





For immediate release

Media Release

First Major Survey of Yayoi Kusama in Southeast Asia Opens at National Gallery Singapore

YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow to feature over 120 works spanning 70 years of Kusama's artistic practice



Works showcased in this exhibition also include new, never-before-seen pieces from Yayoi Kusama's ongoing series 'My Eternal Soul'

6 June 2017 – National Gallery Singapore today unveiled internationally-acclaimed artist Yayoi Kusama's first major survey in Southeast Asia. Titled *YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow*, the exhibition will feature over 120 works, including new, neverbefore-seen, pieces. It will offer an unprecedented opportunity to explore the creative journey of one of the world's most widely recognised artists.

The Gallery's highly anticipated exhibition follows well-received Yayoi Kusama shows in both Washington D.C. and Tokyo, and will include signature pieces, such as her infinity net paintings and infinity mirror rooms. Her most recent works – a cluster of soft sculptures and several paintings from her 'My Eternal Soul' series (2009–ongoing), including the exhibition's titular painting *Life is the Heart of a Rainbow* – will also be on display for the first time. In addition, Kusama's mirrored peep room, *I WANT TO LOVE ON THE FESTIVAL NIGHT*, which has been specially created for the Gallery, will be featured alongside rarely seen works from private and public collections.

"We are pleased to be presenting the works of Yayoi Kusama for the first time at National Gallery Singapore. The remarkable work and life of Yayoi Kusama has entranced millions across the globe and her signature motifs of dots, nets and pumpkins have entered the popular imagination. The exhibition, which will feature seven decades of her unrelenting artistic production is a key part of the Gallery's mission to feature major artists and artistic developments from the 19th century until today. We see Kusama's work as a powerful introduction to important modern art movements and methods such as Surrealism, Pop, Minimalism, Performance and Conceptual art." said Dr Eugene Tan, Director, National Gallery Singapore. "By presenting a wide range of works across the artist's long career, we hope that audiences in Singapore and Southeast Asia will gain a new appreciation of an artist who now has a firm place in the global and regional art history, and is widely considered an iconic figure in popular culture."

YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow takes a specific perspective on Kusama's vast body of work, where visitors can discover the development of her iconic themes and trace their formal and conceptual interconnections through her seven-decade long career. Works on display range across different media from paintings, sculptures, collages and video to large-scale installations.

"Kusama's world is complex: full of colour and powerful symbolism. In each of her works you are transported into a universe that is deeply intimate as well as potentially boundless. We hope that the exhibition will draw visitors to the visual impact and virtuosity of Kusama's works as well as convey the development of her style and motifs, and their personal, artistic and social context." said Russell Storer, Deputy Director, Curatorial & Collections, National Gallery Singapore.

The exhibition culminates in a series of spectacular installations in the Gallery's public spaces, such as the historical City Hall Chamber, extending the experience beyond the exhibition galleries.

Ms Chua Sock Koong, Singtel Group CEO, said, "We are pleased to support the Yayoi Kusama exhibition at the Singtel Special Exhibition Gallery. This influential Asian artist's creative vision has inspired people all over the world, showing that art transcends boundaries. Her art brings people together in the way we, as Asia's leading communications group, connect over 600 million of our customers across the region every day. We hope visitors will enjoy Kusama's stunning artworks in her first major museum exhibition in Southeast Asia. We've lent further support to the exhibition by decorating our

Comcentre at Killiney Road and selected retail stores with her trademark polka dots. We hope our staff, partners and customers also get into the spirit of Kusama, and, by extension, art!"

Singapore Tourism Board's Executive Director for Arts, Entertainment and Tourism Concept Development, Ms Carrie Kwik said, "We are pleased to be the first Southeast Asian country to host a major survey of Yayoi Kusama's works and we hope to see strong interest from our regional visitors. The wide range of enriching programmes and interactive activities is expected to attract arts enthusiasts, Singaporeans and visitors. The exhibition also reinforces Singapore's standing as a key host city in the region for showcasing seminal works by leading global artists, and accentuates our appeal as a cultural and lifestyle destination for art lovers."

