

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The *Collectors Show* returns with new, rarely-seen treasures from private collections

22 January 2013, Singapore – The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) & Credit Suisse are proud to present the third edition of *The Collectors Show*, one of the most anticipated exhibitions on Singapore’s arts calendar. Independently curated and organised by SAM, and sponsored by Credit Suisse as part of its *Innovation in Art* series, the exhibition draws from important private collections to present 23 contemporary masterpieces from the Asia-Pacific region.

This exceptional exhibition series draws entirely from the private collections of individuals, art foundations, private museums and other organizations, offering museum-goers a unique glimpse into spectacular artworks normally held behind closed doors. The *Collectors Show* reflects the impact of museum-curated exhibitions in helping visitors find new ways to look at contemporary art. The theme of each exhibition connects the disparate pieces of art together in a thoughtful way, linking the art to our larger contemporary society and culture.

Titled ‘*Weight of History*’, this year’s *Collectors Show* examines how artists engage with and evaluate local traditions and culture, displaying interconnected relationships between past and present in our increasingly globalised societies. Through the eyes of contemporary artists, *Weight of History* aims to raise questions about what defines history and how personal accounts of the past are just as valuable as official depictions of historical events, and why the past is still relevant to contemporary art making in Asia.

Artists presented in the show hail from across the Asia-Pacific region, including China, Japan, Korea, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, as well as Tibet and Taiwan. Despite their different cultural backgrounds, *Weight of History* brings to light the commonalities in the issues and concerns amongst the artists.

Split over two levels, *Weight of History* explores how artists look at the idea of tradition and the artists' exploration of past social and political issues as well as personal histories. Some of the artists include Chinese artist Xu Bing whose work looks at how language has an important role in defining Chinese identity and history; Yuken Teruya whose redesigning of a traditional Okinawan style kimono fuses tradition with contemporary political tensions; Sakshi Gupta who addresses the issue of young adults in India reconciling values of contemporary society and Indian tradition; Tibetan artist Gonkar Gyatso who explores tradition and spirituality through two works; and Li Songsong who tackles the issue of the recording of history in media. This year's edition of the show also presents works by three local artists including Tang Da Wu, Francis Ng and artist collective Vertical Submarine. (For a full list of artists and their works, please refer to Annex B.)

Mr. Tan Boon Hui, Director of SAM, says, "We are extremely grateful to the collectors who have generously opened their collections for *Weight of History* and to Credit Suisse for their continued support that has made this exhibition possible today. The works presented in the exhibition allows us to highlight the rich nuances and texture in contemporary Asian art through their critical inquiry into the historical events and respective artmaking traditions."

Mr. Lito Camacho, Vice Chairman Asia Pacific and Singapore Country CEO, Credit Suisse, and Board member of the National Heritage Board of Singapore, says, "Credit Suisse is delighted to be supporting SAM in the presentation of *Weight of History* as part of our *Innovation in Art* series. This engaging and inspiring exhibition demonstrates our continued support and dedication towards developing a vibrant contemporary art scene here in Singapore."

Credit Suisse: *Innovation in Art* series – *The Collectors Show: Weight of History* runs from 25 January to 5 May 2013, with a number of related programmes including artist presentations and curator tours taking place in-conjunction with the show. For more information, please refer to Annex A.

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For more information, please read on:

- **Annex A** – Exhibition Synopsis & Related Programmes
- **Annex B** – Featured Artworks & Collectors' Statements

About the Singapore Art Museum

The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) focuses on the creation of art in the present moment. It advocates and presents the contemporary art practices of Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, situating them within the global context of art making today. SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region, and its programming aims to introduce new artistic practices and styles to the public, as well as nurturing discerning audiences for contemporary art. SAM is also organiser of the Singapore Biennale 2013 and the past edition in 2011.

About Credit Suisse

Credit Suisse AG is one of the world's leading financial services providers and is part of the Credit Suisse group of companies (referred to here as 'Credit Suisse'). As an integrated bank, Credit Suisse offers clients its combined expertise in the areas of private banking, investment banking and asset management. Credit Suisse provides advisory services, comprehensive solutions and innovative products to companies, institutional clients and high-net-worth private clients globally, as well as to retail clients in Switzerland. Credit Suisse is headquartered in Zurich and operates in over 50 countries worldwide. The group employs approximately 49,200 people. The registered shares (CSGN) of Credit Suisse's parent company, Credit Suisse Group AG, are listed in Switzerland and, in the form of American Depositary Shares (CS), in New York. Further information about Credit Suisse can be found at www.credit-suisse.com.

About Credit Suisse: Innovation In Art Series

The Credit Suisse: Innovation In Art Series began in 2007 as a long-term partnership between the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) and Credit Suisse. The Series enables SAM to showcase important Asian contemporary art practices, ground-breaking artists, as well as significant exhibitions from around the world. Exhibitions presented under the Series include *Seeing. Feeling. Being: Alberto Giacometti*, *Accelerate: Chinese Contemporary Art*, *FX Harsono: Testimonies* and the prestigious *President's Young Talents*. In 2013, as part of Credit Suisse's commitment to promoting emerging artistic talent, the Bank is also sponsoring the *President's Young Talents Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award* which offers recipients the opportunity to develop and showcase new works during the *Singapore Biennale 2013*, Singapore's premier contemporary art exhibition.

With the visual arts as a key focus, Credit Suisse builds lasting relationships with important museums and cultural institutions around the world. The Bank's support has given SAM the creative freedom and resources to plan ahead, while supporting the museum's efforts to offer unique and varied experiences to its visitors and create a stimulating environment through the expanse of contemporary art. For its

contributions to SAM, Credit Suisse has been conferred the National Heritage Board's *Partner of Heritage* award.

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Annex A: Exhibition Synopsis & In-Conjunction Events

Credit Suisse: Innovation In Art Series

The Collectors Show: Weight of History

25 January to 5 May 2013 | Singapore Art Museum

The Collectors Show is one of the most anticipated shows on the arts calendar and continues to present compelling contemporary art works from private collections in Asia. Defying conventional expectations of private art collections as being merely showpieces to be hung on walls, this edition features a spectrum of more than 20 works that show how artists perceive, and re-conceive the multiple facets of history in the Asia-Pacific region.

Curated and independently organised by SAM, *Weight of History* examines how artists engage with, and evaluate, local traditions and culture, translating them into masterpieces which display the interconnected relationship between past and present in our increasingly globalised societies.

RELATED PROGRAMMES

Artist Presentations

Don't miss these exclusive presentations by artists Gonkar Gyatso, Tony Albert and Zulkifli Yusoff, who will talk about their works, which are featured in the exhibition, as well as their artistic practice.

Friday, 25 January 2013 | 7.30pm – 9pm | Glass Hall, SAM

Free admission. Registration required. Please e-mail nhb_sam_programs@nhb.gov.sg.

