

LEARNING GALLERY

20 Jul 2024–29 Jun 2025
Tanjong Pagar Distripark

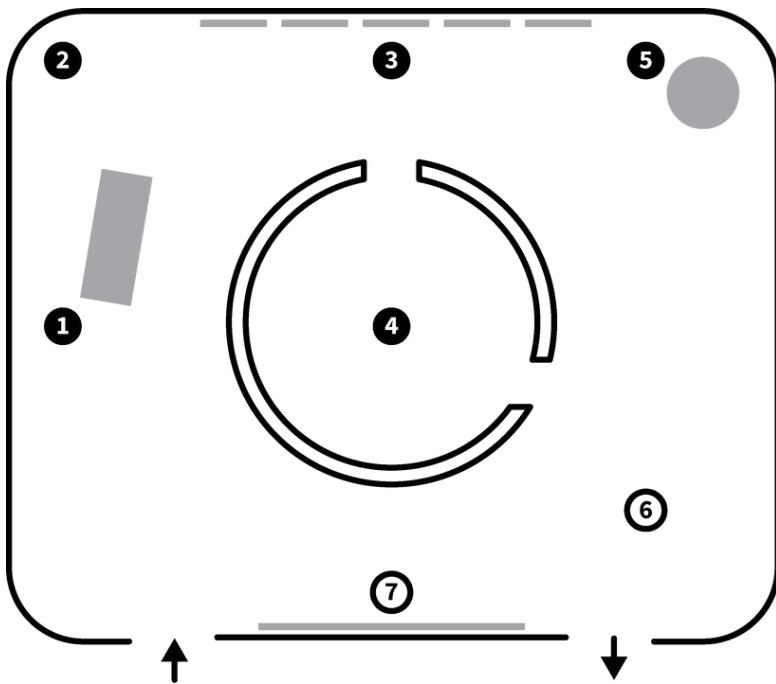
TO THE INNER CHILD:

Childhood is a defining stage in all our lives. The foundations of our emotions, beliefs and memories take root during these formative years, with some receding within as we transit into adulthood.

The human impulse to create and appreciate art starts in childhood, and has transcended cultural and geographical boundaries from the moment humans first made their mark on the world. Both art and childhood are universal human experiences, which are characterised by freedom, curiosity and exploration.

The Learning Gallery invites you to embrace this spirit of exploration with a child-like lens. Allow yourself to approach the artworks curiously, unburdened and unafraid of the unknown. Learn about the artworks, artists and their attachments while engaging in both internal conversations and open dialogue.

Perhaps you may once again have an uninhibited relationship with the world: to look, feel and live fearlessly.



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1 HAN SAI POR *Black Forest*

2024
Wood and charcoal,
dimensions variable
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.

2 JULIAN ABRAHAM “TOGAR” *A Gesture*

2016
Sound installation,
5 min 52 sec (loop)
Collection of
Singapore Art Museum

Through this work, Julian Abraham “Togar” explores the act of listening and highlights the visitors’ relationship with sound within a space. Vocalisations like “sssttt” and “ehm” may be associated with sounds heard during a typical gallery experience, such as whispering or throat clearing. Through this sound-based artwork, the artist tests how sensitive we are to unseen aspects of the exhibition space.

Each visitor’s interpretations of the sounds are dependent on their background or state of mind at the time, suggesting that a gesture is partly defined by the party who receives it. However, ultimately, the sounds are simply varied intonations and articulations.

3**NGUAN*****Untitled, from the series Singapore***

2012
Archival pigment print,
100 × 100 cm

Untitled, from the series Singapore

2011
Archival pigment print,
100 × 150 cm

Untitled, from the series Singapore

2013
Archival pigment print,
100 × 100 cm

Untitled, from the series Singapore

2013
Archival pigment print,
100 × 100 cm

Untitled, from the series Singapore

2013
Archival pigment print,
100 × 100 cm

Collection of
Singapore Art Museum

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.

4**MIGRANT
ECOLOGIES
PROJECT*****{if your bait can
sing the wild
ones will come}
Like Shadows
Through Leaves***

2021
Video, single channel,
16:9 aspect ratio, colour and
sound (surround), 28 min
Collection of the artists

This film by art collective Migrant Ecologies Project is about Tanglin Halt, one of Singapore’s oldest public housing estates in Queenstown, and the process of its urban renewal, from the demolition of its buildings to the relocation of its residents. The collective made repeated visits to Tanglin Halt to trace the echoes and memories that still animate the area, like shadows through leaves.

The birds are presented as silhouettes or puppets in the habitats where they were once observed, exemplifying a mode of storytelling that evokes a restorative process known as “rewilding.”

Transformative encounters in Tanglin Halt are interwoven with calls of different species of birds, narration and poetry to form a layered tale in which both humans and birds search for a place that once existed, while conjuring possible future returns.

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TANG DA WU
深疤凰
SEMBAWANG

2013
Mixed media,
dimensions variable
Collection of
Singapore Art Museum

深疤凰 (Shēn bā huáng) is Tang Da Wu's Chinese homonym for an area in Singapore called Sembawang, whose actual Chinese name is 三巴旺 (sān bā wàng).

The Artists Village (TAV), an artistic community of like minded practitioners that Tang founded in 1988, was in Sembawang, located in the north of Singapore. It was a dynamic space for exhibitions, performances and discussions, which challenged traditional artmaking and pioneered new art forms in Singapore.

深疤凰 translates to "phoenix of deep scars." The avian creature in this work bears a resemblance to the "tok-tok bird" (the Large-tailed Nightjar or *Caprimulgus macrurus*), which appeared nightly near TAV. TAV left its premises in Sembawang in 1990 and this work conveys Tang's feelings about the event. The creature in his artwork is perched on a cluster of diamond-shaped mirrors, which represents its tears as it emerges from the ashes of its rebirth.