

# LEARNING GALLERY

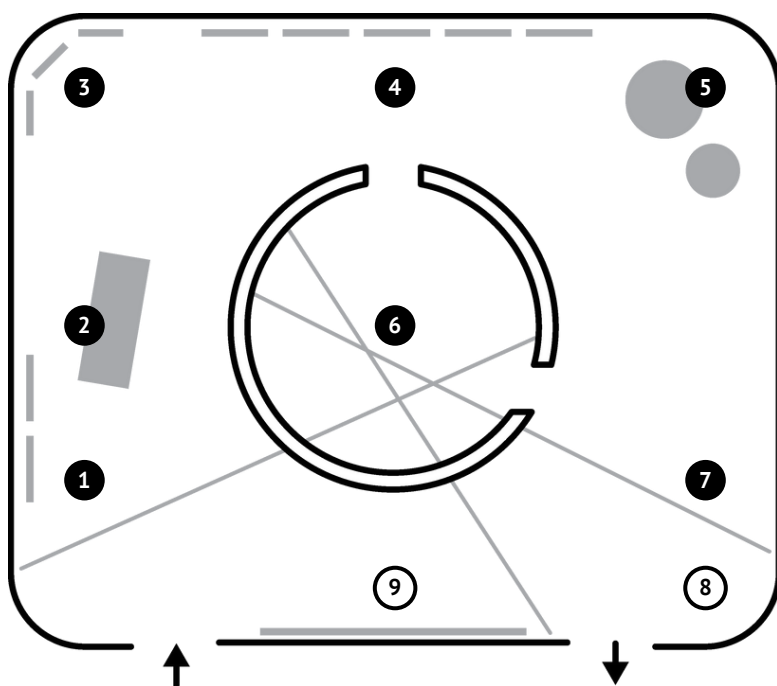
2 Aug 2025 — 28 Jun 2026  
Tanjong Pagar Distripark

## TO THE INNER CHILD

Art and childhood share a natural connection. Both involve freedom, curiosity and fearless exploration. Many of us first create art as children, a time when we learn about the world and shape our emotions, beliefs and memories. What if we could return to that childlike spirit, open to discovery and unafraid to try something new?

This second edition of the Learning Gallery invites you to look beyond the everyday. Explore possibilities, experiment with different ideas and materials, and venture outside the familiar.

The artworks here span across diverse mediums and explore themes of identity, home, nature and the environment, people and places, space and memory. They ask meaningful questions about life and inspire new ways of seeing and understanding contemporary art.



- 1 HAN SAI POR  
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*Land Deterioration*
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## 1 HAN SAI POR *Shelter* *Land Deterioration*

2009  
Ink on paper  
Collection of the artist

In these works, Han Sai Por addresses environmental degradation, such as deforestation and the loss of jungle and animal habitats across Southeast Asia. Her intense engagement with nature stems from her lifelong concern for these pressing issues, offering powerful commentary on our evolving relationship with the natural world.

In 2009, Han embarked on intensive research into the rapidly diminishing tropical rainforest ecosystems of Southeast Asia, including those in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. Memories of her childhood kampong home, which was flattened to make way for public housing, motivated these works. Han's efforts yielded critical insights that informed a body of work including *Shelter* and *Land Deterioration*. Both works challenge conventional representations of landscape by showing nature in its raw and authentic state rather than as neat and carefully arranged scenes.

*Shelter* portrays a monochromatic forest of sculptural trunks and sinewy boughs stripped of their leafy crowns. Washed in a tonal gradation of black, white and grey, the work powerfully evokes the desolation of a place once rich with biodiversity. The complete absence of foliage suggests the large-scale impact of human activities through construction and broader environmental threats by climate change.

*Land Deterioration* confronts viewers with earth stripped bare of its anchoring trees. The work magnifies coarse, dense soil textures and its materiality. Water has sculpted the resulting loose, grainy earth into undulating formations, etching deep ridges, cracks and grooves across its surface. This work directly addresses the issue of soil erosion caused by deforestation. It compels viewers to question whether prioritising human needs justifies such environmental destruction.

## 2 HAN SAI POR *Black Forest*

2024  
Wood and charcoal  
Collection of the artist

*Black Forest* is an ongoing project that was initiated by Han Sai Por in 2011 and revisited in 2013 and 2016.

This 2024 version is a testament to Han's commitment to exploring the profound impact of human activities on the natural world. The installation presents a striking visual of an obliterated forest, the haunting aftermath of relentless deforestation. Upon closer observation, some branches appear unburnt. These branches suggest the inherent resilience of nature despite the destructiveness of humankind.

Beyond aesthetics, Han's work offers powerful commentary on the human management of forests and the enduring spirit of the environment.

