, such that we no longer see ourselves as part of nature. Mukand has been based in Singapore since 2003.</p>
	<p><i>Conversations with an Octopus</i> by Sandra Lee</p> <p><i>Conversations with an Octopus</i> narrates an ongoing conversation between The Girl with the Red Shorts and her wise old friend, The Octopus, as they embark on hours of fun activities together and discuss important topics regarding the environment such as climate change.</p> <p>About the artist Sandra Lee graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore in 1998 with a diploma in Visual Arts. She was awarded an Honourable mention in the Phillip-Morris Singapore-ASEAN in 2003 and the National Arts Council Bursary in 1996. Her works have been exhibited at Singapore Art Museum, National Museum of Singapore as well as presented The Enchanted Tree House at National Gallery</p>

Singapore in 2015, as part of the Keppel Centre for Art Education's Art Playscape.

Artworks under the theme of Diversity

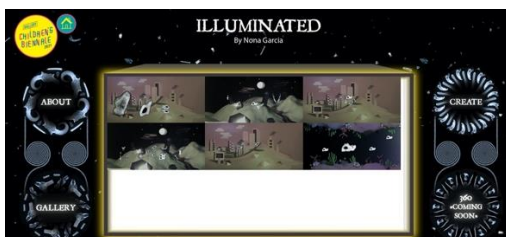


***Voices from The Centers* by Dinh Q Lê**

Through *Voices from The Centers*, Lê hopes to acquaint young audiences with a variation of his signature art-making approach by using a digital filter to weave images into a seamless 60-second video. In creating their own artworks, children are empowered to build their own stories and explore image-making practices. His artwork will also introduce children to 60 works from the National Collection in a fun and playful manner.

About the artist

Internationally acclaimed artist Dinh Q. Lê was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the US at the age of ten. Lê is best known for his large-scale photographic weavings and video works that question the way in which world events are perceived. Inspired by traditional Vietnamese grass mat weaving, Lê weaves images chosen from a variety of motifs including the Vietnam War and Cambodian ruins. Lê's research focuses on people's personal memories of historical events, notably on the complex legacy of the Vietnam War and its ongoing impact on contemporary Vietnam. Identity, memory and history are concepts that permeate Lê's works and installations.



***Illuminated* by Nona Garcia**

Illuminated is a continuation of Garcia's works using x-ray, where she employs a collection of x-rayed bones and shells, and different landscapes for young children to participate in image-making and storytelling. Through the use of x-rayed images, children are able to observe the inherent patterns within nature, which are typically less visible to the naked eye.



About the artist

Nona graduated from the University of the Philippines with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting. She probes into the essence of things, setting up a dichotomy between the transparent and concealed, framed and natural, the sublime and the everyday. In 2013, she relocated to mountainous Baguio City in Benguet Province.