

For immediate release

Media Release

**Malaysian Painter Latiff Mohidin's *Pagodas II*
Hits the High Notes with Jazz Maestro Jeremy Monteiro**

Singapore, 14 December 2015 – Jazz maestro Jeremy Monteiro concludes National Gallery Singapore's *My Masterpiece* series as the final ambassador of the year-long campaign. Following the critically-acclaimed musician's performance at the launch of the Gallery's opening celebrations, Mr Monteiro admitted to feeling a strong sense of nostalgia when he first laid eyes on Latiff Mohidin's *Pagodas II*. The design of the buildings in the artwork, reminiscent of temples and mosques commonly found in Asia and depicted in close proximity in the painting, reminded him fondly of home.

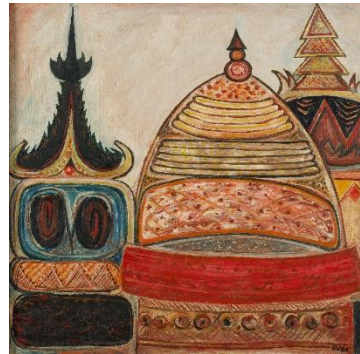
Commenting on the masterpiece, Mr Monteiro said, "The pagoda tapers really evoked a sense of nostalgia for me. I spend a fair bit of time travelling through Asia and Europe performing. When I saw the painting for the first time, it made me miss the part of the world I came from. It made me miss Asia and home," said Mr Monteiro.

Like music, art is a common language that can transcend boundaries. Latiff Mohidin's *Pagodas II* connected with Mr Monteiro and inspired him to study the artwork in multiple ways, from both the viewer's and artist's perspectives.

"Looking at the painting of the three pagodas side by side, I think what Latiff is trying to express is that although we come from different background and cultures, have different skin colours and follow different religions, we are still able to live alongside one another," explained Mr Monteiro. "I think Singapore is a prime example of this harmony."



Jeremy Monteiro



Latiff Mohidin. *Pagodas II*
(Pago-Pago Series). 1964.
Oil on Canvas, 99.4 x 99.2cm.
Collection of National Gallery Singapore.
Image courtesy of National Heritage Board.

An abstract representation of three pagodas, Latiff Mohidin illustrates his objects in simplified forms with strong outlines. While the bold outlines and broad horizontal base of the pagodas create a sense of weight and sturdiness in the buildings, the painting draws viewers to examine the design motifs of the patterned layers all the way to the pointed tips of the rooftops.

Latiff Mohidin held his first solo exhibition at Kota Raja Malay School in Singapore in 1951 and was labelled a “wonder boy” by the local press. He was ten years old then. Nine years later, Latiff received a scholarship from the government of the Federal Republic of Germany to study painting in Berlin, West Germany. During that time, he travelled around Europe extensively, exploring Western classical and modern art before returning to Malaysia. *Pagodas II* is part of his landmark *Pago-Pago* series. The latter formed the basis for his creation of regional archetypes and figure-types abstracted from the region’s architectural monuments such as Angkor Wat. Since the mid-1960s, he had been included in many of the group exhibitions at the National Art Gallery, Malaysia and was the subject of two retrospectives there. The Singapore Art Museum also held the first comprehensive retrospective of his work in 1994.

The other 11 ambassadors in the *My Masterpiece* campaign are popular MediaCorp actress Joanne Peh, celebrity chef Willin Low, distinguished writer Professor Edwin Thumboo, comedian Kumar Chinnadurai, entrepreneurs Elim Chew and Olivia Lum, *Illo Illo* director Anthony Chen, actor-comedian Suhaimi Yusof, singer-songwriter JJ Lin, fashion designer Ashley Isham and paralympics medallist Laurentia Tan. View Jeremy

Monteiro's video and find out more information about Latiff Mohidin's *Pagodas II* on the Gallery's Facebook page [here](#).

Educating and Inspiring Singaporeans

My Masterpiece is the first of an exciting line-up of initiatives and activities that will bring Singaporeans closer to their arts heritage. The Gallery aims to capture the artistic spirit of Singapore and Southeast Asia. By sharing stories of our region's distinctive art in a global context, we seek to be a leading visual arts institution that inspires and engages our people and our neighbours, creating a dialogue between the art of Singapore, Southeast Asia and the world. The Gallery also seeks to encourage a deeper appreciation of art, and foster a greater sense of national and cultural pride.

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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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