

**JOINT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS-
NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD PRESS STATEMENT**

**PRESIDENT S R NATHAN RECEIVES GIFT FROM SAN MARINO
AT SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM AUDITORIUM
ON 22 JANUARY 2009**

President S R Nathan has received a gift of high institutional value from the Ambassador of San Marino to Singapore H.E. Andrea Griminelli. The presentation of the 61 pounds, hand-made, marble-covered book titled “Michelangelo: La Dotta Mano” took place at Singapore Art Museum Auditorium on 22 January 2009.

The ceremony was attended by Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman of National Heritage Board, Ms. Jane Ittogi, Chair, Singapore Art Museum, members of the Diplomatic Corps representatives from the local arts scene and other invited guests. “Michelangelo: La Dotta Mano” will travel to selected destinations in Singapore before finally residing at the National Art Gallery in the year, 2013.

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FACT SHEET : “Michelangelo: La Dotta Mano”

Michelangelo: La Dotta Mano has been referred to as the “world’s most beautiful book” in the New York Times, Le Figaro and various other newspapers to date and possesses a value of 100,000 Euros. It was created in 2008 to pay homage to the celebrated Renaissance artist and to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the first painted stroke on the Sistine Chapel ceiling in the Vatican which took place in 1508.

Measuring 70.5 cm by 45 cm and weighing 61 pounds, this formidable tome is entirely handmade with its cover of special silk velvet from Nole, Piedmont. The pure cotton, handmade paper traces its roots from one of the world’s oldest paper-mills, the Cartiere Magnani in Pescia, Tuscany. The cover is a scaled reproduction in marble of the “Madonna della Scala” (“Madonna of the Steps”), a bas-relief of the Virgin and Child sculptured by Michelangelo when he was still in his teens. The marble used comes from the Polvaccio quarries in Tuscany, a significant source considering that Michelangelo himself chose his marble from these quarries when sculpting various pieces such as the world-renowned, La Pieta. The original is housed in the Casa Buonarroti in Florence.

Featured in this book is the original text of the artist’s biography, by the first Italian art historian, Giorgio Vasari, reproductions of 46 of Michelangelo’s most important drawings and a hundred photographs of Michelangelo’s sculptures – which have been exhibited at the Hermitage, in Saint Petersburg’s – by Aurelio Amendola, a contemporary art photographer who has a penchant for homing in on details which escape the eye of the ordinary observer. One of these photographs has been reproduced in marbled paper, personally printed and signed, by Amendola himself.

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FACT SHEET : Singapore Art Museum

Opened in January 1996, the mission of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is to preserve and present the art histories and contemporary art practices of Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. To date, SAM has amassed the world's largest public collection of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian artworks with a growing component in international contemporary art. The museum has presented shows covering both local and international art practices, traditional and cutting edge art expressions. Through strategic alliances with international arts and cultural institutions, SAM has been facilitating visual arts education, exchange, research and development within the region and internationally. Through forging collaborative partnerships and staging innovative programmes to engage different audiences, SAM aims to contribute to an enlarged role in the regional visual arts community and Asian art museology, as well as facilitating developments in art as well as the art sector in Singapore.

Opened in August 2008, 8Q sam is a contemporary art space with fresh, multi-disciplinary, interactive and community oriented programming; a place where the public can directly experience the work and ideas of living artists, and in relation to its aesthetic and social context. 8Q sam will support experimental art forms and is envisioned to become a crossroad of new ideas and expressions. 8Q sam aspires to engage a broad and diverse audience, create a sense of community and be a place for contemplation, stimulation, and discussion about contemporary art and culture, and serves as a forum especially for the students. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience the diversity of contemporary art practices ranging from painting and sculpture, to installation, film & video, photography, new media, performance art and sound art.

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