The exhibition is a collaboration between National Gallery Singapore and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane, Australia. The exhibition is co-curated by Russell Storer and Adele Tan of the Gallery and Reuben Keehan of QAGOMA. The show will travel to QAGOMA in November 2017 after its presentation in Singapore.

YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow will run from 9 June to 3 September 2017 at the Singtel Special Exhibition Gallery and City Hall Chamber, Level 3, City Hall Wing.

More information can be found in the following annexes:

Annex A – Exhibition highlights and the accompanying catalogue

Annex B – Exhibition ticketing

Annex C – Complementary programmes and activities

Annex D – Exhibition merchandise

Annex E – Kusama-inspired food and beverage by the Gallery's partners and tenants

For more details about the exhibition, visit www.nationalgallery.sg/yayoi-kusama.

ANNEX A: Exhibition Highlights

The exhibition is divided into three sections:

Gallery A looks at Kusama's use of dots, nets and pumpkins through painting, sculpture and installation from the 1950s to the present.

Gallery B considers Kusama's engagement with the human body through installation, performance, sculpture and painting.

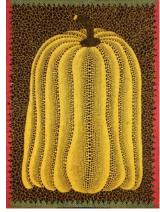
Gallery C focuses on Kusama's major recent canvas series 'Love Forever' and 'My Eternal Soul', along with large-scale installations that demonstrate her activation of space and deployment of spectacle.

GALLERY A



Self-Portrait
1952
Gouache, pastel, crayon on paper
28 x 20.4 cm
Collection of the Artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA

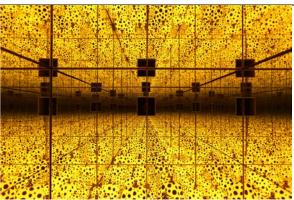
Kusama's early works already demonstrate motifs that she continues to use throughout her life – eyes, dots and organic shapes. Works such as *Self-Portrait* reflect a Surrealist sensibility, with their exploration of the subconscious through symbolic forms.



Pumpkin 1981 Acrylic on canvas 130 x 97 cm

Collection of Daisuke Miyatsu, Japan Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore ©YAYOI KUSAMA

Kusama returned to painting pumpkins after moving back to Japan from New York in the 1970s. She had painted them often as a young art student in Kyoto. This work combines an image of a pumpkin with the artist's signature nets and dots motifs.



The Spirits of the Pumpkins Descended into the Heavens
2017
Mixed media

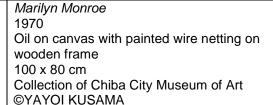
Dimensions variable

The humble pumpkin is one of Kusama's most beloved motifs. The origin of her distinctive yellow-and-black colour scheme, these whimsical, bulbous forms appear regularly in her paintings, prints, sculptures and installations. This work creates the illusion of a vast field of pumpkins stretching to infinity.

GALLERY B







This work is one of 15 portraits of women whom Kusama called "the bad girls". These 'caged' paintings were distinguished by a layer of wire netting overlaying the canvases, with the shadow cast by the netting intertwining with the net and dot motifs in the painting.

Infinity Mirrored Room – Gleaming Lights of the Souls 2008

Mirror, wooden panels, LED lights, metal, acrylic panels

415 x 415 x 287.4 cm
Collection of the Artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA,
Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore,
Victoria Miro Gallery, London

First created in 1965, Kusama's infinity mirror rooms extend the repetitive approach of her net and dot paintings into an immersive sensory experience. Ranging in format from small peep boxes to room-scale installations, these kaleidoscopic environments invite contemplation within an infinitely repeating, expanded space.