Curator Tour

Now into its third year, *The Collectors Show* continues to present compelling works of contemporary art from private collections around Asia, unveiled to the public for the first time at SAM. This edition features a spectrum of works that show how artists perceive, and re-conceive the multiple facets of history in contemporary Asia, ranging from the personal to the social, the spiritual to the art historical. SAM curator, Michelle Ho, examines how the past has shaped and continues to shape present day societies through art.

Wednesday, 6 February 2013 | 7:30 – 8:30pm | SAM

\$12 (includes admission to the exhibition). Tickets available at SAM and SISTIC. Limited spaces. For ticket availability at the door, please call SISTIC.

Artist Presentation: Vertical Submarine

Local art collective *Vertical Submarine* is known for using humour to provoke and subvert. Join them for a workshop on pictorial analysis and gain an insight into the way they look at things and at artworks in particular. Workshop participants will get to analyse a neo-classical painting, make a drawing of it and unlock the secrets of a coded message.

Saturday, 23 February 2013 | 2pm – 3.30pm | Glass Hall, SAM

Free admission. Limited spaces. Registration required.

Please e-mail nhb_sam_programs@nhb.gov.sg.

Exhibition Venue

Singapore Art Museum is located at 71 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189555.

Opening Hours

Mondays to Sundays | 10am to 7pm (Last admission at 6:15pm)

Fridays | 10am to 9pm

Admission Fees (Combined SAM and SAM at 8Q)

Adults : S\$10

Students (with valid student card) : S\$5

Senior Citizens (Foreign) : S\$5

20% discount on admission fees for group of 20 pax or more

Admission ticket includes \$1 SISTIC fee and is available from SAM and SISTIC.

Admission is free for visitors aged 6 years and below, Singaporean and PR senior citizens, fulltime NS men and students and teachers from local schools.

Free admission on Fridays from 6pm and on Open House days.

Guided Tours for SAM

English Tours: Mondays: 2pm | Tuesdays to Thursdays: 11am & 2pm
Fridays: 11pm, 2pm & 7pm | Saturdays and Sundays: 11am, 2pm & 3.30pm

Japanese Tours: Tuesdays to Fridays: 10.30am

Mandarin Tours: Fridays: 7.45pm

SAM online

www.singaporeartmuseum.sg
www.facebook.com/singaporeartmuseum
www.twitter.com/singaporeart
www.youtube.com/samtelly

Enquiries

6332 3222 or 6332 3200
nhb_sam_programs@nhb.gov.sg

How to get to SAM

By Bus: SBS 7, 14, 16, 36, 111, 131, 162, 175, 508, 518
 SMRT 77, 167, 171, 700

By MRT: 2-minute walk from Bras Basah MRT Station
 10-minute walk from Dhoby Ghaut, Bugis or City Hall MRT stations

By Car: Carparks available at Waterloo Street, Queen Street, NTUC Income
 Centre, Plaza by the Park, Hotel Grand Pacific and Singapore
 Management University

Annex B: Featured Artworks & Collectors' Statements



Xu Bing

The Living Word

2001

Cut and painted acrylic

Dimensions variable

Private Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Language, and its intimate relationship with Chinese history, has been Xu Bing's core domain of investigation in his practice. Xu is part of the New Wave generation of Chinese contemporary artists of the 1990s whose highly critical artworks of the time, responded to the rapid changes of communist China, from the Cultural Revolution, to its transformation into a global economic powerhouse at the turn of the 21st century.

For Xu, the Chinese language is embedded with many complex facets of the China's history and traditions, and the artist has been known for his works that deconstruct text and words, as a way of revealing the relativity of meaning, whether prescribed by dominant powers or individual interpretation. He is best known for his legendary installation *Book From The Sky* (1987-1991), which comprises thousands of fictitious Chinese characters that he carved out, to question the authority of prescribed traditions. *The Living Word* marks a new phase in the artist's practice in the 2000s, as he began exploring the relationship between language and image in the historical development of the Chinese script.

The Living Word can be seen as the artist's journey into uncovering the essence of language and its meaning. Centering on the Chinese character for 'bird', the dictionary definition for bird is presented on the floor in the simplified Chinese that Mao Zedong institutionalised in the 1950s. The ascending text in the installation trace the gradual transformation from older versions of the Chinese character for 'bird' that has been known in the course of Chinese history to its ancient pictogram format. Xu's flock of hundreds of bird-scripts portray a celestial transition backward in time, and is an artistic gesture intended at liberating meaning from the structures of defined culture, by returning to nature as a source of inspiration.



Li Songsong

I Saw National Socialism

2012

Oil on canvas

200 x 300 cm

Private Collection

Image courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery

Li Songsong is known for his use of images from the mass media in his paintings, blurring the boundaries between apparent facts as portrayed from newspapers, magazines and the internet, and his ambiguous compositions which reconstruct historical events.

In his work, the artist intentionally seeks to cast doubts on the authenticity of images. Li is part of a unique generation of Chinese, who did not experience the brunt of Chinese political upheavals, but at the same time, is aware of the country's difficult past before its transformation as an economic power. Born at the tail end of the Cultural Revolution in an elite military family, Li has early recollections of the changes in Post-Mao Chinese society, as well as unsettling memories of the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. The use of photographs in artworks has particular resonance in Chinese contemporary art practice. Newer generations of Chinese artists seek ways of recovering historical memory, while recognising the uncertainties of the reality that photographs portray.

I Saw National Socialism is Li's reinterpretation of a photograph, portraying Nazi Third Reich leader Adolf Hitler visiting a soldier who was wounded during a failed bomb assassination attempt on him on 20 July 1944. The placid image of the infamous dictator, captured in a humane moment of comradeship, is intended to provoke discomfit, prompting viewers to reconsider alternative possibilities of not just European history but the consequences of its politics on the rest of world.



Zhang Huan

Ash Army No. 2

2008

Ash, steel and wood

55.9 x 47 x 50.2 cm

Private Collection

Image courtesy of Zhang Huan Studio and Pace Gallery

Zhang Huan first came into prominence in the early 1990s for his performances involving nudity, endurance and pain. A member of the Beijing East Village collective of artists active in 1993, the East Village artists were known for their experimental performances that engaged the body as a way to express urgent social and political concerns. Engaging painting and installation as well in his practice, his intimate awareness of the body as both a critical medium and language has shaped Zhang Huan's body of work, with his use of unusual materials and forms.

Ash Army follows from his 2007 body of works using incense ash. This series began following his return to China and adoption of Buddhist beliefs after living in New York for eight years. For the artist, the symbolic meaning embedded within the ceremonial burning of incense ash goes deeper than the Buddhist contemplation on the temporality of forms. Incense burning, a daily ritual for millions of Chinese people, embody the remembrance of past generations of ancestors, as well as the personal histories and deepest hopes of countless temple-goers.

Each week, Zhang's assistants collected barrels of discarded ash from more than twenty temples in Shanghai. The process of transforming discarded ash into tangible art objects is the artist's way of reconciling wasted traces of devotion into a repository of personal, cultural and historical memories. Zhang's *Ash Army* sculptures range from depictions of the common man to military figures. They also reveal the fragility of collective memories, as the artist strives to reclaim, and re-consecrate the manifold fragments of human imagination and endeavour, recorded in prayer and devotion.



