

SAM CONTEMPORARIES

**1 AUG — 16 NOV 2025
LEVEL 3, GALLERY 3**

Chok Si Xuan
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Masuri Mazlan
NEO_ARTEFACTS
Syahrul Anuar

HOW
TO
DREAM
WORLDS

LEARNING RESOURCE

This educational resource features selected artworks and guiding questions suitable for ages 13 and up.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

"What does it mean to imagine a world otherwise?"

The exhibition explores dreaming as a form of resistance and a way to envision alternative futures, relationships and perspectives.

Six artists use installation, film and material-based works to address themes like technology-body connections, hidden histories and the politics of space—rooted in personal research and lived experiences.

The works resist utopian ideals; instead, they propose open-ended, evolving ideas that dwell in uncertainty, possibility and close observation of the present.

KEY POINTS TO NOTE

DREAMING AS RESISTANCE

This exhibition uses imagination to challenge the way things are.

ART AS EXPLORATION

The artists do not give answers; they invite viewers to think.

GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

WHAT MAKES SAM CONTEMPORARIES SPECIAL?

This biennial initiative showcases newly commissioned works by emerging Singaporean artists, developed in collaboration with SAM's curatorial team. Together, they explore imaginative alternatives for living, perceiving and relating to our present moment.

WHAT DO CURATORS DO IN THIS EXHIBITION?

Curators work closely with the artists to realise their artworks. In this show, they collaborate with the artists, conduct research, plan the layout, write texts or guide visitors to better understand the ideas behind the art.

WHAT DO THE ARTISTS DO IN THIS EXHIBITION?

Artists are creative thinkers who express ideas, feelings, or social messages through their work. In SAM Contemporaries, they use different materials and methods to tell stories or ask questions about the world.

HOW DO THE ARTISTS AND CURATORS WORK TOGETHER IN THIS EXHIBITION?

The curators and artists did not work separately. They were creative partners who inspired and challenged each other. The artists challenged the curators to embrace the unknown, and the curators helped the artists dig deeper into their ideas. Together, they shaped an exhibition that speaks to our world today.

GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

WHY ARE ALL THE ARTWORKS HERE “INSTALLATIONS”?

Think of an installation as a world created by an artist. They do not just make a thing to look at; they build an entire environment you can step into.

The artist choreographs your experience. They decide what captures your attention first, the sounds that surround you and the path you take. This is all done to immerse you completely, creating a powerful and intense encounter. This kind of art requires more than a quick glance. It asks you to engage with it physically and emotionally actively. You do not just look, you explore, move around, and often your presence completes the scene.

INSTALLATION CREATES AN IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENT

The artworks engage viewer's body and senses, making the act of exploration feel immediate and personal.

NAVIGATING THE EXHIBITION

To help students navigate the exhibition, transition from the pre-visit questions to a four-step process during the gallery tour:

1. **Close Looking** (Observe details)
2. **Interpretation** (Build meaning)
3. **Personal Connection** (Relate personally)
4. **Critical Thinking** (Question beyond)

The questions below are provided to support you in facilitating each step.

PRE-VISIT

1. What do you think it means to "dream of a different world"?
2. How do artists use their work to question the world as we know it? Can you think of any examples?
3. Can art change how we see the future?

CLOSE LOOKING

1. Before we read the label, just look: What is the first word or feeling that comes to mind?
2. Take a minute to silently observe. What materials are being used in this work? What details do you notice that might be missed with only a quick glance?
3. Beyond the object itself, what is the environment of this piece? How is it lit? Is there sound, smell, or space around it? How does that environment change the presentation or experience of the artwork?

NAVIGATING THE EXHIBITION

INTERPRETATION

1. How do the elements you just described (the light, sound, scale, materials) work together to create a specific mood or atmosphere?
2. What connections can you make between this artwork and the world outside this gallery? For example, the “tower viewer” in *the mountain lovers club* reframes your perspective, forcing you to look up at Singapore's skyscrapers as if they were mountains, directly confronting the replacement of nature with man-made structures.
3. What choices did the artists make? What if they had made a different choice? (e.g., if it is dark, what if it were bright? If it is messy, what if it were clean?) How would that change the meaning?

