

MEDIA RELEASE

**TWO NEW OUTDOOR ARTWORKS TO BE FEATURED AROUND
THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM**

*'Sub/merged' and 'An Unnatural History' will feature digital elements
that extend the experience of the works beyond the hoardings*



Finbarr Fallon, 'Sub/merged', 2020; image courtesy of the Artist

Singapore, 16 December 2020 – Singapore Art Museum (SAM) presents two larger-than-life artworks by artists Finbarr Fallon, and Darel Seow with Lee Xin Li for the latest presentation on the hoardings surrounding the museum buildings. SAM's location in the city centre is central to the artists' artworks, with each responding to the urban landscape in their own way. As site-specific installations, Finbarr Fallon's *Sub/merged* imagines a subterranean city of the future, while *An Unnatural History* by Darel Seow with Lee Xin Li, explores the struggle between man and nature. Both newly commissioned pieces will offer viewers the opportunity to engage more intimately with the artworks online through interactive elements. The artworks are part of SAM's on-going collaboration with Singapore-based artists to present contemporary art in public spaces while the buildings undergo redevelopment and will be on display from 18 December 2020 until 6 June 2021.

SAM's Assistant Curator Andrea Fam, who curated these commissioned works, elaborates, "As SAM undergoes redevelopment, we saw an opportunity to engage and grow relationships with arts practitioners we had not yet worked with in a concerted manner. Being trained in

architecture, Finbarr brings his considerations of the future of urban planning and building design to the hoarding at SAM's main building, transforming a familiar and well-trodden pavement into a surprisingly unexplored corridor. As illustrators, Darel's affinity to flora and fauna, and Xin Li's interest in architecture are well known. They are collaborating for the first time to exhibit a charming presentation of stories of the natural and built history of Queen Street and its surroundings. Both works consider how Singapore and our society has adapted over time and will continue to evolve in the future."

***Sub/merged* by Finbarr Fallon**

Presented as a mural on the hoarding around the SAM building along Bras Basah Road, *Sub/merged* by Finbarr Fallon responds to the site of SAM and draws inspiration from the history of the area to imagine a subterranean city of the future. This hypothetical city is a reaction to the numerous plot and development regulations in the Bras Basah Bugis Precinct, including restrictions on building heights due to the many national monuments in the area. Fallon, who is also an architectural photographer and trained as an architect, builds on the network of subsurface passages and transit corridors surrounding the site of SAM, and presents a thoughtful and compelling argument for developing Singapore's underground as the next frontier for urban verticality. For this SAM commission, the artist has also drawn on the earlier world-building in his 2017 animated film *Subterranean Singapore 2065*, which proposes large scale underground living in land scarce Singapore.

"*Sub/merged* is a work that projects into the future, confronting the challenges of land scarcity in Singapore. In collapsing the past, present and future of the Singapore Art Museum buildings into a single artwork, my aim is for us to reflect upon the larger issue of urban development and alternative solutions in land scarce Singapore and how we can purposefully address the usage of the island's underground spaces," says Fallon about his commissioned artwork. The artist invites viewers into his subterranean world via an interactive aspect of his work where the public can experience the subterranean warrens through three AR (Augmented Reality) portals located on the mural. The experience is also accessible at the [*Sub/merged* website](#) from 18 December, which is best experienced via desktop.

***An Unnatural History* by Darel Seow with Lee Xin Li**



Darel Seow with Lee Xin Li, 'An Unnatural History', 2020; image courtesy of the Artists

Presented on the hoarding around SAM at 8Q along Queen Street, *An Unnatural History* by Darel Seow with Lee Xin Li is a site-specific mural that draws on imagination and heritage to question the histories surrounding the area and reflects on the museum's role as a re-teller of official narratives. It explores the struggle between man and nature within the heart of Singapore. The mural is complemented by a website, an ever-growing, living archive with contributions from local interest groups and experts, which serves to expand the exchange of knowledge about the area. Viewers are invited to engage with the work by scanning a QR code that will take them to the [An Unnatural History website](#), available from 18 December, where they can participate in an art activity and learn about Singapore's natural and built environment through a series of video conversations and text contributions by collaborators.

The work is a combination of Seow's passion for natural history and storytelling, and Lee's interest in heritage and architecture. By capturing Singapore's cultural and natural history, the work challenges the viewer to consider what heritage means to them. Discussing their work, Seow and Lee say, "*An Unnatural History* draws attention to the various layers that exist around the Singapore Art Museum site. The mural layers local culture and nature together with the history and architecture of this area. The hoarding forms the perfect canvas to question the authenticity of this presented version of heritage."

Sub/merged and *An Unnatural History* will be on display on the hoardings around the SAM building along Bras Basah Road and SAM at 8Q along Queen Street from 18 December 2020

to 6 June 2021. They are part of SAM's exhibition programming that will continue throughout the period of the museum's redevelopment.

For more information on the artists, please refer to [Annex A: Artist Biographies](#)

Images are available for download at: <https://bit.ly/Images-SAMHoardings>

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About the Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art-thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges.

SAM occupies two buildings: the old St Joseph's Institution on Bras Basah Road, built in 1855 and now a National Monument; and SAM at 8Q, a conservation building across the road on Queen Street that was the old Catholic High School. The museum buildings are currently closed for a major building redevelopment, with museum programming continuing at partner venues until the buildings re-open.

SAM is the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2019. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. To find out more, visit www.singaporeart-museum.sg

Annex A: Artist Biographies

Lee Xin Li (b. 1988, Singapore) is an independent illustrator. Based in Singapore, Lee finds inspiration in the environment he grew up in, drawing on culture, food, architecture and history. An architecture graduate from the National University of Singapore, his love for the comic series *The Adventures of Tin Tin* by Hergé and Guy Delisle's travel chronicles motivated him to begin drawing in 2013. His notable works include the *Kueh* series and *Peta Singapura*.

Darel Seow (b. 1989, Singapore) is a visual storyteller who illustrates tales of the natural world with his unique brand of wry wit and whimsy. The illustration graduate from Central Saint Martins believes in using storytelling as a means of engagement to create experiences that simultaneously excite and educate. He has worked with the British Museum (London), National Museum of Singapore, Asian Civilisations Museum (Singapore) and other cultural institutions on projects that encourage learning through the power of imagination and play.

Finbarr Fallon (b. 1992, United Kingdom) is an architectural photographer and artist based in Singapore and the United Kingdom. Trained as an architect and a RIBA silver nominee, Fallon has received acclaim for works in various disciplines; these include the Blueprint Architecture Photography Awards 2019 (Atrium People's Choice), Landscape Photographer of the Year 2016 (Urban – Finalist) and Infrastructure Photographer of the Year 2016 (Finalist). His works have been exhibited widely, at museums including the ArtScience Museum and National Museum of Singapore, and are regularly published in journals around the world. Fallon recently curated the group show *Transient Bodies* for Singapore Art Week 2019.