Song of a Manhattan Suicide Addict 2010

Video

1:24 minutes

Collection of the Artist. © YAYOI KUSAMA, Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore, David Zwirner, New York

This video installation shows Kusama singing an original song about her experience dealing with depression. A moving sequence of artworks forms the backdrop. Taking its title from Kusama's acclaimed debut novel, published in 1978, this work provides an insight into her worldview and drive to create art.

GALLERY C



I WANT TO LOVE ON THE FESTIVAL NIGHT 2017

Mirrored box and light bulbs 220 x 214 x 185 cm Collection of the artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA

Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore



The Sun Wants to Go on a Journey 2012
Sawn stuffed fabric, paint, metal 200 x 85 x 85 cm
Collection of the Artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA.

Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore

Kusama's recent soft sculptures continue in a medium that the artist has worked with since the early 1960s, but include a new range of vivid colours and dynamic silhouettes. Like her recent paintings, they combine the organic with the imaginary to create strange and compelling hybrid forms.

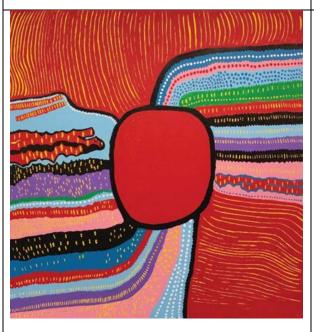


With All My Love for the Tulips, I Pray Forever 2013

Metal, fibreglass, urethane, paint, stickers 201 x 170 x 295 cm; 181 x 170 x 235cm; 210 x 170 x 229.5 cm

Collection of the Artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA, Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, David Zwirner, New York

Kusama made her first environment installation in 1963. These invited audiences to enter a space full of repeated forms and images, such as phallic objects and dots. This work creates a world as seen through a screen of dots, invoking the hallucinations that Kusama experienced at a young age. It also evokes her concept of self-obliteration – the giant tulips merge into a white room covered entirely in psychedelic dots, becoming a part of the space around them.



Life Is the Heart of a Rainbow 2017

Oil on canvas 194 x 194 cm

©YAYOI KUSAMA, Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, David Zwirner, New York

Kusama began her epic painting series 'My Eternal Soul' in 2009, initially intending to complete 100 canvases. Still ongoing, the series now comprises over 500 paintings, 24 of which are featured here. They contain familiar motifs from Kusama's work over the decades, such as eyes, profiles, dots and nets, but also introduce new forms and colours, continually extending her rich visual language.

CITY HALL CHAMBER



Narcissus Garden
2017
1500 stainless steel balls
Dimensions variable
Collection of the artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA

In 1966, Kusama carried out one of her boldest acts—installing 1,500 mass-produced reflective balls in the grounds of the 33rd Venice Biennale, even though she had not been invited to exhibit there. She had wanted to connect art with everyday life, thus freeing it from the confines of the wealthy elite. *Narcissus Garden* has continued to be exhibited in recent years, with versions of it displayed indoors and outdoors, around many different locations around the world.

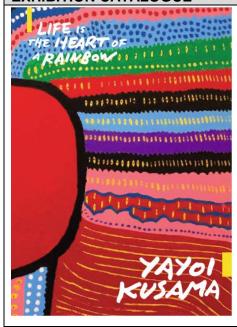
UOB CITYHALL COURTYARD



Dots Obsession
2017
Dimensions variable
Collection of the artist ©YAYOI KUSAMA
Courtesy of Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo/Singapore,
Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Dots Obsession exemplifies Kusama's endless fascination with our place in this world. First created in 1996, this on-going series of installations features polka-dotted spaces with suspended biomorphic or spherical inflatables in different colour combinations. These create joyous environments that visitors can wander into and be enveloped by sensuous dotted forms.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow exhibition catalogue

Accompanying the first major survey of Yayoi Kusama's work in Southeast Asia, this catalogue explores the captivating work of one of the world's most influential artist. It features essays by curators from National Gallery Singapore and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, a biographical timeline highlighting key moments in her 70 years of artistic practice, and beautifully reproduced images of her works from the 1950s to present day.