PERSONAL CONNECTION

1. Does this piece remind you of anything in your own life, something you have read, or seen in a movie? How does that connection influence your understanding of it?
2. What question do you think the artist is asking us, the viewers, by creating this work?
3. Which part of this work resonates with you most? Which part puzzles or challenges you?

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Look at the title and artist's statement now. Does knowing the artist's intent change your interpretation? Does your interpretation still hold value if it's different?
2. If you could add one thing to this installation or change one thing, what would it be and why?
3. What connections do you see between this artwork and the rest? What themes or ideas do they share?



Installation view of *solid_state*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

CHOK SI XUAN

solid_state

2025

Steel, fibreglass, nylon, silicon, silicone, multi-axis fasteners, custom electronics with shape memory alloy, linear actuators, stepper motors, servo motors, carbon fibre rods, jersey fabric, cable glands, single core wire and router

Dual-channel livestream video with multi-channel contact microphones, 4:3 aspect ratio, colour and sound (stereo) Video: single-channel, 4:3 aspect ratio, colour and no sound, 12 min

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- The kinetic sculptures of *solid_state* are draped in synthetic materials that look like skin and perform precise, human-like motions through a skeleton of electronics and shape-memory alloy.
- The work reimagines the body as a closed, solid-state electronic system, alive with a quiet mechanical whirring beneath its surface.
- It highlights the inherent unknowability of both bodies and objects, as their complex internal workings remain concealed from view.
- The installation further investigates this obscurity by tracing the global journeys of the materials themselves through fragmented video footage.
- Ultimately, *solid_state* speculates on what remains hidden within us and the technological world we create.



Installation view of *Pretty, Please (Sleep Tight)*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

LEE PHENG GUAN

Pretty, Please (Sleep Tight)

2025

Dried lalang (*Imperata cylindrica*), lalang flowers, metal grid armature, steel, glass, LED light, fan and sound

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- This installation features lalang which has been meticulously gathered and contained within rigid metal frames.
- Lalang is a native invasive weed that runs wild in neglected pockets of the city, seldom visible in Singapore's meticulously manicured urban landscape.
- The work uses the metaphor of gardening to reflect on how control is reflected in everyday landscapes through acts like pruning and enclosing.
- At half-hour intervals, a lamp lights up accompanied by the sounds of motors whirring. The glowing light and whirring sound might feel unnatural, like they are disturbing the regular rhythm of day and night. This creates an atmosphere of unease.
- It suggests systems of order shape not only our external spaces but also our inner lives.
- The piece leaves us to question the comforts we cling to and the hidden costs of this imposed order.



Installation view of *Nasi Goreng Diplomacy #3*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

CHU HAO PEI

Nasi Goreng Diplomacy #3

2025

Video installation, digital print on paper, C-shaped table, office chairs, leather folders and notepad

Video: high definition, four-channels, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour and sound (stereo), 40 min

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- *Nasi Goreng Diplomacy #3* is an artistic installation structured as an extended cooking session, featuring the artist and his collaborators preparing their own versions of the dish, nasi goreng.
- The work uses nasi goreng, a common yet adaptable Southeast Asian dish with no single recipe, as a metaphor for the layered and flexible nature of diplomacy.
- Set on a large table resembling an intergovernmental conference, the installation highlights how personal and national conversations are mediated through food and informal discussion.
- Across four videos, the project follows each collaborator's journey from buying ingredients to cooking and sharing their renditions of nasi goreng.
- By inviting visitors to contribute their own recipes, the work extends this diplomatic, conversational spirit to the audience.



Installation view of *Secrets, Sweat and Sand*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

NEO_ARTEFACTS

Collaborators: Izzad Radzali Shah, WALL WORKS and WAN G

Secrets, Sweat and Sand

2025

Sand, rocks, camping equipment, excavation tools, artefact props, standing lights, film camera, vinyl sticker and video installation

Video: high definition, single-channel, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour and sound (stereo), 1 min 32 sec

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- This installation recreates the fictional archaeological site of Gunong Perandaian with sand, tools, and a large projection. The “ancient relics” you see there are actually props from famous movies like the *Indiana Jones* series and *Tomb Raider* series.
- It questions whether the site itself is a fiction, using these familiar pop culture objects to critique how movies turn archaeology into a spectacular treasure hunt.
- The work highlights the gap between this glamorous fiction and the slow, methodical reality of archaeological labour.
- By creating its own mysterious site, it mirrors the real contested history of Gunong Padang in West Java.
- Ultimately, the artist reveals our deep desire to create compelling narratives around ancient sites, demonstrating how all archaeology is susceptible to mythologising.