Tang Da Wu

Same Same And No Difference Between Unity and Self-Destruction

1994 - 2010

Hammers and nails

122 x 140 x 100 cm

Private Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

One of the pioneering artists of experimental artmaking in Singapore, Tang spearheaded the establishment of The Artist Village in 1988, a collective of artists who explored installation and performance art. Tang's work is known for its themes of environmental concern as well as critical social issues in Singapore.

This work employs the ready-made tool of the humble hammer, in itself, a loaded and powerful signifier of the working class. A symbolic representation of the struggles, the work suggests the abandonment of outdated production tools in an increasingly technologically driven age that privileges industrial mass production over individual craftsmanship. This is not the first time the artist has employed such symbolic tools in his work. The sculpture *Untitled* (1991), now in the SAM collection, takes the form of an axe with an attached leaf stalk. It was Tang's witty commentary on the devastation of nature through indiscriminate use and exploitation.

Earlier interpretations of this piece, made of hammer, have likened it to be a paradoxical metaphor for the state of Singapore society, the work itself taking the contradictory form of a loaded weight of tools that has to be held together by nails. Such works highlight Tang's philosophical rumination on the absurdities that exist in human life, and Man's self-infliction of pain amongst mankind.

Collector's Statement

Tang Da Wu's work often strikes me as a comment on socio-politics. In *Same Same and No Difference Between Unity and Self-Destruction*, I cannot help but associate the use of hammer as a political statement; at least one political party in Singapore has a Hammer as its party logo. The work refers to the transformation of Singapore from early independence that has been marred by political upheavals. Opposing ideologies come from all political parties, and just like the hammers nailed in all directions, they hold the nation together rather than destroy it. Tang was able to sculpt the head of a man out of these hammers, and to me, this face represents the face of a nation. On the face of it (pun intended) politics, for all purpose and intent, want to see a nation united and progressive. It is Tang Da Wu's intriguing mind and ability to engineer so masterfully those insights into his sculpture that prompted me to purchase this piece of genius work without hesitation. My memories of those early political years resonate so strongly with this sculpture, hammered deep into my heart and mind. There is a story told in this sculpture, of where we came from and where we are now. I am now the proud owner of a piece of Singapore history.



Vertical Submarine

Sun Tzu's Art of War (Part of Armchair Philosophy)

2010

Mixed media

120 x 199 x 125 cm

Tay Yu Jin Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Vertical Submarine is a Singapore artist collective known for its works that employ humour, text and references of both Eastern and Western philosophy and popular culture, as a way of both inciting and deriding critical thinking in everyday life.

This work is part of a series of works called *Armchair Philosophy*, which takes the literal armchair - a place of rest and thinking – as a site to critique the notion of the “armchair philosopher”, or one who claims to be knowledgeable without having direct experience. The work references Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*, a historical Chinese military treatise regarded as the most definitive work on military strategies, since its compilation during the early Warring States period. It has been said to inspire political leaders based on the principle of strategic tactics of warfare without having to actually battle.

Sun Tzu's Art of War consists of an armchair, the back of which had been shot with 64 arrows, a homage to the epic battle scene in Zhang Yimou’s film *Hero*, as well as a reference to the possible permutations in I-Ching, symbolising the different strategies one could deploy against an opponent or an enemy. This work can be seen as the artists’ note to viewers to consider the ways in which knowledge as power can be a formidable tool not only to aid but also to sabotage oneself, and that the best laid plans are not always fool proof.

Collector's Statement

When I first saw *Sun Tzu's Art of War (Part of Armchair Philosophy)* on display, I was initially drawn to the contradictions inherent in this work. Here is an otherwise comfortable-looking Chesterfield cigar room armchair, bearing a *kavadi* of arrows. I liked the work's contemporary reference to the dramatic blizzard of arrows in Zhang Yimou's epic movie 'Hero' and I wondered if the occupant of the chair had been ambushed or was under attack. I then noticed the title of the red text – Sun Tzu's Art of War – stabbed by a dagger into the deep-button chest of the chair. What did this armchair represent? Did the occupant survive attack?

Especially in Asia, for some, there is something fundamentally disturbing and inauspicious about the idea of a Chesterfield, which one traditionally associates with relaxation and high society, being dramatically attacked from both the front and the back. Has this chair been appropriated as a voodoo pin-cushion for the occupant or owner?

Viewed differently, however, did the strategies or philosophy of the red text protect the occupant of the chair from attack on all sides? Aren't the ideas of this most studied of war philosophers supposed to protect one successfully from attack? Or, given the work's other title reference to Armchair Philosophers, was this armchair – a metaphor for status – a subtle criticism of strategy and theory over action and execution?

I like the fact that these ambiguities remain unresolved, and perhaps deliberately so, given the subversive wit that is characteristic of Vertical Submarine's works. Since I acquired this work, this battle-scarred chair has served as a provocative conversation piece; like most good art – exciting emotions and raising questions, but not necessarily offering any clear answers. As a disputes lawyer, to me, this chair portends no ill omen. It signifies survival – the victory of strategy over force.

Only later did I learn from the artists that there are precisely 64 arrows in the chair – corresponding to the 64 permutations of the I-Ching – symbolising different strategies that one can deploy against an enemy or opponent.



Gonkar Gyatso

Excuse Me while I Kiss the Sky

2011

Stickers, paper collage, and pencil on cast polyurethane sculpture

122 x 81 x 71 cm

Peggy Scott and David Teplitzky Collection

Image courtesy of Conceptio



Gonkar Gyatso

108 Burning Questions

2011

Acrylic, pencil, ink, stickers and collage elements on paper in custom frame, series of 108 works

27 X 25 cm (each)

Private Collection

Image courtesy of Conceptio

Born in 1961 in Lhasa, Gonkar Gyatso grew up in the new secular and socialist society created by the People's Republic of China after Tibet came under Chinese administration in 1950. Living through the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) meant that he never had a chance in his youth to discover his Tibetan heritage, as revered monasteries like the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple were shut down during that period. It was only after 1984 upon his return to Lhasa after his art education in Beijing that the artist began to encounter Tibetan culture, but this was to be short-lived as political events of the late 1980s began to affect the Tibetan population as well. Over the next two decades, Gonkar has been living between Beijing, London and New York.

It is this disjuncture between his Tibetan heritage, upbringing in Chinese socialist society as well as his globalised identity, that the artist's works can be seen a potent metaphor of the struggle with identity politics and the growth of capitalist society. Using the Buddha as his primary source of inspiration,

Gonkar contrasts the values of religion and tradition with present-day issues, through assemblages of saturated images taken from the media.

Excuse Me While I Kiss the Sky, which takes its name from the lyrics of Jimi Hendrix's Purple Haze song, shows a Buddha figure as a modern-day devotional figure, adorned with thousands of stickers that signify contemporary popular culture and society's desires.