Available at Gallery & Co. and selected bookstores in Singapore.

For more information, please email publications@nationalgallery.sq.

ANNEX B: Exhibition Ticketing

Exhibition title	YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow			
Exhibition run	9 June – 3 September 2017			
Opening hours	Sun-Thu and Public Holidays, 10am–7pm Fri–Sat and Eve of Public Holidays, 10am–10pm Admission ends 30 minutes before closing time.			
Entry fees	Singaporeans and PRs			
	Ticket Type	Standard	Concessions	
	All Access Pass	\$15	\$10	
	Non-Singaporeans			
	Ticket Type	Standard	Concessions	
	General Admission	\$20	\$15	
	YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow	\$25	\$20	
	All Access Pass	\$30	\$25	
Ticketing	Free for children 6 years and under, local and locally-based students and teachers, persons with disabilities and one caregiver. Concessions apply to children ages 7–12, seniors 60 years and above, full-time National Servicemen (NSF) excluding foreign personnel and overseas students and teachers. Valid verification is needed. Timed-entry tickets will be introduced for YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow. Timed-entry tickets help to ensure the capacity of our			
	exhibitions is not exceeded, providing visitors with a comfortable experience.			
	 Advanced ticket sales (online only) Online ticket sales are available on SISTIC from 2 June onwards. Online bookings must be made at least one day before your visit. 			
	Visitors are encouraged to book the	=	-	
	disappointment. Ticket collection is at Level B1 Ticketing Counter			
	Membership Privileges Gallery Insiders enjoy free admission to the exhibition and enjoy priority queues for onsite tickets. Same-day ticket sales (on-site only) From 9 June, a limited number of on-site tickets will be made available each day from 9.30am at the Level B1 Ticketing Counter. Sale of on-site tickets ends 1.5 hours before the galleries close. Last sale of on-site tickets from Sun—Thu & PH: 5.30pm Last sale of on-site tickets from Fri—Sat & Eve of PH: 8.30pm During peak hours, queues may be expected at the exhibition gallery entrances and at some installations.			
	For more details, visit: https://www.nation	nalgallery.sg/yay	<u>/oi-kusama</u>	

ANNEX C: Programmes and Activities

TOURS

Self-guided Tours

Download our free Gallery Explorer app to enjoy a short audio tour that provides a fascinating glimpse into Kusama's life and the stories behind selected artworks. Available in English and Japanese.

Curator-led Tours

Tickets available through the Gallery and SISTIC website and ticketing counters.

Thu 13 Jul | 7.30pm - 8.45pm | \$25 Led by Adele Tan

Thu 10 Aug | 7.30pm – 8.45pm | \$25 Led by Russell Storer

KIDS AND FAMILIES



Gallery Children's Biennale: Dreams & Stories 20 May–8 Oct

Visit Yayoi Kusama's immersive *The Obliteration Room*, and other creative installations spread across the Gallery!

Family Weekends

Every second Sat & Sun | Jul-Sep

Join us for artist-led workshops and storytelling sessions that explore the patterns, shapes and colours in Kusama's work. Visit www.nationalgallery.sg/learn/families for more information.

TALKS

Curatorial Roundtable: Yayoi Kusama

Sat 17 Jun | 3-4.30pm | The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium | Free

Why is the work of Kusama still relevant today? What explains the dazzling popularity of her art, both in the art world and beyond? Explore these questions and more in a lively discussion with the Gallery's Russell Storer and Adele Tan, and Reuben Keehan of the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

Lecture by Akira Tatehata

Sun 27 Aug | 3 - 4.30pm | The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium | Free

Join distinguished curator and art critic Akira Tatehata as he discusses the work of Yayoi Kusama and her broader significance in the Japanese and international art scenes.

