

Media Release

For immediate release

Embark on a Small Big Dreamer’s Journey at *Children’s Festival* by National Gallery Singapore

*Children’s Festival: Small Big Dreamers 2018 casts the spotlight on the zealous spirit
of Singaporean artist Lee Wen*

Singapore, 8 June 2018 – As part of its continuous focus on engaging young audiences, National Gallery Singapore launches the ***Children’s Festival: Small Big Dreamers 2018*** from 9 June to 9 September to empower children to be creative, to imagine and reimagine the world around them, and build greater self-awareness through experiential art and active play. Each bi-yearly edition will be inspired by a Singaporean artist who dreams big and demonstrates that anything is possible, thereby inspiring others, especially the young ones, to follow suit.

This first edition spotlights the life and practice of Singaporean artist Lee Wen, a Big Dreamer in his own right. An internationally-recognised, multidisciplinary artist and one of the pioneers of performance art in Singapore, Lee Wen is known for the overwhelming sense of optimism and perseverance conveyed through his works despite his battle with Parkinson’s disease which limits his body movements.

Ms Suenne Megan Tan, Festival Director of Children’s Festival and Director (Audience Development and Engagement) at National Gallery Singapore, said, “Dreams have the innate power to encourage possibilities in the minds of everyone, regardless of age. This sets the stage for Children’s Festival, as we work together with artists to curate art installations that open one’s mind to new ideas and encourage creativity.”

The Festival will feature a special commission – *A Waking Dream: Sun-Boy and Yellow Man* and four other interactive installations that encourage visitors to create their very own stories – similar to how Lee Wen was guided by stories in his artistic practice.

Dream big together with Lee Wen



(left-right) *Rainbow Passageway*, and *Anatomy of Dreamers*

The immersive Small Big Dreamer's journey begins at the City Hall Foyer as one enters the dream-like world and encounters *Sun-Boy* and *Yellow Man* – two personas created by Lee Wen in his body of works. From dancing around the spaces and creating the perfect soundtrack for their adventures using pots, pans, ladles and whisks, to journeying through obstacles with *Yellow Man* on the bridge or under a gazebo of red lanterns, visitors are encouraged to be led by their unfettered imagination and explore the different spaces fearlessly. This mirrors Lee Wen's own leap of faith as he left the banking industry to dive into the art world as a performance artist.

From dreams to possibilities

The journey continues at the Koh Seow Chuan Concourse Gallery and Ngee Ann Kongsi Concourse Gallery, where visitors will open their minds to limitless possibilities through the installations by artists from the region and beyond. *Hands On* by We Make Carpets, a Dutch collective, spurs the visitors to create their very own artworks using simple everyday objects such as ropes, pool noodles and coloured velcro swatches. Filipino artist, Mark Justiani introduces a new iteration to the popular *Firewalk: A Bridge of Embers*, 10-metre infinity bridge with an illusion of depth that crosses the boundaries between dreams and reality. teamLab creates a multitude of stories and fleeting encounters with characters such as rabbits and frogs hopping and leaping across the room. (More information on the installations can be found in Annex A.)



(left-right) Passages and Bridges, Evolution of Firewalk: A Bridge of Embers by Mark Justiniani (Philippines), Hands On by We Make Carpets (The Netherlands)

Held in alternate years to each other, *Children’s Festival: Small Big Dreamers* will complement the *Gallery Children’s Biennale*, which was first launched by National Gallery Singapore in 2017, as part of its continued engagement to inspire young, curious minds through art. *Children’s Festival* anchors on the life and works of a Singaporean artist in the National Collection, whereas *Gallery Children’s Biennale* gathers the best of children’s art programming from the world for all our visitors.

Children’s Festival: Small Big Dreamers 2018 is proudly supported by Development Partner, Tote Board.

General admission applies to *Children’s Festival: Small Big Dreamers 2018*. For more information, please visit: www.smallbigdreamers.com.

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Annex A: Children’s Festival 2018 Highlights

Annex B: Programme Highlights of Children’s Festival 2018

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About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a visual arts institution which oversees the largest public collection of modern art in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Situated 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 venue. Reflecting Singapore’s unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery features Singapore and Southeast Asian art from Singapore’s National Collection in its long-term and special exhibitions. The Gallery also works with international museums to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for the visual arts.

