

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 new and unique art practices, and who create artworks that are shown not just in art galleries, but also on the streets.

Why is the subtitle (secondary title) of this exhibition 'Future Proof'? Let's take a look at the definition of 'proof':

Evidence or argument establishing or helping to establish a fact or the truth of a statement.

In the same way, the curators (people who plan exhibitions) of this show wanted to prove that the artists in this show represent the future of Singaporean art, and that these artists will be the ones to look out for in the future when it comes to the local art scene.

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 below.



Walk around the room and look carefully the images on the structures, as well as how these structures have been arranged around the room.

1. This work is called *Eccentric City: Rise and Fall*. (Something that is ‘eccentric’ means that it is irregular or peculiar.) Do you think this artwork shows an ‘eccentric city’? Why do you say so?

2. This artwork was made in collaboration between the local artist group :phunk studio and the Japanese artist Keiichi Tanaami. Can you tell that this work was made by two artists? How so?

DID YOU KNOW?

This installation showcases the Japanese art of *tatebanko*, which is the art of making models or dioramas out of paper, as well as creating three dimensional perspectives from paper. Look up the *tatebanko* on the internet and see if those versions are similar or different to the ones in this work!

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. Did you notice how the artists have used different colour schemes in the installation? How do the different colours 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 about the modern city? What would be the connection between the material and the theme of the work? Sketch your idea below!



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



10. Does this sculpture remind you of any local buildings in Singapore? What kinds 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? (Ask your teacher or friend if you are not sure!)

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. What do you think the artist is trying to say through this work?

14. What similarities can you find between the two works by Chun Kaifeng?



Head into the next gallery.

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



15. Stand at least 2 metres away from the work and look at the objects on display as a whole. Do they remind you of something?

16. Why do they remind you of this?

17. What kind of mood do you think the artist is trying to create with this artwork?

18. The artist Donna Ong has created a city out of glass containers. What do you think she is trying to say about the city?

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.



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

20. From your own experience, and after viewing the exhibits in this room, what kind of relationships do you think that we, as humans, have with animals?

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



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



22. Look carefully at the photographs. Do these areas pictured in these photographs look familiar to you? Where do you think they were taken?



In these photographs, Genevieve has explored unusual parts of 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 of photographs 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.

23. The artist has said that depending on one's tastes, 'weeds may be regarded as a pest or something of a beautiful sight'. Do you think these weeds are beautiful, or are they just a nuisance? Why do you think so?

24. Can you think of other spaces in Singapore that would be interesting to explore? In what way are they interesting?



Head into the last gallery and look for the artwork titled *Inside Outside*



A border is a geographic boundary that separates a country from its neighbouring countries. Some borders are open and unguarded, but they are more often controlled.

25. Why do you think Singapore’s border markers are located in the sea?

26. 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, who live on continents?) Why do you say so?

DID YOU KNOW?

The artist on this work, Charles Lim, was once a national sailor, and he even competed in the 1996 Olympics! He has always been fascinated with the sea, and so even after he became an artist his artworks have also been about water, and the sea.

As an artist, Charles Lim is concerned with exploring ideas relating to personal identity and how a person feels a sense of belonging—to a nation, an ethnicity, a religion, and other groups—thereby shaping his own identity.

He believes that a person defines himself through differentiating himself against someone else, or another group.

For example, this is how someone might define themselves:



27. Now, make your own mind map. How do **you** define yourself?

28. Can you think of some categories or groups in which people define themselves?

29. There are many works in this exhibition that deal with the idea 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 feelings about living in a modern city like Singapore? Why do you say so?



Now look for this sculpture outside the SAM Front Lawn.



30. Does this figure look familiar to you? What does it look like?

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

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

33. The title of this artwork is No One Can Save Us Now. Why do you think the artist has chosen this title?

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.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the worksheet.

- 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.

Answers

1. Free response. Yes, because the work shows a city that doesn't look like any city that exists in real life, as it is covered with strange-looking figures. No, because cities are very colourful and vibrant, and yet have their darker and less vibrant sides as well.
2. Yes, because two sides of the boxes are covered with very distinctive colourful figures, and the other two sides have black and white figures that look very similar to one another.
3. The artists have used paper because it is a material that is easy to fold, in order to create shapes that look like buildings, and paper is easy to draw on or print drawings on. Paper is also easily available and is not expensive.
4. Free response. E.g., one side of the work is very colourful and vibrant, and makes me feel happy and excited, and when I walk to the other side of the buildings and see the black and white drawings, the feeling is quieter and more calming.
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.
8. Free response.
9. Free response. E.g., The fence and the loudspeakers around the Ferris wheel are strange, as there would be no need for these things. The cabin doors are locked from the outside, which make the cabins seem like prison cells.
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., I think the artist is trying to say that this building may have both positive and negative effects for Singapore, and Singaporeans, even though it may be an iconic building.
14. Free response. E.g., both works use very dull and quiet colours, and they are both sculptures of iconic buildings in Singapore, and he questions the use and benefits of these buildings to Singaporeans.
15. Free response. E.g., the objects resemble a city being lit up at night.
16. 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.

17. Free response. E.g. The artist is trying to create a quiet, thoughtful and sad mood.
18. Free response. E.g. I think she is trying to say that the city is very fragile and easy damaged, as glass containers are easily broken and are very delicate.
19. 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.
20. Free response. E.g. we have a close relationship because we study animals and keep 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.
21. 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 destroy their habitat in order to build cities and other human environments such as farms.
22. Free response. These photographs were taken in jungles/forests around Singapore.
23. 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.
24. Free response.
25. Singapore's border markers are located in the sea because it is an island.
26. 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.
27. Free response.
28. Religion, region (e.g. Asian vs. non-Asian), age group (e.g. teenager vs. senior citizen), career/job and so on.
29. Free response.
30. It looks like a superhero figure.
31. The artist has shown the superhero figure melting away, so that half of his body is gone.
32. To show that the weather (the wind, sun and rain) has caused the figure to melt away.
33. Free response. E.g. the artist wants to show that superheroes do not exist, or even if they do, they will not be able to save people. Or that humans are destroying the environment and causing global warming, and it is so disastrous that it can even destroy superheroes.