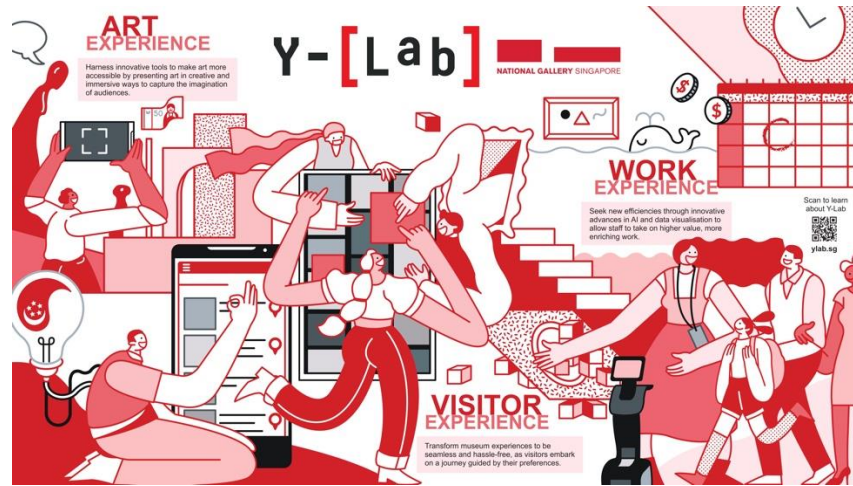


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## NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE ACCELERATES THE CONVERGENCE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY THROUGH NEW INNOVATION LAB

*Y-Lab kicks off with the twin launch of its new Showcase space and Southeast Asia's first art and tech start-up programme for entrepreneurs to develop next-gen innovations*



**Singapore, 25 November 2021** – National Gallery Singapore proudly presents Y-Lab, an art and tech convergence product innovation lab that builds a pathway for next-gen technology solutions that make art more accessible to all and inspire the use of technology with artistic sensibilities across various sectors. Taking another step towards achieving its SmartMuseum vision, the Gallery has developed Y-Lab to provide aspiring artists, technologists, startups, and entrepreneurs the distinct opportunity to testbed and launch their art/tech product innovations in the arts and culture sector first before progressively scaling out to other sectors. This is part of the Gallery's ongoing efforts to accelerate the digital transformation of its sector, alongside support from valuable public-private partnerships.

Marking this milestone are the opening of Y-Lab's Showcase space at the Gallery, which invites the public to participate in a changing display of innovation prototypes; and the call for participants for its inaugural Y-Lab Foundry – Southeast Asia's first art and tech start-up programme.

Ms Chong Siak Ching, Chief Executive Officer of National Gallery Singapore, says, "Recent developments from the use of blockchain to authenticate artworks, to the reemergence of the

Metaverse clearly demonstrate the game-changing potential through the convergence of the art and tech sectors. As a progressive museum, we want to re-imagine the future by fostering and leveraging complementary synergies between digital technology, creative services and art. We aspire to be the catalyst of this transformation and Y-Lab is our latest effort to champion museum-led innovation labs in Southeast Asia.”

As an innovation lab, Y-Lab seeks to empower entrepreneurs with the industry knowledge, expert mentorship, and resources to create art and tech innovations that will shape the future of Art, Visitor, and Work Experiences. It encourages the development of innovations that enhance the Art Experience by introducing more creative, immersive, and accessible ways to present art to all. Y-Lab also invites creative solutions to enhance the Visitor Experience through technologies that make visits to venues more seamless, hassle-free, and tailored to one’s preferences. Innovations to upgrade the Work Experience are also welcome, as they seek new efficiencies that allow staff to take on higher value and more enriching work.

Prior to the launch, the Gallery has been working with venture capital firm, RedShift Capital, to kick-start the Y-Lab initiative. Together, they have co-mentored start-ups such as TicTag and ReveLight to develop their innovation prototypes as part of its pilots. TicTag works alongside Y-Lab on a crowdsourcing metadata platform that taps on citizen participation to increase art appreciation and crowdsource content, while ReveLight is a portable mixed reality smart device that projects content onto any surface for a new interactive experience.

### **Empowering visitors at the Y-Lab Showcase**



*Image of Y-Lab Showcase, National Gallery Singapore*

In line with Y-Lab’s aim to promote co-creation, visitors to the Gallery are empowered to co-create “innovations-in-progress” displayed in its new Showcase space. It features an exciting rotation of innovation prototypes powered by technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, and augmented reality – all designed by entrepreneurs and startups the Gallery has recently partnered with. The Showcase invites visitors to interact with these innovation prototypes and provide feedback on their experience real-time through a digital form in the exhibit called “Common Landscape”. This effectively transforms Y-Lab into a “living lab” that rallies the public to take on the critical role of co-developing these next-gen innovations, as well as ignites conversations on the novel experiences made possible with art and tech.

11 innovation prototypes are currently on display. The selection includes Orchid Harmonics, a series of vivid AI orchid paintings created through Generative Adversary Network (GAN); Common Landscape, an interactive visual project that features highly visual, collaborative, and immersive environments that can be navigated virtually through a motion-sensing input device called Kinect; and TEMI, the Gallery’s first autonomous robot guide that provides visitors introductions to select artworks in the museum. The Showcase will revolve the innovation prototypes on display every six months. Complementing the room is the upcoming Y-Lab Workspace, a space that provides a sandbox environment for entrepreneurs and their mentors to test their ideas from the brainstorm to product demonstration. Launching in Q1 2022, the Workspace will be fitted with various resources such as a Maker Library and materials that assist with virtual presentations, remote collaboration, storytelling, and pitching.