In 2016, the Gallery won the awards for “Best Attraction Experience”, “Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism” and “Best Customer Service (Attractions)” at the prestigious Singapore Tourism Awards 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 grantmaking 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. Being a broad-based grantmaker, Tote Board strives to identify synergies and needs across multiple sectors, and tailor our funding efforts accordingly to create greater impact. The wide reach of Tote Board's grants has enabled us to touch the lives of Singaporeans from all walks of life. We provide equitable opportunities for vulnerable groups, strengthen communities, and inject vibrancy and liveability in our community spaces through our grantmaking. Tote Board's grants are derived from surpluses from the gaming businesses Singapore Pools (Private) Limited (a subsidiary company of Tote Board) and Singapore Turf Club (a proprietary club of Tote Board), as well as the collection of casino entry levies. Tote Board also ensures that Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club conduct their businesses in a socially responsible manner, so as to provide a safe and trusted avenue for gaming and to counter illegal gambling. Tote Board's goal is to help build a flourishing society in Singapore. We want to inspire positive change and contribute towards building an inclusive, resilient and vibrant community, while fostering a caring and compassionate nation.

Annex A: Children's Festival Highlights

All information accurate as of 7 June 2018



Rainbow Concert Hall



Rainbow Passageway



Dreamers' Haven



A Waking Dream: Sun-boy and Yellow Man by Lee Wen *City Hall Wing, Level 1–3, City Hall Foyer and Singtel Special Exhibition Gallery A*

Explore five interactive installations with a cast of fun characters inspired by Lee Wen's book *A Waking Dream* and seminal series *Journey of a Yellow Man*. Make music at *Rainbow Concert Hall* and spin the wheel of life at the *Daydream Tunnel*. Watch colours transform as you follow the curious Cosmic Dancer along the *Rainbow Passageway*. Then, step inside *Dreamers' Haven* and leave your hopes and fears on a pair of wings. Finally, look for the Yellow Man on the bridge or under the gazebo of red lanterns inside the *Anatomy of Dreamers*.

About the artist

Born in 1957, Lee Wen is a multidisciplinary artist and one of Singapore's most internationally-recognised contemporary artists. A pioneer of performance art in Singapore whose works revolves around the themes of social identity, he is best known for his *Yellow Man* series. Lee Wen's works have been shown in more than 30 international arts festivals and biennales in countries such as France, Germany, Japan and China. Despite being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, his two-dimensional works convey an overwhelming sense of optimism and perseverance. Lee Wen was conferred the Cultural Medallion for Visual Arts in 2005 and won the Joseph Balestier Award for the Freedom of Art in 2016.

Hands On by We Make Carpets

Supreme Court Wing, Level B1, Koh Seow Chuan Concourse Gallery

Create works of art using pool noodles, Velcro and other household items. You will never see everyday objects in the same way again!

Hands On is based on an exhibition first commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Melbourne and developed in collaboration with We Make Carpets in 2017–18.

About the artist

The carpets of Dutch collective We Make Carpets are made from everyday objects like forks, buttons, staples, matches, cocktail umbrellas and paperclips. They want people to take a fresh look at these every day products and become aware of their beauty.

The trio made their first carpet in 2009 while collaborating in the *Instant Nature* exhibition for the Dutch Design Week. Their site-specific artworks can be considered contemporary interpretations of a centuries-old craft that celebrate mass industry and beautify the ordinary. They have presented their works at NGV Melbourne Triennial, NDSM Wharf, Zeeuws Museum, Jerusalem Design Week, 21_21 Design sight in Tokyo.



Passage and Bridges, Evolution of Firewalk: A Bridge of Embers by Mark Justiniani

Supreme Court Wing, Level B1, Outside Koh Seow Chuan Concourse Gallery

Mark Justiniani introduces a new iteration to the popular *Firewalk: A Bridge of Embers*, 10-metre infinity bridge with an illusion of depth that crosses the boundaries between dreams and reality. Take a surreal walk along this bridge and peer through the windows of time. Uncover stories connecting us to the realms of the cherished and yet forgotten.



Part of a five-year incubation project between Justiniani and National Gallery Singapore, the installation is a first of its kind where an existing and completed artwork continues to have a fresh look every year.

About the artist

Mark Justiniani was born in 1966 in Bacolod, Philippines. He is often identified with the lineage of Social Realism through the 80's and 90's in the Philippines through artist-activist initiatives like Salingpusa (1984) and Sanggawa (1994).

After returning from the USA in 2006, he developed his oeuvre through “magic realist strains” and has moved to configurations of space, the nature of vision and their ever-vacillating relationship with time through the use of reflective media in recent years. His practice has had him represent the Philippines in conferences and exhibitions overseas since 1992.



Walk, Walk, Walk: Search, Deviate, Reunite by teamLab
City Hall Wing, Level B1, The Ngee Ann Kongsi Concourse Gallery

This immersive digital installation blurs the line between the virtual and real world. Step inside a wondrous labyrinth and encounter new characters of frogs and rabbits and divergent paths in a quest for enlightenment.