108 Burning Questions comprises a series of collages that present social and political problems and dilemmas of the contemporary world. By juxtaposing critical global issues with kitschy images, he shows how global homogenisation has clouded culture and politics, as well as trivialised some of the most important issues in contemporary society.

Collector's Statement (Excuse Me while I Kiss the Sky)

Excuse Me while I Kiss the Sky is one of the very first three-dimensional works completed by Gonkar Gyatso. The sculpture is the meeting of two worlds—the world of tradition and spirituality, as exemplified by the Buddhist cast, and the world of pop iconography, as conveyed through the profusion of stickers covering the entire piece. The reincarnation of a classical icon into a modern context is one that has been practiced throughout the many threads of world art history. To take an object that's sacred as an art form and changing it, interpreting it, adapting it – in a way that pays utmost respect – is a discursive strategy that comes naturally and remains irresistible to artists. Gonkar Gyatso's identity is charged with dichotomies, often contrasting, between ethnicities, politics and cultures. The mandate to make art that retains a connection with the past, yet that offers pertinence for the present is pressing and necessary.

The title of this work in particular, spells out the unforgettable lyrics from Jimi Hendrix's legendary song, 'Purple Haze'. This resonates with me as I first encountered art when I was a teenager completely mesmerized by album covers. So my initial experience was intimately connected with my passion for collecting music. Collecting has always been my obsession and it extends beyond the visual arts to music, fashion and film possibly because they are all genuine forms of human expression, which I find intriguing. Collecting is all-consuming and I have been hooked ever since. I find resonance in Gonkar's obsessive use of stickers because I believe that these little adhesive pictures have allowed an entire generation of children to become their own artists and to make their own statements in an instant. Stickers on notebooks, stickers on water bottles, stickers on toys, stickers on pencil cases, stickers on everything and anything. Overwhelming the surface of the sculpture is a vibrant flood of stickers, as well as layers upon layers of childhood memories and playful nostalgia.



Tony Albert

A Collected History

2002-2010

Installation made up of hundreds of reworked objects, sculptures, and paintings; original paintings and drawings; and three unique artworks by Vernon Ah Kee, Shane Cotton, and Arthur Pambean, Jr.

Wall installation 240 x 600 cm with additional sculptural elements

Peggy Scott and David Teplitzky Collection

Image courtesy of Conceptio

A Collected History is Australian artist Tony Albert's reinterpretation of Aboriginal memorabilia, ranging from paintings, souvenir objects and household items that have long defined the image of the archetypal Australian Aboriginal in the public imagination. For more than a century, these gaudy mass-produced objects, named "Aboriginalia" by Albert, have reinforced the vision of the "noble savage", ultimately serving as a testimony of colonisation.

Albert's work show how a diverse civilisation of more than half a million people (with their own languages and cultural specificities), has been represented in a distorted manner that is devoid of the critical voices and realities of actual Aboriginal life today. The installation also includes three works by other artists: Shane Cotton's depiction of a Maori *mokomakai* head that represents the solidarity that Maori and Aboriginal people share; Vernon Ah Kee's black and white image of a Aboriginal man that casts a haunting sobriety on Aboriginal history; and the late artist Arthur Pambean Jr.'s painting of black-ochre markings, symbolic of the body adornment styles of the Aborigines from the Aurukun.

The inclusion of UFO drawings in the installation raises the ironic question of status differences between alien and citizen in Australian citizenship and immigration policies. In 1967, Aborigines were granted citizenship status, despite the fact that they were the original custodians of the land and alienated by colonisation.

Collector's Statement

These mass-produced objects in *A Collected History*, named "Aboriginalia" by Albert, have been manufactured by White Australians for more than 100 years to fulfil a mythical vision of the primitive "other". As alienating caricatures, the Aboriginal image is distorted and disseminated without the historical realities, critical voices, and evidence of survival that are inherent parts of Aboriginal life.

The idea of an extended family existing across borders, cultures, colour and generations is an idea that we have come to embrace. Works of art we have collected over the years transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. There are recurring themes and common threads that bind them together; they are all interrelated and are a constant reminder that we all belong to the same community. But the world has been torn asunder because we refuse to acknowledge each other as compassionate beings. Tony's work tells a story, and we're drawn to the way people see and depict those around them. Head-dresses, in powerful and compelling ways, persuade us to see something new or challenge our assumptions about representations of race. *A Collected History* is a self-portrait, and with it comes a subliminal tension between courage and vulnerability, hovering beneath the surface as the artist presents himself to the world.



Shilpa Gupta

24:00:01

2012

Motion flapboard

21.8 x 190 x 25 cm; video duration 19:00 mins (loop)

Peggy Scott and David Teplitzky Collection

Image courtesy of Conceptio

Shilpa Gupta is an interdisciplinary artist who uses interactive video, photography and performance to query and examine themes of consumer culture, enhanced security, militarism and human rights. Technology, and the way media images define contemporary reality are other themes in Shilpa's works.

24:00:01 takes the form of a mechanical flapboard, similar to the manner in which airport arrival and departure signboards make announcements through interchanging alphabets. The work reflects Shilpa's deliberation on civilisations long gone, the fragility of rising and falling nations, the politics of migration, location and dislocation, the conundrums of terrorism and religious violence in the name of self-identification as well as the toxic and cyclical nature of vengeance, ultimately meaningless. The narrative, which is presented in a freeform stream of consciousness style, has been intentionally programmed with spelling errors to reflect a sense of bewildering pathos and delirium, not dissimilar to what the artist considers as a growing culture of prejudice and fear which play out to disastrous consequences in global politics.

24:001:01 may represent a time that does not exist, or a space beyond the paradigms of conventional boundaries, as the work begins with a reference to pre-historical time, reconsidering a history before man-made time began. Both a meditation and an elegy by the artist, the work takes a sweeping contemplation on the enormous breadth of time past, imagining reality beyond the confines of historical periods that official records define.

Collector's Statement

Shilpa Gupta's *24:00:01* is a poignant exercise of how we see language, how we receive information and how we derive meaning. The flapboard offers a somewhat primitive platform through which to convey simple announcements. Each Rotary dial comprises of the entire alphabet, the digits 0 through 9 and the black blank. Instead of posting departure times, arrival times or train destinations, the white letters in *24:00:01* form a narrative, a poem of sorts. Capitalizing on the sensory misfires that result from anticipating where a dial would or would not stop, Shilpa deliberately fills her prose with misspellings, disturbs words with elisions and wreaks havoc on the kerning. Arbitrary numbers precede nonsensical phrases, until a few moments and a few flips reveal the final answer to the inadvertent riddle. The artist explores the relationship between time and language, and how a passing glimpse of words or letters provides the viewer with information

That can be so far removed from the whole account. It is like crossing through the living room and passing by the television, only to catch some fragments of data from the ticker line moving quickly through the bottom of the screen. It is both an exhilarating as well as an unnerving experience to sit in front of *24:00:01* waiting for a story to unfold as the black and white rustle busily on.

