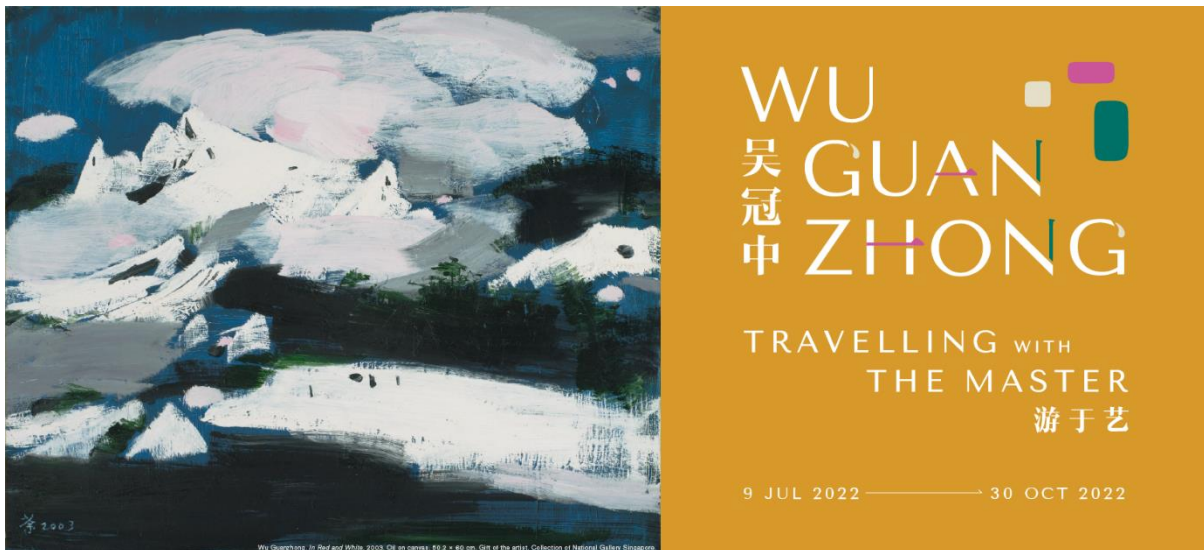


MEDIA RELEASE

**EXPLORE NEW PERSPECTIVES OF TRAVEL
WITH NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE'S FIRST EXHIBITION
CO-CREATED WITH DOCENTS**

*Four docent-curators guide visitors on a journey
of Wu Guanzhong's works and artistic career*



Singapore, 1 July 2022 – Opening on 9 July, National Gallery Singapore's latest exhibition *Wu Guanzhong: Travelling with the Master* is set to instill a new sense of wanderlust as it takes visitors on an intriguing journey of the artist's life and art through the lens of everyday people. The exhibition, conceived at a time when travel was curtailed during the pandemic, explores various aspects of "travelling" through the curatorial interventions of a group of long-serving museum volunteer guides, also known as docents. This marks the Gallery's first-ever co-created exhibition with the docent community, presenting 47 artworks by Wu Guanzhong from the National Collection and rare archival materials alongside the docent-curators' personal stories and recollections. This new approach of co-creation champions diverse voices and continues the Gallery's ongoing and dedicated efforts to being an inclusive and welcoming People's Museum.

The four docent-curators – Gertrude Tan, Queenie Chow, Stella Rong and Tina Nixon – are passionate about the arts, avid fans of Wu Guanzhong and have guided visitors through his exhibitions at the Gallery since 2015. By bringing together their knowledge on Wu's art and biography, drawing connections between his artworks and their lived experiences through

personal anecdotes, reflections and photographs, the co-creation process of *Travelling with the Master* manifests Wu Guanzhong's personal desires for his art to resonate with both art experts and the wider public. The docent-curators' anecdotes also spark visitors' memories of their own travels, bridging their own experiences with Wu's art to draw intimate and personal connections between Wu and general audiences.

Dr. Eugene Tan, Director of National Gallery Singapore, says, "As an inclusive and welcoming museum for all, the Gallery continues to explore new formats to allow us to present diverse perspectives. Docents are integral to the museum experience, and it was natural to invite them to participate in our inaugural co-created exhibition. We hope that as audiences explore Wu Guanzhong's art through the lenses of the docent-curators, they will be inspired to connect their own experiences, and gain a newfound appreciation for his masterful practice."

