

For immediate release

Media Release

First ArchiGallery Exhibition Opens Up National Gallery Singapore's Histories and Transformations to Public

*Listening to Architecture: The Gallery's Histories and Transformations captivates
with stories within the City Hall and former Supreme Court buildings*



The exhibition invites visitors to listen in on an ongoing conversation of the architecture between different generations, across time.

29 June 2017 – National Gallery Singapore has launched its new ArchiGallery, its first and only exhibition space dedicated to architecture. The first exhibition to be held in the ArchiGallery titled, *Listening to Architecture: The Gallery's Histories and Transformations*, will illustrate the rich histories of the City Hall and former Supreme Court sites and their architectural transformation into National Gallery Singapore.

The Gallery has seen a keen interest in the histories and architecture of the two buildings since its opening – the ArchiGallery will provide visitors with an immersive experience of the two buildings and complement the building history tours offered daily. The ArchiGallery is also a way for the Gallery to acknowledge the tremendous collaborative effort to transform these two buildings into the Gallery today.

The inaugural exhibition is a multisensory show, which will present a history of the buildings' design and conservation efforts, highlight key architectural features, showcase key artefacts from excavations conducted on-site and display artworks by Singaporean artists Zai Tang and Michael Lee. A fusion of art and innovation, the exhibition will allow, for the first time, the public to virtually navigate two spaces that are inaccessible – the Gallery's main dome and the walkway leading from the holding cells to the courtroom in the former Supreme Court. This is done through an innovative 360-degree tour projected onto the wall. The interactive tour enables visitors to control their movement within the virtual space through their physical actions, allowing them to feel totally transported into these spaces.

“Positioned within an institution committed to the research and display of regional art histories, this exhibition is a means by which the Gallery may look self-reflexively at its own history within Singapore's Civic District, and to make sense of the district and cultural planning that has long made the site an important landmark.” said Dr Eugene Tan, Director, National Gallery Singapore.

Architectural plans, drawings, photographs and archival materials, including artefacts excavated from beneath the two buildings will be on display to the public for the first time. Visitors will also learn about the work and workers behind the monumental transformation and conversion of the two buildings into the Gallery.



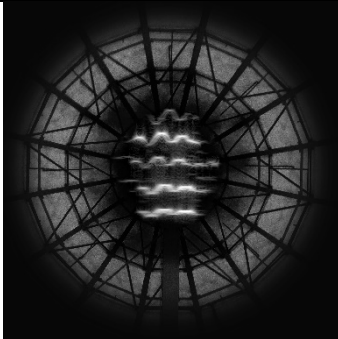
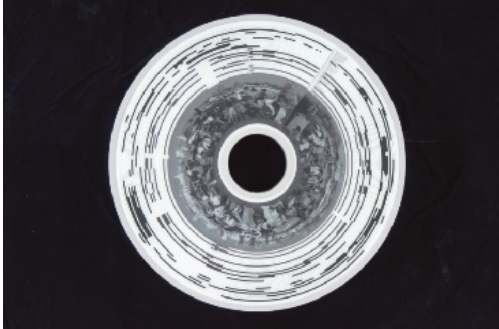
Mr Low Sze Wee, Director for Curatorial, Collections and Education, National Gallery Singapore said, “Through the exhibition, we hope that visitors will learn about the little-known histories of the sites, the philosophies and symbolic elements of the City Hall and former Supreme Court buildings' design, their changing roles over time, and the challenges involved in transforming them into National Gallery Singapore. The archaeological remains that were found as part of excavation work date back to the 1300s and tell a story of an almost forgotten past, providing a glimpse into the lives of the island's different inhabitants, who have shared the same space across vastly different eras.”

Visitors can also experience artist Zai Tang's immersive sound work located along the connecting corridor. The work was commissioned by the Gallery and developed by Zai in response to the Gallery's histories and architecture. The eight compositions which constitute the installation, titled, *'Resident Frequencies: A Brief Aural History of the National Gallery Singapore'* were created from sounds recorded in and around the City Hall and former Supreme Court buildings. Meanwhile also on display is Michael Lee's *'Mapping Worlds: Scenes of Singapore'* which explores the relationship between Singapore's architecture, urban planning, and people.