A stylistic affinity particular to different areas can certainly be distinguished in some instances, but much of that is collapsing. Patterns and stylizations that have defined indigenous cultures have been creeping into contemporary art for years and we see increasing evidence of it. But we are not convinced that any specific style defines a country anymore. Shilpa may be a female Indian artist, but her work holds relevance and offers lessons for social settings beyond her native context. Inspired perhaps by encounters and issues exclusive to her home country, her art tackles universal issues such as the forces of commodification, the upheavals of identities, and the polemics of power.



Shahzia Sikander

The Explosion of the Company Man

2011

Gouache, hand painting, gold leaf and silkscreened pigment on paper

203 x 20 x 173 cm

The Rose Trust Collection

Image courtesy of Pilar Corrias Gallery

Shahzia Sikander is known for works that combine the allegories from Hindu and Muslim cultures, infused with personal histories and critical commentary. Trained in miniature painting, Shahzia's skill in the precision and methodology of both Mughal (Islamic) and Rajput (Hindu) styles, translate into works that explore the richness of multicultural identities, and critically examining the legacies of the past in the present.

The Explosion of the Company Man references the hybrid Indo-European style of painting known as Company Style or Company Painting (kampani kalam in Hindi), executed by Indian artists which emerged in 18th and 19th century India. At that time, British patrons of the colonial elite (working in the British East India Company and other foreign companies in India) began employing Indian artists to document images that catered to European tastes, introducing Western techniques of linear perspective and shading into the Indian aesthetic tradition.

Beyond the allure of Shahzia's picturesque court scenes and detailed decorative arabesque motifs, her appropriation of this hybrid style reveals the uneven power relations in the colonial world, in which Indian artists redefined their aesthetic tradition to make art that conformed to colonial perspectives. Colonialism and its legacy in art and politics are being presented in her visual representations of transforming societies in disruption. The work is part of her 2011 series of works that explore British colonialism of the Indian subcontinent, engaging the "exploding Company man" as a metaphor for the destructive paradigms that colonialism has brought about.

Collector's Statement

To look at this painting is a deeply energizing process for me. Its reinterpretation of the traditional miniature into this large size exudes confidence. Its stylization as an opened folio creates a diptych format that allows for enormous dynamism between its corresponding halves.

On the left, elements of the composition float like confetti, as if eager to recombine themselves into the holistic image one sees on the right half. But then, the dynamic can work in the opposite direction as well, where the whole can dissolve or “explode” into its elements.

This witty ambiguity takes Shahzia's painting beyond its polemical and historical context. There is a play on imagery as well as colour. For instance, the trumpet - used to alert soldiers in colonial armies – is rendered in grey on the left. On the right is a corresponding grey form but suggestive of a winged creature... the mythical *simurgh*, perhaps? History and myth correspond in Shahzia's rich creation. Things are what they are yet they are changeable. There is a vibrant sense of metamorphosis about to happen, and the viewer is invited to participate. There is enormous sensory and imaginative pleasure to behold *The Explosion of the Company Man*.



Yee Sookyung

Translated Vase

2007

Ceramic trash, epoxy, 24K gold leaf

160 x 90 x 90 cm

Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul Collection

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Korean artist Yee Sookyung's *Translated Vase* series of sculptures began in 2001 when she created a series of 12 jars, based on the 1947 poem 'Ode to White Porcelain' by Korean poet and antique dealer Kim Sang-ok. This began the artist's deep reflection about the Korean ceramic tradition that dates back to 57 BCE.

Collecting ceramics waste from present-day Korean ceramicists, Yee's *Translated Vase* was created through a painstaking jigsaw-puzzle process in which the artist attempts to create new connections between disparate shards. The use of gold leaf to reconfigure disjointed ceramic pieces also bear linguistic significance as the artist intentionally uses *geum* (gold in Korean) to fill in *geums* (cracks in Korean), thereby opening up new readings into the notion of defects and values.

Her process of recomposing fragments of Korean ceramics into entirely new sculptures is both forceful and elegant, as the artist seeks to complement curved fragments, all of which were previously part of a different form, while preserving the aesthetic of the original forms. The tension between the past and the present, and the question of how to maintain traditional values while embracing contemporary visions is being addressed in her work that strikes a harmonious balance despite its bulbous, uncanny appearance.

Collector's Statement

Yee Soo-kyung's *Translated Vase* is perhaps the work that correlates most closely with the mission of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, and the directions its collection has pursued.

Leeum is the only museum in Korea whose collection spans the full range of art from traditional Korean works to Korean and international contemporary art. Leeum advocates as its primary philosophy the need to understand time as a continuous flow from the past to the present and then to the future, rather than imposing any division in culture and art. In this respect, we have always been interested in Yee's ceramic works, as she creates sculpture entirely anew by collecting the fragments of traditional ceramics – originally discarded as soon as they were made by a master in ceramics – and joining the pieces back together.

The process by which each incomplete and useless fragment is brought into contact with others and reborn as a complete work of visual art is itself a kind of translation. What makes Yee's work even more interesting is the presence of clear traces of this translation. The fault-lines that join the broken ceramic fragments together, the irregular cracks decorated with sparkling gold leaf, are the traces of the translated, which radiantly expose the process of healing.

The inspiration for Yee Soo-kyung's *Translated Vase* came with the insight she gained into the inevitable differences that arise when seeking to convey meaning between heterogeneous cultures and languages. 'Translation' produces differences that 'reproduction' and 'duplication' do not allow. The unexpected new interpretations generated by translation may be capable of motivating the enrichment of culture and art. For these reasons, we cherish *Translated Vase* with especial ardour, and look forward eagerly to Yee Soo-kyung's future works.



Sudarshan Shetty

No Title (from "This too Shall Pass")

2010

Carved wood, electro magnetic mechanism, steel sword, mild steel

340 x 267 x 102 cm

Apeejay Surrendra Group Collection

Image courtesy of GALLERYYSKE

Sudarshan Shetty is an Indian conceptual artist who is known for his body of playful, yet enigmatic work, often untitled. His kinetic sculptures and hybrid objects frequently employ simple mechanics of movement, and are created in a manner that eludes fixed symbolism. The artist is known to convey overarching themes like mortality, transience and time past. Indian art critic Ranjit Hoskote once described Shetty's works as "giant toys whose conception of play is as serious as a game of life and death".

In this piece, Shetty worked with Bengali craftsmen, applying the traditional practice of Indian woodcarving to create an elaborate wooden archway with Tree of Life motifs, a hallmark of traditional Indian woodwork. An ominous pendulum, in the form of a sword, denies entry into the archway, while the relentless ticking from a metronome, portrays the stillness of passing time. *No Title* is both a metaphor for beauty that is contradicted by danger, as well as a meditation on mortality. The theme of repetition and passing time is characteristic of Shetty's work that seeks to present a sense of ultimate futility and meaninglessness in all human endeavour.

