

The Singapore Show: Future Proof



Welcome to the exhibition *The Singapore Show: Future Proof*.

This exhibition presents artworks by the brightest and most promising artists from Singapore who have innovative and unique art practices, and who create artworks that take place both on the street and in art galleries.

Why is the subtitle (secondary title) of this exhibition 'Future Proof'? The curators of this show have said that when producing a test print of an artwork, such as an illustrated print or photograph, a 'proof' is the test sheet that is made before the final work is made, in order to reveal any flaws, as well as to record how a print is supposed to look like.

In selecting these artists and artworks to be chosen, the curators are saying that they believe that these artists are the future of Singaporean art, and they want to record these artworks and artists through this exhibition.

In these activity sheets, we are going to focus on the artists whose works in the exhibition deal with **the theme of living in the city**: sometimes Singapore in particular, and sometimes in a city in general.



Go to Gallery 1.11

Look for the artwork *Eccentric City: Rise and Fall*, a collaboration between the local artist group :phunk studio and the Japanese artist Keiichi Tanaami.



Walk around the room and look carefully the images depicted on the structures.

1. Why do you think the artists have chosen to title this work *Eccentric City: Rise and Fall*?

2. How can you tell that this work is a collaboration between two different artists?

DID YOU KNOW?

This installation showcases the Japanese art of *tatebanko*, which is the art of making dioramas or models out of paper, as well as creating three dimensional perspectives from paper.

Take a closer look at the materials the artists have used to create their artwork.

3. Why do you think the artists have chosen to use this particular material to create their work?

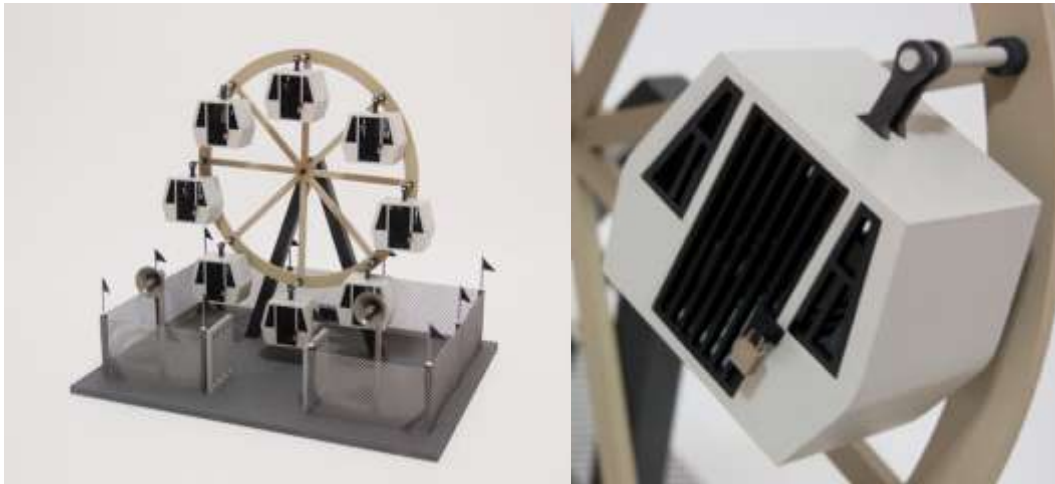
4. How do the different colour schemes used in this installation affect how you view the work?

5. Now that you know how the artists have used paper for a specific reason to create this work, what kind of materials would you use to create your own work if you were to make an artwork about the city? What would be the connection between the material and the theme of the work? Sketch your idea below!



Now head up to the 4th floor, to Gallery 4.12

Look for this artwork, titled *Ride of a Lifetime!* by the artist Chun Kaifeng.



6. Look at this sculpture closely. Can you think of any existing structure in Singapore that resembles it?

7. How does Kaifeng's sculpture of a Ferris wheel differ from the typical Ferris wheel?

8. How do the colours used in this artwork affect your experience of viewing the work?

9. Why do you think the artist has chosen to depict the Ferris wheel in this particular way?



Head over to the other work by Chun Kaifeng, , ¥ € \$.



10. What local building do you think the artist is referring in this artwork, and what kind of activities are usually carried out in this particular building?

11. Do you recognise the symbols that the artist has placed on top of this building? What are they?

12. Walk around this artwork. Why do you think the artist has chosen these particular symbols to be placed on top of these buildings, and splashed paint on the back of the buildings?

13. Do you think that casinos are good for Singapore? Why or why not?

Kaifeng's works often reference architectural landmarks in Singapore, as seen from both works in this exhibition, and subverts these buildings from their original function or purpose. Can you think of another well-known landmark in Singapore whose purpose you can twist, like Kaifeng has? How would you do so?



Head into the next gallery.

Look for this artwork by the artist Donna Ong – don't look at the wall caption yet!



14. Stand at least 2 metres away from the work and look at the objects on display as a whole. What do they remind you of?

15. Why do they remind you of this?

16. What kind of atmosphere or mood do you think the artist is trying to evoke? Why do you think she has chosen to use crystal jars and bottles to create this work?