TRAVELLING WITH THE MASTER: FROM THE ABSTRACT TO IDEALISATION

The exhibition renews perceptions of travel, exploring physical journeys and beyond, including the conceptual, imaginative and emotional aspects of travel through the docent-curators' presentation of the modern Chinese master's art.



Wu Guanzhong. *A Dream in the Daytime*. 1991. Chinese ink and colour on paper, 68.5 x 139cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

In the first section ***Daydreaming***, audiences are invited to explore the boundless mind of the master painter and his desire to roam freely – between the East and the West, the traditional and the modern, the figurative and the abstract. Stylised strokes and simple dots, lines, colours and forms portray the conceptual aspect of travel, and the abstract paintings capture the free-

spirited nature of Wu's imagination. The expressive brush strokes and vibrant colours in *A Dream in the Daytime* (1991) encourage the mind to wander, as audiences are taken through the depth of Wu's artistic styles and expressions through the world of abstraction.



L: Wu Guanzhong. *A Tibetan Buddha Wall*. 1961. Oil on board, 45.2 x 60.7cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

R: Sculpture of the Buddha along the wall of a hill in Tibet, taken by Nan Drak Tsring in 2018. Photo provided by Queenie Chow.

Inspired by Wu's idealised paintings of his hometown, the docent-curators travelled to Jiangnan and other parts of China to see and experience the locations and landscapes which Wu had traversed years prior, and recollect these travels through the section titled **Exploring**. Wu's travels through Tibet are investigated through the juxtaposition of his painting titled *A Tibetan Buddha Wall* (1961), a photograph of a Buddha sculpture along the wall of a hill in Tibet and reflections of the docents' own travels to Tibet. Viewers are prompted to imagine Wu's difficult travels and tireless search for artistic inspiration across China, building a greater understanding of the artist's life and artistic practice. **Beyond The Horizon**, which traces Wu's extensive travels around the world, displays a world map inspired by Wu's own hand-drawn map; his artworks are also supplemented with archival photographs and catalogues of seminal group and solo exhibitions from around the world.



Wu Guanzhong. *Roaring*. 1998. Oil on canvas, 80 x 201 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

The exhibition culminates in the final section, *Rhapsodies*, with an evocative set of works that taps into Wu's emotions as he skilfully rendered his surroundings into moving ink depictions of landscapes. A key highlight is a two-metre long painting of the Yellow River titled *Roaring* (1998) which captures the sights and sounds of the iconic landmark, accompanied by the docent-curators' own experiences of their visit to the river. As audiences take a closer look at the artworks in this section, they are invited to contemplate the emotional and imaginative aspects of travel as they take their time to perceive and connect with Wu's art.

EXPANDING SCHOLARSHIP AND DEEPENING INTERESTS IN WU GUANZHONG

National Gallery Singapore has been devoted to researching the life and art practice of the maverick modern master since 2015. Anchored by a collection of artworks donated by the artist and his family, the Gallery's investigation into Wu's unique approach to classic painting mediums is framed within the wider contexts of ink aesthetics and modern Asian art, as well as the desire to educate general audiences about Wu's significant contributions to Chinese art history. *Wu Guanzhong: Travelling with the Master* is the sixth edition in an ongoing series of exhibitions dedicated to studying the artist.

Reaching out to the docent community, the Gallery held an Open Call during the pandemic in 2021, inviting non-museum professionals to submit proposals for an exhibition on Wu Guanzhong using artworks from the collection. Based on the selected exhibition proposal, the four docent-curators worked closely with the curatorial team to refine artwork selections and the exhibition narrative, as well as develop texts, design and public programmes to reach out to wider publics and inspire interest and curiosity in Wu's art.

Wu Guanzhong: Travelling with the Master will run from 9 July 2022 to 30 October 2022 at Wu Guanzhong Gallery. General Admission (free for Singaporeans and PRs) applies. Accompanying programmes include a panel discussion with the docent-curators on 9 July 2022 (registration is free); docent tours in English and Chinese will also be available. For more information, please visit nationalgallery.sg/travellingwiththemaster or refer to the annexes below. Media assets are available at this [link](#).

- *Annex A: Wu Guanzhong: Travelling with the Master Exhibition Sections and Highlights*
- *Annex B: Docent-curators' biographies*

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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 landscapes.