The work is from Shetty's 2010 solo exhibition 'This Too Shall Pass', which showcased works created from ready-made objects and machine parts. It reflects the humdrum of everyday life in modern Indian cities. The exhibition is also based on the artist's exploration of the lost histories of Mumbai, and the reality and artifice that define these narratives.



Aisha Khalid

Appear As You Are, Be As You Appear

2010

Fabric (black velvet, red silk), steel needles

93.98 x 55.88 x 12.7 cm

Mimi Brown Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Aisha Khalid is one of Pakistan's leading contemporary artists who is part of a generation of art practitioners known to have revitalised the traditional medium of miniature painting within the contemporary art world. Through juxtaposing decorative tradition with socio-political subtexts, Aisha's work deals with cultural identities, global politics in the aftermath of 9/11 and gender inequality.

Embroidery is also a recurring theme in Aisha's work, reflecting her familiarity with the embroidery traditions of regions of Sind and Punjab. *Appear As You Are, Be As You Appear* reveals the ambiguity of external, surface appearances, as seen in the luxuriant jacket of velvet and silk that is lined with bare steel needles on the inside. The work that is beautifully intricate is also a sublimation of intense pain. It can be seen as reference to the burdens of woman, and a statement on plight of local cottage industries which produce souvenirs for the tourist market. Here, beauty and tradition are being portrayed as a double-edged sword. While exquisite craftsmanship continues to be valued in the appreciation of culture and tradition, Aisha reveals a sense of unspoken brutality that at times, accompany beauty.

Collector's Statement

The first time I saw Aisha Khalid's work was at the invitation of Amna Naqvi. She had installed a show at the Hong Kong Arts Centre. And there in the middle of this remarkable and provocative show was Khalid's jacket.

The jacket was hung from the ceiling by fishing wire, unframed, exposed to the elements, twisting slowly on its hanger - a lethal jacket, perhaps, recalling other morbid scenes. But it was breathtakingly beautiful.

How could I square the languidness of the red silk with the ire of the steel needles? The sumptuousness of the black velvet with the death-metal pointillist fantasy? The pinheads glinting like diamond inlay on the exterior, while the interior harbours a lush field of fierce fur? The fabric maker, the seamstress, the groom, the bride, the misanthrope, the perfectionist, the lover and the artist were all there, each asking to be examined, respected and heard.

In our home this piece is displayed in the dining room. It stands gentle sentry in the corner, both silent and loud, a friend of our family, calling us to remember - even relish - the conflicts we feel in ourselves, but don't acknowledge.



Yuken Teruya

You-I, You-I

2002

Bingata dye on linen

180 x 140 cm

Tatsumi Sato Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Yuken Teruya is known for his delicate and playful works that transform everyday objects, inviting visitors to consider their relations with social issues, ranging from consumer culture and the environment, to political histories. *You-I, You-I* is Teruya's reinterpretation of the *bingata* kimono, an Okinawan style of kimono, made by a stencil dyeing method (*katazome*), that can be traced back to the Ryuku Kingdom period (14th century CE), when the island was ruled by the independent kingdom before it became part of Japan.

In this work, the artist, of Okinawan origin redesigns the patterns of the *bingata*, inserting amidst the traditional depictions of flora and fauna, the reality of the US military bases' presence in Okinawa. After Okinawa was returned to Japan at the end of World War II, the American military bases were kept in place and increased to more than 20% of the main island.

In Teruya's *bingata*, US jet fighters and V-22 Osprey aircrafts fly through clouds, and paratroopers float amongst the domestic Okinawan butterflies and chrysanthemum flowers. The depiction of helicopters amidst Okinawa's manatee (dugong) population reflects the reality of US Air Force activities threatening the habitat of the endangered sea creatures. Tradition is fused with contemporary political tensions in this work. By illustrating different seasons on the *bingata*, Teruya weaves together the multiple histories of the island's long history.

Collector's Statement

You-I, You-I is a beautiful kimono and one of the most popular works of Yuken Teruya.

I have been fascinated with *You-I, You-I* because it is an elegant art work as well as a sincere documentary. I hope more people will enjoy the beauty and warmth of this work as a brilliantly coloured kimono, that is made using a traditional dyeing technique *bingata* that originated in Okinawa with its a rich textile tradition. I hope they will also think of the meaning of its disquieting military motifs such as parachutists, and then become interested in the so-called "base problems" like economic dependency, aircraft noise and environmental damages that Okinawa faces today, where US military bases have been stationed since the end of World War II.



Jumaldi Alfi

Life/Art #101: Never Ending Lesson

2010

Fibre resin, chalk, life-size fisherman wooden boat

Dimensions variable

Mike Tay Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Since his 2009 *Blackboard* series of works, Indonesian painter Jumaldi Alfi began employing the humble chalkboard as his canvas, conceptually distilling his ideas into their essential meanings. Using chalk, as his primary vehicle and marker, the processes of blurring, cancelling and erasing reveal a significant aspect of the artist's mental processes before representation. This installation is a culmination of the artist's recent body of work.

Life/Art #101: Never Ending Lesson presents a lone skeleton, surrounded by a sea of chalk. If chalk can be said to be a metaphor of all of the artist's ruminations, meditations and ideological processes in artmaking, they also represent the residues of artistic endeavours, both significant and arbitrary. What is left after a spent life, the price of pursuit of knowledge, and the inherent isolation that is part of this journey, is suggested in this enigmatic installation loaded with the artist's existential angst.

The boat, which was procured from Madura Island, is Alfi's reference and salute to the fishermen who navigate this Indonesian island off the north-eastern coast of Java. The region is known for poverty, in part due to extreme and infertile land conditions that limit the island's potential for agriculture and economic development. The boat is symbolic of the strength and resilience of Madurese people, and their reputation as seasoned sailors, having historically traded with neighbouring islands between Indonesia and Singapore. It is also a remnant and reminder of a memory and traditional way of life, erased by the onset of modernity.



Zulkifli Yusoff

Pendita

2011

Collage embossed dye printed on canvas

Dimensions variable

Aliya & Farouk Khan Collection

Image courtesy of artist

History, as a rich source of materials and narratives, is artist Zulkifli Yusoff's chief source of reference and inspiration in his practice, and he investigates how historical texts shape cultural memory and present-day understandings of Malaysian identity. One of the earliest proponents of installation art in Malaysia, Zulkifli is part of the emerging generation of 1990s artists who began to critically examine post-Independence Malaysian nationalism and the social and political issues surrounding it.

Knowledge is power. *Pendita* is a layered commentary on the development of contemporary Malaysian society and the critical role that education plays. In the work, the artist, who is currently an academic at the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), touches on the importance of education, not just for scholars, but the masses. The importance of critical thinking, the definition of global vision and outlook (a topic often promoted by the government), and what it actually means in Malaysian society are being examined in the work. The work is in part, a tribute to Za'aba (Tan Sri Zainal Abidin Ahmad, 1895-1973), an eminent UPSI faculty member who was known to have cultivated and advanced educational policies within the institution during his tenure, as well as for having established departments focussed on translation and writing. His image appears on the collaged plates in the installation.