Installation view of *the mountain lovers club*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

SYAHRUL ANUAR

Collaborators: Crystal Sim, Timo Kleinemeier, Naing, Hwee Min

the mountain lovers club

2025

Video installation and PVC print

Video: single-channel, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour and sound (multi-channel), 15 min

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- *the mountain lovers club* is a video installation which reckons with the replacement of natural topography with man-made elevations in Singapore. Through a "tower viewer"—an device commonly found on observation decks—you will gaze upwards as though looking at high-rise flats and skyscrapers in our skyline.
- How does a landscape with no mountains shape the mindset of its people? This artwork explores that question and connects it to the feeling of living in a city there today.
- The work connects this leveled landscape to a deeper historical context of British Malaya's urban expansion, where terrain was developed and minerals extracted to facilitate urban development and civic infrastructure, at the same time allowing for global trade.
- This process transformed the land into capital, ultimately galvinising Singapore into a wealthy nation with one of the world's busiest ports.
- By oscillating between fact and fiction, the artwork invites us to question our relationship with the land and the costs behind the nation's economic success.



Installation view of *can haunting be another way of enduring?*, 2025. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

MASURI MAZLAN

can haunting be another way of enduring?

2025

Furniture, glass, polyurethane, fibreglass, epoxy resin, fabric, photographs, steel, vinyl print, water, pump and mister

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- This sprawling installation reconfigures "home" as a haunted shell, where identity is negotiated through absence, adaptation and resilience.
- Masuri Mazlan uses salvaged furniture, expanding foam and resin-soaked sheets to evoke the memory of those from whom sanctuary was withheld.
- The materials grow and distort across familiar domestic surfaces, forming wound-like membranes and hollow spaces that suggest both shelter and refusal.
- Although based on a personal history, this artwork speaks to a wider truth. It is about the experience of surviving and enduring in spite of not belonging or being excluded.
- The sculptures assert a defiant presence, proposing that haunting is not horror, but a form of endurance and a refusal to disappear.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

POP-UP INTERNET RADIO SESSIONS

UNDERCURRENTS: VOICES OF SAM CONTEMPORARIES

This internet radio series underscores the exploratory nature of *SAM Contemporaries* as a commissioning platform for emerging practices and seeks to bring a more informal and personal touch to audiences' understanding of the artists behind the works. Each session featuring an artist in conversation with their curator(s) and/or collaborator(s).

Tune in via <https://www.undercurrents.live/> on any device to hear more about the artists' inspirations for their work, the approaches and motivations that fuel their practices, and their broader interests beyond the art world.

LIVE BROADCAST SESSION:

[Day 1] Thur, 9 Oct

7.30 – 8.15pm: Syahrul Anuar

8.30 – 9.15pm: Masuri Mazlan

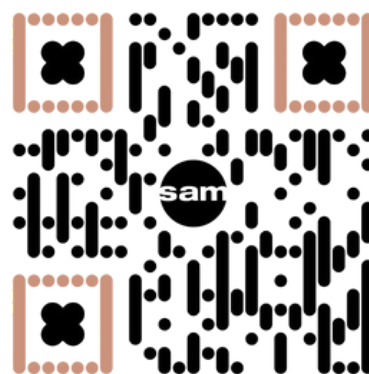
9.30 – 10.15pm: Chok Si Xuan

[Day 2] Fri, 10 Oct

7.30 – 8.15pm: NEO_ARTEFACTS (Fazleen Karlan)

8.30 – 9.15pm: Lee Pheng Guan (PG Lee)

9.30 – 10.15pm: Chu Hao Pei



The recordings of this internet radio series will be available to the public.
Stay tuned for the link!

The information is accurate at the time of print.

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