WORKSHOPS



Sunday Studio: Marbled Patterns
Sun 18 Jun, 2 Jul, 6 Aug, 3 Sep | 2–5pm | Keppel Centre for Art
Education Workshops 1 & 2 | \$45

Learn marbling techniques and experiment with creating patterns on fabric and paper.

FILM SCREENINGS



Near Equal Kusama Yayoi – I Adore Myself by Takako Matsumoto

Japan | Japanese with English subtitles | 2008 | 104 min | NC16

Includes post-show Q&A with director Takako Matsumoto and exhibition curators Russell Storer and Adele Tan

5 & 6 Aug (Sat & Sun) | Starts 3pm | The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium | Free (Registration required via Gallery website or ticketing counters)

This documentary observes avant-garde artist Yayoi Kusama at work, as she completes a series of 50 large monochrome drawings entitled *Love Forever* for an exhibition in New York (and which will also be exhibited at National Gallery Singapore), makes cameo celebrity appearances on TV, and receives her country's pre-eminent cultural award – the Praemium Imperiale – from the emperor of Japan.

Filming over a period of 18 months, director Matsumoto gets up close and personal with the artist. Through the casual interviews, poetry recitations by Kusama and conversations between the artist and her collaborators in the film, viewers will also be able to appreciate the source of her eccentricities, self-obsession and above all, intense dedication to her art.

ANNEX D: Exhibition Merchandise

An extensive range of merchandise will be available online from 2 June and in store from 9 June. A select number of items are exclusive to Gallery & Co., and cannot be found anywhere else in the world. The items featured below have all been given the Kusama treatment, embellished with her signature polka dots, whimsical creations, and latest artworks, bringing her fantastical imagination to life.

Life is the Heart of a Rainbow Sling & Tote Bag The bag features the painting Life is the Heart of a Rainbow from her 'My Eternal Soul' series, which begun in 2009 and is ongoing. This is also one of Kusama's recent artwork and used as the title of the exhibition.
Pumpkin (1981) Foldable Umbrella Inspired by Kusama's Pumpkin (1981), the umbrella pays homage to Kusama's signature dotted patterns and vibrant yellow that can be found on a number of her works.
Pumpkin (1981) Enamel Mug & Bowl The enamel material is a household item familiar with most Singaporeans. This cup, inspired by Kusama's Pumpkin (1981) is a combination of Kusama's art and local sensibilities.
Enamel Pins This series of enamel pins feature motifs from Kusama's 'My Eternal Soul' series, 'Love Forever' series, her signature <i>Pumpkin</i> (1981) artwork, as well as her iconic reclining position.

	,
	Everlasting Beauty for the Never Ending Universe Square Pouch This square pouch is made to mimic Kusama's painting from the 'My Eternal Soul' series, which is an ongoing project. Paintings from this series are also done on square canvases.
	Supermama & Co. X Yayoi Kusama Socks
The state of the s	These socks are in collaboration with Supermama, a concept store based in Singapore. Supermama's strong representation in fusing Japanese craft with Singapore colours, drew Gallery & Co. to collaborate and create a unique, yet relevant, Yayoi Kusama product that caters to Singapore's market. These socks are also adorned with Kusama's artworks from the exhibition, which will be made available from the end of June.
	Square Notebooks
	These notebooks are from Kusama's 'My Eternal Soul' series, where she paints on square canvases. The works used on the covers of these notebooks include Entrance to Death, Everlasting Beauty for the Never Ending Universe, and Night of the Festival.
	Postcards
	The range of postcards available are extracted from Kusama's 'My Eternal Soul' series, the 'Love Forever' series, as well as film stills from her video installation Song of a Manhattan Suicide Addict.

About Gallery & Co.

& Co.'s inaugural project, Gallery & Co., is a progressive retail and F&B destination with a bookstore, café, cafeteria, bar and store in a continuous space. Housed within the historic City Hall building at Singapore's premier arts institution, this venture is done in partnership with the National Gallery Singapore.

The Gallery & Co.'s merchandise for "Life is the Heart of a Rainbow" exhibition can be purchased online at www.galleryand.co.