Pendita has been created through a detailed process of collage, silk-screen and embossment techniques, forming a colossal assemblage of text and information within which the artist purposefully embeds visual codes that act as triggers and provide answers to the central inquiry. Zulkifli reinterprets historical sources by drawing from news archives and other sources of media. Working like an artist-archivist, whose recollection of the past stems from his belief in its relevance to present times, the processes of his work also reveals incidental histories that may be more significant than what official history has accorded.



Montien Boonma

Nature's Breath: Arokhayasala

1995

Metal, herbs

256 x 215 cm

Disaphol Chansiri Collection

Image courtesy of the artist and Max-Ole Casdorff

One of the most important artists of Thailand whose practice signalled the beginnings of Thai contemporary art, the late Montien Boonma was highly regarded for his conceptual use of material in the 1980s. This included industrial materials and local herbs and spices to illustrate the transformations between rural and urban societies of a fast modernising Thailand.

A devout Buddhist who fused spirituality with artmaking, *Nature's Breath: Arokhayasala* was created by the artist when he was battling cancer. The installation was created to resemble a temple-like sanctuary of respite, formed by columns of metal boxes stacked together without adhesives. Symbolic of the human respiratory system, herbs have been placed atop the structure to represent lungs while the precarious curved columns illustrate imagined rib cages, culminating in a metaphor for the frailty of the human body. The scent of aromatic herbs counter the pervasive sense of weight in this structure, signifying the potential for healing when one can still one's mind through breathing practices in such a meditative realm.

The work connects the words *arokhaya* (to have no sickness) and *sala* (a place) to symbolise a realm where sickness does not exist, and where visitors are welcomed to contemplate the dualities of life such as life and death, desire and freedom, internal and external forms.



Chatchai Puipia

Chapter 13 out of 20: The Heart is a Lonely Painter

2005-2006

Oil on linen

250 x 180 cm

Disaphol Chansiri Collection

Image courtesy of the artist and Max-Ole Casdorff

Thai artist Chatchai Puipia is well-known for using images of his own face and body to depict his own personal experiences and reactions towards society. His self-portraits express his dissatisfaction with the social situations of the present day and are filled with expressions of confusion, loss and alienation. His 1995 series of self-portraits *Siamese Smile*, has since become one of the most significant body of works in Thai contemporary art.

One decade later, *The Heart Is A Lonely Painter* is the artist's reassessment of the meaning of his existence as both artist and human being. The title of this series, takes its inspiration from American author Carson McCullers' 1940 novel, *The Heart Is A Lonely Painter*, about loneliness and alienation. A sharp contrast to his earlier projections of selfhood, a profound sense of abjection and isolation fill the artist's anguished self-portraits. Personal struggles to come to terms with his role as an artist, negotiating art world politics while pursuing authenticity in artmaking defined the mood of the famously reclusive painter.

This work is part of a series of 20 paintings of Chatchai in various gestures of disembowelment, ranging from a depiction of himself painting as a one-armed artist, to one of him holding out his heart which he had wrenched from his chest, while yet another one holding a cigarette. For Chatchai, portraiture is an intimate form of self-biography. The artist's stoic composure across this series, a conspicuous departure from his earlier *Siamese Smile* portraits, reveals an extraordinary self-absorption which is haunting, gut-wrenching, and which plunges him further into the depths of existential desolation.



Kawayan de Guia

Horse

2011

35 mm celluloid film, wood, wire

223.5 x 238.8 x 81.3 cm

Michelangelo and Lourdes Samson Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Born in the Baguio City of the Philippines, Kawayan de Guia is known for his installation, painting and performance practice that references popular culture and mass media, to make social statements that are both humorous and ironic.

The sculpture *Horse* comprises 700 celluloid trumpets, made from discarded B grade Filipino films from the 1980s and 1990s that were retrieved by the artist. From the abandoned film, the artist recorded images from the found footage to recreate what can be seen as his reflection of Filipino cultural history. The work, reminiscent of the Greek Trojan Horse, alluringly harmless in its external appearances, can be seen as a statement against the friendly commodification of formulaic film entertainment that audiences unassumingly consume, helping to propagate the industry. Yet as society progresses, kitsch and nostalgia begin to embody new value, and for the artist, also capture the mood and dominant imageries of time past. His attempt to salvage these cultural memories from film that have been reduced to trash, and to recreate a narrative from found footage, reveals alternative facets of Filipino cultural history, highlighting how badly they are being treated and valued in contemporary society today.

Horse can be seen as Kawayan's tribute to his filmmaker father Kidlat Tahimik, who founded the movement LIBHRTY (Limit Idiot Box Hours Thank You) in the late 1980s, to champion the independent film scene's efforts to create more socially relevant films.

Collector's Statement

Kawayan de Guia's *Horse* is a memorial to the vanished: the lost material of celluloid, forgotten traditions, erased memories, the changing art of film itself. Like all memorials, *Horse* evokes feelings of nostalgia, even sadness for what is gone. But, as in the best memorials, there is also a sense of defiance: a broken horse refusing to lie down quietly. De Guia has fashioned an amazing sculpture that is both a farewell and a battle cry. The artwork seems to say that from the ashes of a doomed world, rises an apocalyptic vision, a celluloid form so fragile it could burn at any moment, but from the multiple horns that make up its body, trumpets the undying cry of the artist to fight on, to create, to live.



Sakshi Gupta

Freedom is Everything

2007

Plywood, metal scraps

4 x 360 x 210 cm

Lekha and Anupam Poddar Collection

Image courtesy of GALLERYYSKE and Vijay Sebastian

A sculptor based in New Delhi, India, Sakshi Gupta is known for her works that transform discarded industrial scrap material into art. This practice is the result of the artist's reflections on the fast-paced city where she resides in, and reconfiguring the wastes of industrial production is her way of transcending the repetitive and mundane rhythm of structured living. Working with a spectrum of both physical and ephemeral materials, her work has been described to reflect the transformation of contemporary society's dependence on heavy industries to the weightless age of the information and technology.

Freedom is Everything is part of a 2007 body of works in which the artist seeks to express the importance of individual self-determination, in a contradictory Indian society where an emerging new generation of Indian youths feels trapped between the traditional structures of previous generations, and their desire to determine their destinies and life choices. In this work, bolts, bearings, cogs and nuts have been assembled in a decorative and symmetrical composition to take the form of a carpet. The contrast between the imagined sensations of a lavish carpet and the punishing reality of its actual materials emphasises the sense of disjunction that young people feel today.

Collector's Statement

Freedom is Everything was one of the first few works of Sakshi Gupta's that we acquired for our collection in 2007.

She recycles scrap material, often with industrial origins, to produce sculptures. I find it fascinating how, with such heavy material, she creates forms that evoke an ephemeral lightness and fragility. Her compositions made from discarded scrap, escape the associations that they come with, to form a unique object with new meaning.