ANNEX A: WU GUANZHONG: TRAVELLING WITH THE MASTER ARTWORK

HIGHLIGHTS

Daydreaming	
	<p>Wu Guanzhong. <i>A Dream in the Daytime</i>. 1991. Chinese ink and colour on paper, 68.5 x 139cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.</p>
	<p>Wu Guanzhong. <i>Galloping</i>. 2006. Chinese ink and colour on paper, 41.5 x 68.5 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore</p>
Exploring	
	<p>Wu Guanzhong. <i>Green Sorghum</i>. 1995. Oil on canvas, 64.6 x 54.8 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore</p>
	<p>Wu Guanzhong. <i>A Sauce Shop</i>. 2000. Oil on canvas, 85.5 x 100 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.</p>



Wu Guanzhong. *Pandas*. 1992. Chinese ink and colour on paper, 122 x 247 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

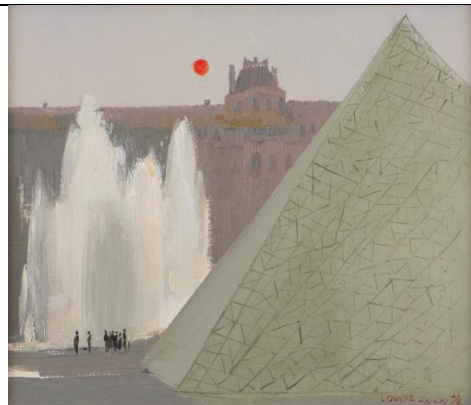
Beyond the Horizon



Wu Guanzhong. *A Fleet of Boats in Indonesia*. 1994. Oil on canvas, 48.2 x 68 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.



Wu Guanzhong. *An Indian Temple in Singapore*. 1990. Carbon ink and watercolour on paper, 35.5 x 25.3 cm. Gift of the artist and his family. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.



Wu Guanzhong. *The Louvre Palace*. 1989. Oil on canvas, 44.8 x 52.2 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Rhapsodies



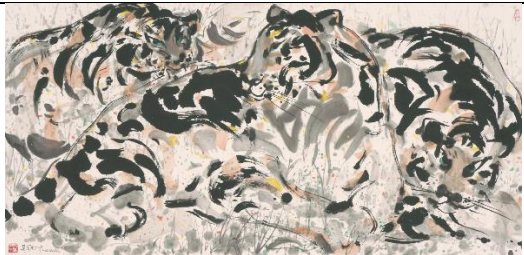
Wu Guanzhong. *A Lotus Flower Island*. 2003. Oil on canvas, 39.8 x 60.1 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.



Wu Guanzhong. *In Red and White*. 2003. Oil on canvas, 50.2 x 60 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.



Wu Guanzhong. *Roaring*. 1998. Oil on canvas, 80 x 201 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.



Wu Guanzhong. *Tigers (I)*. 1990. Chinese ink and colour on paper, 68.1 x 137 cm. Gift of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

ANNEX B: DOCENT-CURATORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Gertrude Tan Yam Hua is a full-time lecturer at a tertiary institution in Singapore and has been an active docent for almost 20 years with several local art and cultural museums. Prior to the opening of National Gallery Singapore in 2015, she was involved in designing its inaugural docent training programme, and she continues to train and mentor new docents who are keen to join the community.

Queenie Chow Wai Lee has been actively volunteering as a guide in local museums and galleries since 2011 and joined National Gallery Singapore as a docent in 2015. In addition to the Gallery's permanent galleries and special exhibitions, she has also guided tours to all of Gallery's exhibitions on Wu Guanzhong, namely *Beauty Beyond Form*, *A Walk Through Nature*, *Expressions of Pen and Palette* and *Learning from the Master*.

Stella Rong Yiyi moved to Singapore with her family in 2005. She works in the finance sector and deals with numbers daily. It was through a serendipitous encounter that she started volunteering as a docent at museums in Singapore, and then became a Mandarin docent at National Gallery Singapore in 2015.

Tina Nixon was trained as one of the first docents to guide at Singapore Art Museum in 1996. After leaving Singapore shortly after, she worked at Christie's in Hong Kong, The Asia Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Royal Academy in London, before returning to being a docent here in 2010. She joined National Gallery Singapore in 2015 and is passionate about encouraging people to explore the art within its galleries.