Listening to Architecture: The Gallery's Histories and Transformations is curated by National Gallery Singapore's Senior Curator Seng Yu Jin, Assistant Curator Joleen Loh and Assistant Curator Goh Sze Ying. The exhibition is located at ArchiGallery, City Hall, Level 4 and there is free admission for all visitors.

For more details about the exhibition, visit www.nationalgallery.sg.

ANNEX A: Exhibition Highlights

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS	
	<p>Grand Hotel de l'Europe. late 19th century Postcard 9.4 x 14.5 cm</p>
360-DEGREE INTERACTIVE TOUR	
	<p>360-degree interactive tour: Main Dome and the walkway leading from the holding cells to the courtroom in the former Supreme Court</p>
ARTWORKS	
	<p>Zai Tang <i>Resident Frequencies: A Brief Aural History of the National Gallery Singapore</i> 2017 Eight-channel sound installation, 00:36:00 Commissioned by National Gallery Singapore</p> <p>Image courtesy of the artist</p>
	<p>Michael Lee <i>Mapping Worlds: Scenes of Singapore</i> 2010 Digital print on lightbox with matt silver frame Collection of Koh Seow Chuan</p>

ARTEFACTS	
	<p>Bodhisattva figurine in royal pose, Qing Bai porcelain, Yuan Dynasty. 8 x 7 x 1.5 cm. c. 1300s.</p> <p>Image courtesy of the Archaeology Unit, Nalanda Sriwijaya Centre at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute</p>
	<p>Toothpaste lid from the colonial period. 8 x 8 x 1.5 cm. Ceramic porcelain. c. 1876-1900.</p> <p>Image courtesy of the Archaeology Unit, Nalanda Sriwijaya Centre at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute</p>
	<p>British military webbing metal fittings, World War II midden. c. 1942.</p> <p>These buckles and metal fittings were part of infantry personal equipment dumped into a WW2 trench in the Padang. Their context marks the surrender of the Allied Commonwealth army in February 1942.</p> <p>Courtesy of the Archaeology Unit, Nalanda Sriwijaya Centre at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute</p>

ANNEX B: Programmes and Existing Publications

PROGRAMMES

Eye / Feel / Write II (EFW II)

4 and 11 November 2017, 1pm – 3pm

Supreme Court Wing, National Gallery Singapore

Following the success of the first iteration, the *Eye/Feel/Write* series focuses on responding to the history and architecture of the Supreme Court. EFW II will follow a structure similar to the 2015 edition, with 5 – 6 writers reading their work on a special tour led by a Gallery curator/docent.

EXISTING PUBLICATIONS

The titles here are published by National Gallery Singapore and are related to the transformation of our buildings and their rich history.

Our titles are available at the museum shop, selected bookstores in Singapore and on Amazon.com. For more details, visit <https://www.nationalgallery.sg/learn/publications> or contact us at publications@nationalgallery.sg.



The Making of National Gallery Singapore Published 2015

The Making of National Gallery Singapore animates the story of the origins and physical transformations of the City Hall and former Supreme Court buildings into National Gallery Singapore. Accompanied by stunning photographs, these chapters flesh out details of the colonial past of the buildings, the conception and organisation of the architectural design competition, and the ambitious ten-year envisioning, design and building process.



National Gallery Singapore: Art Spaces

Right in the heart of the Civic district, National Gallery Singapore occupies the neoclassical City Hall and former Supreme Court, two buildings that have been focal points for many important events in the history of Singapore. In collaboration with Scala Arts and Heritage Publishers, this little book brings the reader on an architectural journey tracing the origins of the two national monuments through time, to where they stand today, as National Gallery Singapore, telling a story of competition, preservation and innovation.

ABOUT NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

UNVEILING MODERN SINGAPORE AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART

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.

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