Based on the notion of a Mughal carpet, which is an object of luxury, Sakshi's carpet looks sumptuous and sensual from afar but up close the surface reveals itself to be made of metal scrap. Like a traditional carpet, the artist has carefully arranged nuts, bolts, cogs and bearings in a symmetrical pattern. It denotes the highs and lows of life. One can walk on the carpet to experience the contradiction brought by the discomfort of walking on a metal simulation of a lush wool carpet.



Francis Ng

Re:Act

2010

Mixed media

121 x 121 cm

Hady Ang Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Known for his investigation of public and private spaces, as well as the historical and cultural contexts that shape the experience and the loss of these spaces in the fast-developing city scape of Singapore, artist Francis Ng's practice also critically examines the conceptual properties of materials in artmaking.

Re:act is the artist's reflection on the speed of change in contemporary society today, where things never remain in their constant form for long. With pieces of metal, commonly used in washing machines and other industrial mechanisms, the material is bent, cut and reconfigured in Ng's process of translating sculpture into the two-dimensional space. In the work, overlapping lines, shapes and forms present a picture of an abstract painting. The work evokes a sense of movement amidst stillness, and through the use of abandoned material that bear traces of consumer excesses, discarded objects are re-contextualized and given a second lease of life. For Ng, the transformation of the materials, in this process of shifting representation from one medium to another, is also symbolic of human endeavour to create order amidst the constant fluxes that surround our living environment.

Collector's Statement

I started collecting Southeast Asian contemporary art in 2008. My collection focuses on three eternal issues in the history of mankind: WAR, IMMORTALITY and GOD.

When I first saw Francis Ng's work *Re:act* in a collaborative project with Artesan Gallery/LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, featuring Ronald Ventura and Francis Ng, it immediately resonated with me as at the back of my mind I thought I finally found a Singaporean artwork that falls into my chosen themes.

The artwork speaks to me as in the context of deconstruction and construction, which is the basis in which the work is created; it touches on the issue of mortality and immortality of man and his attempt to seek beyond the known and unknown.

The artwork pays homage to Francis Ng's earlier work *Constructing Construction #1* (2001) and *Spaces_In_Spacing* (2008). The construction site is portrayed as "ruin in reverse", possessing regenerative qualities that cause buildings to rise from debris. Similarly, the artwork possesses an inherent element of regeneration, re-birth and revival and re-activation. One can't help but engage in dialogue with the artwork. There is stillness, a restrained passiveness in the work.

Coincidentally, his work also complements my collection of Jumaldi Alfi's work *Re-born* (STPI, 2010) and *Renewal 1 & 3* (AOC, 2010) both of which as the titles suggest, deal with mortality/immortality, rebirth and renewal.

Finally, I like the fluidity of the compressed tub and metallic texture of the material. The artwork, subtly and with depth, conveys the artist's attempt to invite quiet contemplation of their form and meaning.

It is to me an important artwork in my collection and I am happy looking at it under the lights and moods of a gallery, and sharing it with a wider audience.



Morimura Yasamasu

Portrait (Van Gogh)

1985

Chromogenic print

105 x 100 cm

Private Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

One of Japan's most internationally recognised artists, Morimura Yasumasa is best known for his photographic self-portraits that borrow images from art history. He depicts himself as various personae from renowned Western paintings, through elaborate make-up, photography and digital manipulation. For the artist, embedded in the processes of copying or imitating are critical questions of the actual value of dominant and inherited (Western) art histories within one's own cultural context.

Trained in Western art history, Morimura thought deeply about the stylistic influences of Western art and its relevance to his own Japanese heritage. *Portrait (Van Gogh)* is Morimura's very first work with an appropriation from Western art history. The artist featured himself as Van Gogh in the famous 1889 self-portrait painting of the Dutch painter with a bandaged ear, through duplicating all the pictorial elements of the original.

Later works by Morimura, such as his 1991 *Daughter of Art History* series, saw the artist appearing as characters in some highly realistic Western masterpieces, such as Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, and a court figure in Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. The viewers, who had previously looked upon the European figures in these Western paintings, now have their gazes met by the haunting and uncanny eyes of a Japanese man.

Morimura's work has been widely interpreted, and can be seen as reclamation of Asian identities, a statement on the assimilation of Western culture in Japan, or the embodiment of hybrid identities in globalised societies today. In the past two decades, the artist, who claims he had employed 300 different characters through the course of his practice, has represented himself as iconic figures in popular culture, American actresses and controversial historical world leaders.

Collector's Statement

I have seen Mr. Morimura's self-portrait as Vincent van Gogh during my visit to an art fair in Tokyo in April 1990. I had never seen anything like that before. It was like a love at first sight and I didn't hesitate to acquire it. I was surprised that its edition of 10 from 1985 had not yet been sold out then. I was very lucky to get this important work. Soon afterward the edition sold out and this work is now in the collection of many major museums.

This is the very first work by Morimura Yasumasa which established his signature style of appropriation art. From this work onwards, Morimura created the unique series of photographs in which he became the famous figures from art history.

I had been living in New York since 1980, and this photograph was my first Japanese contemporary art work in my private collection. As a new generation of artists emerging from Japan in the 1990s, Morimura's art became known first in the US and in Europe, and then later in his home country.

I met Mr. Morimura in person soon after I bought this work in Tokyo and again in New York during his first solo exhibition there in 1991. Since then I have added a few more works by him from time to time, enjoying his art's worldwide recognition along the way.

Morimura's art has been expanding from still photography into moving image and performances. Watching his evolution has been an enjoyable and rewarding road since this first work, *Portrait (Van Gogh)*.



Tu Wei-Cheng

The Emperor's Treasure Chest I

2011

Multi-media installation

383 x 263 x 60 cm

Private Collection

Image courtesy of the artist

Taiwanese artist Tu Wei-Cheng creates historical artefacts and ancient relics as a way of inquiring into the value of history in contemporary times, particularly reviewing its renewed significance in the form of museum objects, against the politics of display that changes the meaning of objects. Tu's earlier works, which include the fabrication of archaeological objects of a fictitious ancient civilisation, employ the aged appearance of objects and our fascination with antique novelties, to call into question the reality of time past and its traces in contemporary times.

The Emperor's Treasure Chest I is made of both original and counterfeit antique objects, in an assemblage of old-fashioned gadgets such as a peep box, a magic lantern, a kaleidoscope and a phenakistoscope. The reproduction of these early 19th century inventions can be seen as an ornate construction of a history of seeing, through early technological advances that developed optical illusions in entertainment. Incorporating stop-motion animation and shadow imageries in his work, the artist traces how the representation of moving visual images has evolved.

Music and language are interwoven in the work through the translation of visual modes of communication, such as Braille symbols and Morse code, into musical components. Beyond the charms of nostalgia, embedded in the work are personal narratives, references to the Taiwanese artistic community as well as the artist's concern for the future of Taiwan.