## 3 DAVID CHAN *Animal Roulette*

2005  
Plastic toy animals, glue,  
acrylic dividers and cover,  
wooden box, and printed  
plastic name labels  
Gift of Mark Goh & Guillaume  
Levy-Lambert,  
the MaGMA Collection  
Collection of  
Singapore Art Museum

In his pursuit of a visual language beyond traditional painting, David Chan transforms basic cutting and pasting into a conceptual process. Working systematically through toy animals, he deconstructs and reimagines them as materials detached from their original identities.

*Animal Roulette* presents a taxonomy of imaginary creatures inspired by colours, shapes, forms and stories. Mirroring the game of chance, the work creates infinite and random possibilities. Every creature carries a distinct name and identity, inviting audiences to contemplate how unique identities might coexist within the catalogue of shared existence.

This series is one of Chen's earliest works exploring the nature of animals and the ethical issues of genetic manipulation. Three of the five display cases are presented here in the Learning Gallery. With the passage of time, while society views genetic changes to animals with less alarm, this work remains relevant, reminding us of anxieties that arise when science, technology and society intersect.

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**NGUAN*****Untitled, from the series “Singapore”***

2013  
Archival pigment print

***Untitled, from the series “Singapore”***

2013  
Archival pigment print

***Untitled, from the series “Singapore”***

2011  
Archival pigment print

***Untitled, from the series “Singapore”***

2013  
Archival pigment print

***Untitled, from the series “Singapore”***

2012  
Archival pigment print

Collection of  
Singapore Art Museum

From left to right

In the series ‘Singapore’, Nguan expressively captures quiet, everyday scenes on the streets of Singapore as well as the sense of alienation and solitude that pervades the city.

By taking spontaneous portraits of strangers while exploring Singapore on foot, he presents overlooked aspects of the mundane. The artist once stated that loneliness is “just a symptom of modern life everywhere — we’re living in closer proximity to each other than ever before but feeling further apart.”

The themes explored in this series are sombre and soft, conveying a sense of nostalgia and warmth. In these photographs, a dozen untold stories and personal histories are waiting to unfold.

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**EZZAM RAHMAN*****Here’s who I am, I am what you see***

2015  
Artist’s skin and nails,  
adhesive, second-hand  
furniture and glass bell jars  
Collection of  
Singapore Art Museum

At first glance, delicate flowers sit beneath glass cloches, softly lit and shaped like temple stupas. Their beauty draws your eye. But look closer and their materials tell a different story.

In this installation, Ezzam Rahman presents fossilised flowers across two wooden tables, adapted from his original work with five tables. The artist formed each petal from an unconventional medium: dead skin, which he peeled and scraped from his feet. Through his experimentation with material and time, Ezzam discovered that this thick, calloused skin — detritus from grooming — could be a material rich with meaning. It became a remnant of his presence and existence. By using such unconventional material, Ezzam challenges norms and pushes the boundaries of what can be considered an artistic medium.

These flowers also highlight the ephemeral beauty of the present, a beauty that fades with time. They invite us on an introspective journey to confront memories and the concept of identity when the physical body is no longer present. The work urges us to consider how our life and purpose might endure, even as our bodies decay and return to dust.

Beyond its immediate subject, the work also engages us through its performative nature. The act of periodically cutting one's skin, as well as the sensations intertwined with this intentional process, leads to a deeper appreciation for the present moment and our finite time on Earth.

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**CHEN SAI HUA  
KUAN**  
***Space Drawing 5***

2009  
Video, single channel,  
1 min 3 sec  
Collection of  
Singapore Art Museum

Chen Sai Hua Kuan, also known as Sai, created *Space Drawing 14* in response to Singapore Art Museum's Learning Gallery at Tanjong Pagar Distripark. The work is part of his "Space Drawing" series, in which the artist reinterprets the function of a line and the act of drawing by extending it beyond the conventional two-dimensional medium into three-dimensional spatial environments.

Originally developed to support operations at the nearby port, the Distripark transformed into a dynamic space that blended its industrial past with the arts, as port activities relocated. It has since become an important hub for contemporary art experiments and exhibitions. Against Singapore's evolving cityscape, *Space Drawing 14* unfolds as an interplay of lines in the Learning Gallery.

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**CHEN SAI HUA  
KUAN**  
***Space Drawing 14***

2025  
Elastic bungee rope and  
stainless-steel eye bolt  
Collection of the artist

Sai responds to the space by transforming it into a canvas. Using a single continuous bungee rope as a line — a fundamental and versatile element in art — he creates a path that traverses and intersects the gallery by following its contours. The path becomes a spatial drawing, stretched taut to create a sense of rhythm and flow. Though both ends remain securely tethered, this suspended energy becomes a focal point that evokes curiosity and imagination, suggesting latent potential and unrealised movement — possibilities he first explored earlier in *Space Drawing 5*.

This approach builds on his earlier work, *Space Drawing 5* (2009), which he created for a construction site in Kaliningrad, Russia. There, Sai stretched an elastic cord across the derelict space before releasing it. As he let it go, the stored energy transformed into a kinetic and sonic spectacle, with the freed cord ricocheting across the site and drawing attention to its surroundings.