In this work, Donna wants to communicate the fragility and sadness of the city, and as such she has used breakable objects like glass or crystal jars and bottles to create this cityscape, as these objects are easily destroyed. At the same time, when you view this artwork, there is something magical about it as well.

17. Do you agree with her view that cities are fragile and melancholic? Why or why not?

Donna is an artist who often uses **found objects** to create her artworks. Found objects refer to things that can be easily found and not made from scratch by the artist herself, such as the bottles and jars that you see in this work. From your classroom, found objects can include things like pencils, erasers, whiteboard dusters, and file fasteners.

Artists then either arrange these found objects in a way that is original and new, and often different from these objects' original function, or they somehow alter the found object to create a new object altogether.

Let's try this!

How would you use found objects from your classroom to create a landscape? Try sketching your ideas here!



Head into the other gallery on Level 4 and look for this work by Robert Zhao

There are many parts to this installation. Take your time and walk around the exhibits and look at the various specimens and objects the artist has carefully arranged here.



18. Do you think the animals featured in this exhibit actually exist in real life? Why or why not?

19. From your own background knowledge, and after viewing the exhibits, what kind of relationships do you think that we, as humans, have with animals?

20. What do you think the artist is trying to say about the relationships we have with animals, and by extension, nature? For example, who has more power in this relationship?



21. What examples can you think of that illustrate the differences in power in this relationship?

22. Can you think of ways in which humans exert control over the natural environment and the creatures that inhabit this environment?

23. How do you think living in a city affects our relationship with nature, and animals?

The artist wants us to think about the kinds of relationships we have with animals, and is interested in how we view animals in particular—for example, in a zoo setting. He has said, ‘I am interested in the zoological **gaze**, which is how humans watch and relate to animals in our society.’

The **gaze** is a term often used in art and photography to describe how the audience views the people, or objects, presented in an artwork. The gaze is a concept that is often linked to the idea of power, and it has been said that the person who is doing the gazing, or looking, has more power than the person or object that is being looked at.

The next time you see an art exhibition, try and figure out who is doing the gazing, or from whose point of view you are looking from—and if the subject is gazing back.

DID YOU KNOW?

The title of this work, *If a Tree Falls in the Forest*, is a reference to the well-known philosophy question and riddle: if a tree falls in a forest, and no one is around to hear it, does it still make a sound?

What do you think? Do you agree or disagree with this statement?



Go to the next gallery and look for this artwork by Genevieve Chua.



24. Look carefully at the photographs. Do these areas pictured in these photographs look familiar to you? Where do you think they were taken, and why do you think so?



In these photographs, Genevieve has explored parts of Singapore that one doesn't usually think of when it comes to Singapore, such as secondary tropical forests (forests that have re-grown after a major disturbance, such as a fire or clearing of the original forest).

This series highlight the weeds and vines that grow profusely in secondary forests in Singapore and can even form carpets from tree to tree, smothering the trees and depriving other nearby vegetation of sunlight.

25. How has the artist made these photographs different, or unique?

26. The artist has said that depending on one's tastes, 'these weeds may be regarded as a pest or something of a beautiful sight'. Which point of view do you agree with, and why?

27. Can you think of other spaces in Singapore that would be interesting to explore and are off the beaten path? How are they interesting?

Before going into the last gallery, take the time to answer the question below first:

28. How do you know where a country's territory or borders start, or end?



Now, head into the last gallery and look for the artwork titled *Inside Outside*



These are images of Singapore's border markers, which are located in the sea surrounding Singapore. There are a total of 168 photographs of Singapore's border markers featured in this artwork.

29. What is the purpose of a territorial border? Why do all countries have borders?

30. Do you think that people who live on islands (like Singaporeans) are different from people who don't live on islands (for example, Americans or Europeans?) Why do you say so?

Charles Lim is concerned with exploring ideas relating to personal identity and how a person feels a sense of belonging to a certain group. He believes that a person's identity (or even a nation's) is defined through differentiating himself against someone else, or another group—in this way, staking out a border to define themselves against someone or something else.

Now look for this sculpture outside the SAM Front Lawn.



34. Who does this figure remind you of?

35. How has the artist made this figure different from the way he is usually depicted?

36. Why do you think the artist wanted to place this figure outdoors?

37. Why do you think the artist has chosen to depict the figure in this particular way?

38. There are many works in this exhibition that deal with the idea or theme of living in a modern city, with all its issues and problems. After viewing the exhibition, which artwork comes closest to your own experience and thoughts about living in a modern city? Why do you say so?

Let's try this!

Now that you've seen how different artists in Singapore have responded to the local urban landscape, try drawing your own representation of how you see the city here.

- END -

My day at SAM...

Complete this page and pass it to your teacher in exchange for a special token from SAM!

Before today, I thought art was...

After today, I know that art is...



3 things I have learnt...



2 things I would like to find out more about...



1 thing I hope I can see more of at the museum...