Both the Showcase and Workspace are located in the Gallery’s revamped Basement Concourse, where new spaces like Y-Lab are designed to spark creative inspiration among visitors with its inclusive art experiences that are free for all.

### **Call for participants to the Y-Lab Foundry**

Y-Lab is also calling for participants to the Y-Lab Foundry. A first of its kind in the art and tech startup scene in Southeast Asia, the newly launched programme invites individuals and university or corporate teams to come together to ideate and pitch product innovations, and gain access to Y-Lab’s product innovation lab. Interested individuals and teams with promising proposals that help further the goals of the arts and culture sector and/or have significant commercial potential that can be supported by Y-Lab’s pool of resources, are welcome to apply.

The proposals will be judged by a panel comprising the Gallery’s growing pool of partners in the public and private sectors. Up to 10 teams of selected entrepreneurs will gain multiple



benefits from the programme, including but not limited to 6 months of Showcase space to allow them to tap into the Gallery's visitorship; valuable access to expert mentorship; industry knowledge and tools through a comprehensive curriculum; and a \$5,000 grant for product prototyping to help propel projects for eventual deployment upon their graduation. Solutions that show traction and promise may receive follow-on funding to scale across the arts and culture sector and even beyond.

Deadline for applications is 8 December 2021. The list of selected participants will be announced in February 2022.

In line with the Gallery's commitment towards digital innovation through initiatives such as Y-Lab, the Gallery has also inked a partnership with a new Innovation Partner, NCS Pte Ltd, a Singapore-based leading technology firm with presence in Asia Pacific today. The partnership with NCS contributes to the expansion of the art/tech ecosystem in pursuit of next-gen innovations inspired by art.

For more information on Y-Lab, its spaces, and the Foundry Programme, please visit [www.ylab.sg](http://www.ylab.sg). Examples of innovation prototypes displayed at the Showcase are found in [Annex A](#). Media assets are available via this [link](#).

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## About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which oversees the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian modern art. Situated at the birthplace of modern Singapore, 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 64,000 square metre venue. Reflecting Singapore's unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery aims to be a progressive museum that creates dialogues between the art of Singapore, Southeast Asia and the world to foster and inspire a creative and inclusive society. This is reflected in our collaborative research, education, long-term and special exhibitions, and innovative programming. The Gallery also works with international museums such as Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay, Tate Britain, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a key node in the global visual arts scene.

In 2020, the Gallery was the only museum in Southeast Asia that received a ranking in The Art Newspaper's annual global survey of attendance at art museums, taking 20<sup>th</sup> place. It was the first museum in Asia to receive the Children in Museums Award by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums in 2018. The Gallery also won the awards for "Best Theme Attraction" at TTG Travel Awards 2017, "Best Attraction Experience", "Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism" and "Best Customer Service (Attractions)" at the prestigious Singapore Tourism Awards in 2016 for its role in adding to the vibrancy of Singapore's tourism landscape.

## Annex A: Examples of Innovation Prototypes at the Showcase

Innovation Prototype	Description
<p><b>Orchid Harmonics</b>  <i>Developed by Dr James She, Assistant Professor, Director of HKUST-NIE Social Media Lab, Department of Electronic &amp; Computer Engineering, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)</i></p>	<p>AI orchid paintings created through Generative Adversarial Networks (GAN), where a machine is trained to learn distinctive visual features of different orchids from a collection of orchid photos, thereafter creating novel orchid paintings on its own.</p>
<p><b>Chatbot Arthena</b>  <i>Developed by National University of Singapore</i></p>	<p>Chatbot Arthena helps enhance visitors' experience by assisting them in learning through providing contextual information about the artist and artworks at the Gallery.</p>
<p><b>Common Landscape</b>  <i>Developed by formAxioms at Singapore University of Technology and Design</i></p>	<p>An interactive visual project that features a set of highly visual, collaborative, and immersive environments that can be navigated virtually through a motion-sensing input device called Kinect.</p>
<p><b>Temi Auto-Guided Tour</b>  <i>Developed by RoboSolutions Pte Ltd</i></p>	<p>Autonomous self-driving robot to complement the tour ecosystem at the Gallery, an alternative experience especially catered to visitors who have missed guided tours when visiting the Gallery.</p>
<p><b>Wally the Wayfinder</b>  <i>Developed by Republic Polytechnic</i></p>	<p>Chatbot using conversational way finding approach to guide visitors in identifying key landmarks and finding their way around the Gallery.</p>
<p><b>Gallery Explorer App</b>  <i>Developed by Accenture</i></p>	<p>Accenture developed the Gallery Explorer app, with related features including iBeacon indoor wayfinding, Artwork QR Code Scanning, Audiotour, eConcierge Chatbot,</p>

	Educational Games, and single sign-on with integration with membership services.
<b>AR\$50</b>  <i>Developed by Accenture</i>	From the Gallery Explorer app, users can try the augmented reality experience on their own Singapore \$50 note. Two artworks will float up and animate, with explanation on artist and artwork.
<b>Adopt Now</b>  <i>Developed by Accenture</i>	<p>Through a simple contribution starting at \$50, you can now adopt part of an artwork from Gallery's collection, and become one of our recognised artwork adopters.</p> <p>Your generous support will enable the Gallery to further expand our collection of Singapore and Southeast Asia art for the benefit of future generations.</p> <p>As an artwork adopter, you will also be acknowledged for your contribution, and be entitled to a series of privileges.</p>
<b>eConcierge (Chatbot)</b>  <i>Developed by Accenture</i>	Leveraging Google DialogFlow, the eConcierge is able to answer common questions asked by Gallery visitors in the Gallery Explorer app.