

For immediate release

Media Release

**Paralympics Medallist Laurentia Tan Celebrates Kinship and
Community in latest *My Masterpiece***

Singapore, 1 December 2015 – National Gallery Singapore today announced Singapore Women’s Hall of Fame inductee Ms Laurentia Tan as the latest ambassador for its *My Masterpiece* series. The multiple Paralympics medal winner was enthralled with the artwork *Hérons* by one of the pioneers in Singapore art, Chen Wen Hsi. Teeming with life, the artwork reminded her of the close-knit community that has supported her in her life and career as a para-equestrian through the years.

“I see the birds as people in a crowded place, which could be an analogy for a close-knit community,” said Ms Tan. “It makes me feel blessed, thankful for having loving family and friends who form a caring and supportive network. The painting also means teamwork because sometimes there are dreams which cannot be achieved on your own.”

The talented and successful athlete was captivated by the intricacies of the painting and wondered if viewers shared the same perspectives as the artist. She explained that every individual sees the world in their own unique ways and the painting reminded her of the strength that her close network of friends and family bestow her. Singapore won its very first Paralympics medal when Ms Tan clinched a bronze in the dressage Individual Championship Class during the 2012 Summer Paralympics held in London.



Laurentia Tan



Chen Wen Hsi. *Hérons*. c. 1991.
Chinese ink and colour on paper, 123 x 245 cm. Collection
of Singapore Art Museum. Image courtesy of National
Heritage Board.

In this semi-abstract painting of stylised herons, Chen Wen Hsi simplifies the bodies of herons of different colours and sizes into irregular geometric shapes which overlap and interlock with one another. The artist openly juxtaposes cubist abstraction with traditional Chinese painting, a testimony of the visual dynamics between the two artistic legacies inherited by Chen.

Chen Wen Hsi is one of the most prominent figures who led the innovation in Chinese painting in the history of modern Singapore art. His art had far-reaching influence on the later generations of Singapore's ink artists. *Hérons* is a significant work in Chen Wen Hsi's career, concluding the artist's life-long exploration of the Chinese ink medium as he sought to create an aesthetic dialogue between Western modernism and the legacy of Chinese painting.

The Gallery will continue to highlight significant artworks which encompass diverse periods, marking key moments in the art histories of Singapore and Southeast Asia. The artworks were created by important artists from the region and personally chosen by 12 Singapore personalities who express their unique connection with these artworks. The other 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 and fashion designer Ashley Isham. You can view Laurentia Tan's video and find out more information about Chen Wen Hsi's *Hérons* 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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