***For Teachers to note:**

Please collect all the pages as a single bundle and deposit them at the SAM front desk.

Suggested Answers

1. Free response. E.g. the pieces in this work look like strange buildings in a city—they are very colourful, and they do not look like any buildings that exist in real life. They can be said to be ‘rising’ because they are being suspended from the ceiling.
2. Two sides of the work are very different from the other two sides—when you see the work from one angle, the ‘buildings’ look very bright and cheerful, but when you saw the buildings from another angle, the drawings on them are in black and white.
3. A
4. a
5. Free response.
6. The Singapore Flyer.
7. The artist’s Ferris wheel is very cramped/has very little space to move, and it is fenced in with flagpoles and loudspeakers, unlike the Singapore Flyer. The doors of the artwork’s cabins also look like prison cell doors, and have locks on them. There are also no people present in this work, which makes it feel very lifeless.
8. Free response. E.g. the colours used in this work are very dull and grey, and they make me feel correspondingly dull and listless.
9. Free response. E.g. the artist wants to show that what may be considered ‘iconic’ buildings or structures in cities may not be that great after all, and that living in a city may make people feel very dull and trapped at times.
10. Marina Bay Sands. Shopping, dining, gambling.
11. They are the currency symbols for the Japanese Yen, the Euro and the United States/American dollar.
12. The artist is probably talking about the casinos present in these buildings, as the currency symbols are about money, and the paint splashed on the back of the buildings reminds me of methods used by loansharks to chase for money from borrowers.
13. Free response. E.g. casinos may worsen social problems such as people gambling beyond their means, borrowing from loan sharks, and affecting their families because of these problems. On the other hand, they also attract tourists to Singapore.
14. Free response. E.g., the objects resemble a city being lit up at night.
15. The shapes of the bottles look like buildings, and the light from underneath them makes them look like a city that is lit up at night, and the way they are arranged makes them look like buildings packed close together.
16. Free response. E.g. The artist is trying to create a quiet, thoughtful or sad mood.

17. Free response. Yes, because cities are vulnerable to threats such as economic problems and the infrastructure of cities are under a lot of stress due to the large number of people living in them (such as pressures on the transport system). No, because cities are full of possibility and promise for people who live in them.
18. Free response. Yes, because they look like real animals, and the way the artist has presented them makes them look like real creatures, as they look like science/medical specimens in a laboratory, and the photographs of animals look like nature documentary photos.
19. Free response. E.g. we have a close relationship because we study animals and domesticate them as pets, so we know a lot about them and care about them. Or, we do not have a close relationship with them, because we hunt them as prey for food and for leather goods, and treat many of them as pests to be killed.
20. Free response. E.g. Humans have more power in this relationship because we kill a lot of animals for food and to make leather goods, and we domesticate them as pets, and we destroy their habitat in order to build cities and other human environments such as farms.
21. Free response. E.g. we breed animals for their meat and leather in order for us to consume them. We have domesticated animals that were once wild in order to keep them as pets. We hunt animals in order to keep certain parts as keepsakes or treasures e.g. elephant horns, tortoise shells.
22. Free response. E.g. humans create farmland from forests/unoccupied land and destroy the original habitat of the animals living on this land. Humans create cities and expand these cities by taking over areas that were inhabited by animals.
23. Free response. E.g. living in a city makes us more estranged, or further away from animals because we don't come into contact with them unless they are our pets, or we are consuming them as food.
24. Free response. These photographs were taken in jungles/forests around Singapore, or in Southeast Asia.
25. The artist has coloured only part of the photographs, making the contrast between the coloured parts and the black-and-white parts very stark.
26. Free response. Yes, I think weeds are a nuisance because they deprive the surrounding plants from nutrients and sunlights, and end up harming them. No, I think they are not a nuisance because they have a right to thrive as well, and they are beautiful.
27. Free response.
28. There are border markers to indicate that the territory or boundary of a certain country ends, and another country's begins.
29. Territorial borders are necessary to mark a country's territory, so that neighbouring countries will know not to cross these borders when building structures, for example.
30. Free response. Yes, they are different because islanders live on a much smaller piece of land compared to those who live on continents. More islanders would know how to swim, and travel to the sea compared to those who live on continents. No, because they both still live on land.

31. Ethnicity: Chinese, Malay, Eurasian, Indian
Religion: Buddhist, Christian, Muslim
Nationality: Singaporean, Malaysian, Australian
Age group: teenager, senior citizen
32. Region (e.g. Asian vs. European), careers/jobs, hobbies and so on.
33. Free response. Yes, because they are important parts of my identity. No, because I do not define myself by these categories.
34. It reminds me of a superhero figure.
35. The artist has shown the superhero figure melting away, so that half of his body is gone.
36. To show that the weather (the wind, sun and rain) has caused the figure to melt away.
37. Free response. E.g. the artist wants to show that even though when might hope that superheroes exist, they do not, or even if they do, they will not be able to save people and are powerless. Or that humans are destroying the environment and causing global warming, and it is so disastrous that it can even destroy superheroes.
38. Free response.