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Media Release

Ground-Breaking Southeast Asian Artworks from the 1970s Featured in New Exhibitions at National Gallery Singapore

Singapore, 20 January 2016 – National Gallery Singapore will launch two exhibitions on 21 January to inaugurate its Concourse Galleries. About 90,000 visitors are expected to view the exhibitions which include ground-breaking artworks, some of which have not been seen by the public for more than 30 years.

A Fact Has No Appearance: Art Beyond the Object brings together works by three key artists: Tan Teng-Kee (Singapore/Malaysia), Redza Piyadasa (Malaysia), and Johnny Manahan (Philippines) for the first time, while *Earth Work 1979* recreates the original exhibition by artist Tang Da Wu (Singapore) at the National Museum Art Gallery in 1980.

“We aim not only to explore the history of modern art in the region but also to revive important artworks that no longer exist physically. The curation connects closely to the Gallery’s long-term exhibitions by examining a period in the 1970s when new approaches towards art-making had a strong impact in this region. This means that visitors can enjoy a seamless and expansive art journey as they move into the different exhibitions within the Gallery,” said Low Sze Wee, Director of Curatorial and Collections, National Gallery Singapore.

A Fact Has No Appearance: Art Beyond the Object

The exhibition title is taken from Piyadasa’s 1977 artwork *A Fact Has No Appearance*, which was destroyed and later reconstructed in 2001. The title makes explicit the role of ideas in art while providing a poetic and philosophical dimension to the exhibition. Curators Russell Storer, Clarissa Chikiamco and Adele Tan have selected artworks by the three artists that reflect a period when established art mediums such as painting, sculpture and photography were being challenged and new approaches to art were being explored.

Each of the three artists broke new ground during the 1970s: Tan's 1979 outdoor exhibition, known as 'The Picnic' featured a dramatic fire sculpture, described as the first 'happening' to have taken place in Singapore; Piyadasa co-organised Malaysia's first ephemeral art exhibition *Towards a Mystical Reality* in 1974; and Manahan was the first artist in the Philippines to work with video art, in 1972.

Earth Work 1979

Curated by Charmaine Toh, this exhibition is a recreation of Tang's original showcase in 1980 and examines a key moment of Singapore's exhibition history. This marks the first time the public can view artworks such as *Gully Curtains* since it was first presented, as well as *The Product of the Sun and Me* and *The Product of the Rain and Me* which were destroyed after the 1980 exhibition.

Tang has exhibited widely at international events including Venice Biennale (2007), Gwangju Biennale (2000) and Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial (1999). The accomplished artist's experimental methods encouraged public discourse examining the nature of art and the role of the artist back in the 1980s.

Earth Work 1979 will run from 22 January until 29 May at Concourse Gallery 2 while *A Fact Has No Appearance* will run from 22 January until 19 June at Concourse Gallery 1, located at Basement 1 of National Gallery Singapore. Admission to the Concourse Galleries is free. Both exhibitions will open from Monday to Thursday, Sunday and on public holidays from 10am to 7pm, and on Friday to Saturday and the eve of public holidays from 10am to 10pm.

For more information about the exhibitions, please visit www.nationalgallery.sg

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ABOUT NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

National Gallery Singapore is a new visual arts institution which oversees the largest public collection of modern art of Singapore and Southeast Asia. The Gallery is dedicated to collaborative research, education and exhibitions, highlighting the importance of modern art in Southeast Asia in a global context. The Gallery also provides a unique visitor experience through its art presentations and innovative programming, positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for the visual arts.

Situated in the heart of the Civic District, the National Gallery Singapore has been beautifully restored and transformed from the former Supreme Court and City Hall buildings – two important heritage buildings of Singapore’s nationhood – into an exciting new visual arts venue. Opened in November 2015, the Gallery will be a leading civic and cultural destination established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world. Information on the National Gallery is available at www.nationalgallery.sg.

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