Image courtesy of teamLab

Flowers and People – Dark by teamLab
City Hall Wing, Level B1, Outside The Ngee Ann Kongsi Concourse Gallery

Observe flowers springing up, blossoming and then withering away in this multi-channel installation. The audience's behavior influences the process, creating spontaneous and unique responses.

About the artist

teamLab (f. 2001) is an art collective, an interdisciplinary group of ultra-technologists whose collaborative practice seeks to navigate the confluence of art, science, technology, design and the natural world. The collective includes various specialists such as artists, programmers, engineers, CG animators, mathematicians and architects.

teamLab aims to explore a new relationship between humans and nature through art. Digital technology has allowed us to liberate art from the physical and transcend boundaries. We see no boundary between ourselves and nature; one is in the other and the other in one. Everything exists in a long, fragile yet miraculous continuity of life.

It has been the subject of numerous exhibitions at venues worldwide, including teamLab Dance! Art Exhibition and Learn and Play! teamLab Future Park which has welcomed over 470,000 visitors; Expo Milano 2015 Japan Pavilion, Milan; Saatchi Gallery, London; Maison&Objet, Paris; the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung; DMM.PLANETS Art by teamLab which recorded 5-hour queue; teamLab: Living Digital Space and Future Parks, Silicon Valley; ArtScience Museum, Singapore; among others. Now exhibiting teamLab: Living Digital Forest and Future Park at PACE BEIJING (Beijing, China) till November 19.

teamLab's works are in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Asia Society Museum, New York; Borusan Contemporary Art Collection, Istanbul; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Annex B: Programmes Highlights of Children's Festival 2018

Art Packs

Make the most of your experience by picking up an art pack. For just \$5, you will receive

- A mini festival pass for a Small Big Dreamer
- A set of five illustrated activity cards to explore the installations
- A pencil
- Admission stickers* for 2 Small Big Dreamers

Art packs can be purchased at dedicated vending machines on Level B1, Level 3 and the Keppel Centre for Art Education.

*Each sticker admits a child aged 12 and below. Valid till 9 September 2018. Admission fees apply for accompanying adults.

Sound Makers by Little Creatures

Sat – Sun 1 – 2 Sept | 11 – 11.30am (5 – 8 years old) | 2 – 2.30pm (3 – 6 years old) | 3.30 – 4pm (8 – 36 months)

City Hall Wing, Level 1, Rainbow Concert Hall

Create rhythms and beats using daily objects like pots and pans in this fun parent-child workshop.

Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) 2018: Celebrations in the City

Fri 29 Jun | 5 – 7.30pm, Sat 30 Jun | 1.15 – 5.45pm, Sun 1 Jul | 2 – 5.30pm

Padang Atrium and Singapore Courtyard

Explore your imagination with students in a series of performances across different art forms. Enjoy a musical showcase at the Padang Atrium that explores improvisation and live interaction; and dramatised readings of co-devised scripts that express issues faced by youth today at the Singapore Courtyard.

Small Big Dreamers: Incredible 5 Tours

Wednesdays & Saturdays | 9 Jun–9 Sept | 4–5pm

Gain insights into the stories that inspired the installations on this exciting docent-led tour. Suitable for families, the young and young at heart.

Admission tickets to exhibitions apply. Registration opens 20 minutes before each tour at the Tours Desk located at the Visitors Service Room, Level B1. 20 slots are available per tour on a first come, first served basis.

Family Art Workshop



*Sat 11 Aug | 1.30–3pm | \$20 per adult-child pair or \$30 per adult-child trio | Ages 7 and above
City Hall Wing, Level 1, Keppel Centre for Art Education*

Get creative as a family and pick up new skills for art making under the guidance of an experienced Gallery facilitator. Create your own masterpiece inspired by works featured in the festival.

Tickets available through the Gallery and SISTIC websites and ticketing counters. For more information, please visit www.nationalgallery.sg/families.

Singapore International Children’s Film Festival

*26, 29 May & 2, 3, 9, 10 June | Various timings | Ages 2–18
City Hall Wing, Level BM, The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium | \$12.90*

Showcasing nine collections of short films, each carefully curated for a specific age group, this film festival brings children on a magical journey through film that is sure to enrich and inspire! Catch films like *The Highway Rat*, from the award-winning producers of Roald Dahl’s *Revoltin’ Rhymes* and *Wolfie The Bunny*, directed by Galen Fott.

Tickets are required for admission for children ages 1 and above and may be purchased at <https://www.bigeyesbigminds.com/schedule-tickets>. Children ages 12 and below must be accompanied by an adult.