For media enquiries on merchandise, please contact:

Cheng Shu Yar UNIFORM +65 9631 9968 shu@theuniform.com.sg Olivia Cheng UNIFORM +65 9006 1034 olivia@theuniform.com.sg Lee Jia Qian & CO. Marketeer +65 9871 1839 marketeer@byand.co

ANNEX E: Kusama-inspired food & beverage by Gallery's partner & tenants

Elegant All-Day Dining Indulgences at Aura Sky Lounge



Aura presents a selection of dining specials inspired by the bold and imaginative expressions of Yayoi Kusama over the years. Honouring its Italian culinary roots, the rooftop Sky Lounge introduces an elegant Hi-Tea Menu (\$25++ per person) featuring gourmet snacks and decadent pastries that perfectly encapsulates the fantastical world of the artist's works. Meanwhile, head barman Riccardo Nardone has created a refreshing cocktail to take the experience from day to night. An explosion of vibrant colours and intense flavours, Rainbow Palette (\$18++ each) is a blend of Kakubin Japanese Whisky, Amaretto Disaronno and blood orange liqueur.

Aura
1 St Andrews Road
05-03/06-02 National Gallery Singapore
Singapore 178957
+65 6866 1977
book@aura.sg
www.aura.sg
@aura.nationalgallery

For media enquiries on Aura, please contact:

Lyla Lin LOOP PR +65 9736 1566 lyla@loop-pr.sg

Gallery & Co. presents Yayoi Kusama Specials



Gallery & Co. imagines how it would be like to have a whimsical brunch party with Yayoi Kusama. Drawing inspirations from her constant emphasis on how "dots are a way to infinity", Gallery & Co. selected multiple circular-shaped ingredients to be present in the dishes. This includes coconut, shimeji mushrooms, fregola, dragon fruit balls, all presented in a manner that plays on the gustation and olfaction.

In line with National Gallery Singapore's spotlight on Southeast Asian art, the ingredients used also create a sense of familiarity with locals and visitors from the region. More importantly, every dish embodies Kusama's work in culinary form - a dessert adapted from her iconic pumpkin sculpture, a main dish taking inspiration from *The Obliteration Room*, and more. Through the use of vibrant colours that closely reflects Kusama's colour palette, Gallery & Co. hopes to bring visitors even deeper into the Kusama world.

For media enquiries on Gallery&Co F&B, please contact:

Cheng Shu Yar UNIFORM +65 9631 9968 shu@theuniform.com.sg Olivia Cheng UNIFORM +65 9006 1034 olivia@theuniform.com.sg Lee Jia Qian & CO. Marketeer +65 9871 1839 marketeer@byand.co

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.

ABOUT YAYOI KUSAMA



Yayoi Kusama was born in Matsumoto, Nagano prefecture in 1929. After studying painting in the modern Japanese Nihonga style in Kyoto, she moved to New York in the late 1950s.

Kusama established her career as an avant-garde artist through stimulating happenings and exhibitions until the mid-1960s. Kusama returned to Japan in 1973. From 1980 onwards she became widely known through international solo exhibitions, and the opportunity matured for re-evaluation at the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993. Thereafter she has held solo exhibitions throughout the world at venues such as New York MoMA, Tate Modern and Pompidou Centre. In 2016 she was named as one of TIME Magazine's 100 most influential people. In the same year she was also bestowed the prestigious "Order of Culture" award in Japan. She currently lives and works in Tokyo.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Beverly Tan

Burson-Marsteller for National Gallery Singapore

Tel: (65) 6671 3277

Email: beverly.tan@bm.com

Lum Xin Mun

National Gallery Singapore

Tel: (65) 6697 9120

Email: xinmun.lum@nationalgallery.sg

Susie Lim-Kannan

National Gallery Singapore

Tel: (65) 6697 9207

Email: susie.lim-kannan@nationalgallery.sg