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MEDIA RELEASE



Oh Yun (Korea), *Family 2*, 1982, oil on canvas, 131 x 162 cm, Private collection

National Art Gallery, Singapore Mounts First Ever Exhibition on Asian Realist Art

Realism in Asian Art: Voices Behind The Strokes

9 April – 4 July 2010

7 April 2010 – For the first time in the museum world, the topic of how realist art movements were embraced by artists in Asia will be presented by The National Art Gallery, Singapore, in collaboration with the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) of Korea. The only other major project looking at how critical art developments in the Asian

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sub-continent have evolved since *Cubism in Asia* in 2006, *Realism in Asian Art: Voices Behind the Strokes* features a display of 78 selected paintings from various public and private collections in Asia. Featured artists include important names such as Amron Omar (Malaysia), Byun Wolryong (Korea), Chua Mia Tee (Singapore), Nguyen Gia Tri (Vietnam), Raden Saleh (Indonesia), Renato Habulan (Philippines), and Yamashita Kikuji (Japan). Their profiles can be found attached in [Annex 1](#) for reference.

2 *Realism in Asian Art* is an exhibition that studies the impact and extent of realist art movements on the Asian sub-continent. Unlike the way realism evolved in Europe, these works reveal a distinct Asian sensibility, expressing how the region grappled with modernity, independence and nationhood from the mid 19th to late 20th centuries. Across Asia, these powerful images of realistic artworks have inspired and provoked compelling emotions. In addition, realist tendencies in art often wove together a fascinating tale of heroism, valour and hope in times of tremendous turmoil in Asia.

3 *Realism in Asian Art* represents the second time the National Art Gallery, Singapore and MOCA, Korea, are working together, since *Cubism in Asia* in 2006. It will open first in Singapore in April 2010 and subsequently travel to Seoul, Korea in July 2010. Such curatorial collaborations allow for a robust cross-cultural exchange of ideas and knowledge while providing opportunities for Singapore and Southeast Asia to showcase the region's rich artistic and cultural treasures in a wider Asian context.

4 The second in a series of research exhibitions mounted by the National Art Gallery, Singapore, *Realism in Asian Art* will pioneer new approaches to exhibitions and programmes, prior to the Gallery's opening three to four years down the road. It provides a platform for the Gallery to test new ideas in integrating programmes and exhibition for the eventual museum site at the former Supreme Court and City Hall buildings. Visitors can look forward to a more holistic experience of Asian Realism incorporating interactive stations targeted at children and families, a short film programme providing alternative perspectives, as well as an innovative visitor-oriented approach to exhibition design.

5 Says Director, The National Art Gallery, Singapore, Mr Kwok Kian Chow, "*Realism in Asian Art* attempts to show how within a short span of several decades, the realist impulses in Asian classical art coupled with the turn of 19th to 20th century Western influences, had a pervasive impact on art in Asia. It also reveals how realist renditions in art tied in with societal modernity, political independence, and a new landscape of broad-based communication along with print materials, photography and films. We thank the National Museum of Contemporary Art for the partnership to develop this exhibition as we reach out to institutions from the wider Asia region for the timely and meaningful collaboration in research and curatorship."

6 Says Director, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, Dr Bae Soonhoon, "This exhibition is an ambitious attempt to draw comparisons across eight Asian countries, and examine how Realist concepts and techniques, in contrast with the Western countries,

were similarly embraced and applied by Asian artists. I hope this show will provide an overview of the Asian arts from a different perspective, before it draws more attention from the global art world. We greatly appreciate this collaboration between Korea and Singapore, and are looking forward to this exhibition travelling to Seoul in July later this year.”

7 Says Head of Private Banking, Southeast Asia and Australasia, Credit Suisse, Dr Francois Monnet, “Credit Suisse is extremely privileged to be the proud sponsor of this cultural collaboration between Singapore and Korea that brings a new and significant perspective of the Asian realist art movement to Singapore and the world. The Credit Suisse: Innovation In Art Series is our important long-term partnership with the Singapore Art Museum that has presented a series of inspiring shows to Singapore audiences since 2007. We eagerly anticipate the fresh and innovative ideas the National Art Gallery Singapore can bring to Singapore’s visual arts scene, and look forward to the impressive and exciting shows in the coming years.”

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Notes to Editor

About the National Art Gallery, Singapore

The National Art Gallery, Singapore (*working title*) is a new visual arts institution which will contribute towards positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for visual arts. It manages the world's largest public collection of modern Southeast Asian and Singapore art. The Gallery focuses on displaying, promoting and researching these artworks, relating them to the wider Asian and international contexts, and hosting international art exhibitions.

Situated in the heart of the Civic District, the City Hall and adjacent former Supreme Court building - two important heritage buildings symbolic of Singapore's nationhood - will be converted to house this exciting new visual arts venue, and is anticipated to be completed by 2013. The National Art Gallery will be a civic and creative space, established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world. Information on the National Art Gallery is available at www.nationalartgallery.sg

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About the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea

The National Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Korea was established in 1969 and settled down in Gwacheon in 1986, when a huge museum building had been newly constructed in the suburban area of city Seoul. As one and only national “art” museum, MOCA houses more than 6,000 artworks from both Korea and abroad, which period ranges from early 20th century to the present.

Belonged to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Republic of Korea, MOCA has ambitious project to have new branch museum, located right in the center of city Seoul, which opening is planned to be realized in 2013. Also in the ground of old palace called “Deoksugung” in Seoul, there is another branch of MOCA, dedicated as a space for the special exhibitions. As one of them, *Realism in Asian Art* will be held in the Deoksugung Art Museum from 28 July to 10 October 2010. More information on MOCA can be found at www.moca.go.kr

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