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*President Tony Tan interacts with President's Young Talents artist Ryf Zaini's artwork 'Unveil the curtain to the window with no ledge' while the artist (right) explains the work to him.*

## **President Tony Tan meets his Young Talents!**

**27 March 2013, Singapore** – President Tony Tan tonight graced his first *President's Young Talents* (PYT) exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) and got to know six of Singapore's most promising young artists: Boo Junfeng, Liao Jiekai, Zaki Razak, Grace Tan, Ryf Zaini and Robert Zhao Renhui. President Tan also presented certificates to the six artists, as well as trophies to winners of the coveted *President's Young Talents Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award* at the President's Young Talents Award Ceremony later in the evening.

Jointly organised by the Istana and SAM, PYT was inaugurated in 2001 as a developmental platform for promising local artists under the age of 35 working with emerging contemporary art practices. It has since become a premier commissioning exhibition for young artists. The artists were selected by an independent curatorial committee of local art professionals for the strength and promise in their

practice and for possessing the potential for credibility and recognition in the international arts scene. They presented their new works at the *President's Young Talents 2013* exhibition at SAM in January earlier this year.

President Tony Tan said, "The President's Young Talents 2013 continues to support and encourage our young artists to pursue their passion for art and establish a presence at home and overseas. Members of the curatorial committee have devoted much of their time to work closely with the young artists to make this exhibition a reality. The works are remarkable and I look forward to see these six artists make a bigger impact on the local and global arts scene."

At the PYT Award Ceremony, Boo Junfeng and Liao Jiekai were announced winners of the *President's Young Talents Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award* and received the award from President Tony Tan. Aimed at supporting additional commissioning experience and international exposure, the Award provides each of the two artists with \$25,000 to present a work at the upcoming the *Singapore Biennale 2013* which opens in October this year. Boo and Liao were selected by an independent curatorial committee who also served as the mentors to all six artists during the PYT commissioning process: Ahmad Abu Bakar, Cheo Chai-Hiang, Shirley Soh, Tay Swee Lin, and SAM curator Tan Siu Li.

In making their selections, the curator-mentors carefully considered how each artist acquitted himself or herself over the course of the commissioning process: translating initial concept into realised work, as well as juggling budgets and timelines. The potential for future development of each artist was another consideration.

Mr Tan Boon Hui, Director of SAM, said, "All six artists in the President's Young Talents were shortlisted for the exhibition on the basis of their having demonstrated an interesting, strong, and consistent practice over the past few years. They have all established a strong artistic voice as well and the exhibition is testament to their potential in making waves internationally. Ultimately, the curator-mentors were impressed with the creative agility and resourcefulness demonstrated by the two winners. Their works also resonated deeply with the Committee in the way they addressed and engaged with important issues, and the moving way they conveyed their ideas. On behalf of the museum and the award recipients, I would also like to thank Credit Suisse for initiating the Commissioning Award."

On behalf of the curatorial committee, Mr Cheo Chai-Hiang said, "We were incredibly impressed with the quality of all six candidates. This award could have been won by any of the six, but after rigorous deliberation it was unanimously agreed that the work presented by the two winning candidates best demonstrated the artists' ability to articulate and address the concerns of their practice in a rigorous, interesting and sophisticated manner. Congratulations to Boo Junfeng and Liao Jiekai for demonstrating great potential for future artistic development; we look forward to their projects to come."

Extending his well-wishes, Lito Camacho, Vice Chairman Asia Pacific and Singapore Country CEO, Credit Suisse said, "My warmest congratulations to the recipients of the *President's Young Talents Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award*, which will offer them the opportunity to develop new commissioned works for the *Singapore Biennale 2013*. I believe this award is a significant milestone for the arts in Singapore,

providing valuable experiential learning for local young artists while showcasing Singapore's outstanding creative talent on an international platform such as the *Singapore Biennale*. I wish them all the best in their artistic journey and am confident their creations will be an inspiration to many other young artists.

"Cultural sponsorship has a long tradition at Credit Suisse and is of prime importance as an integral part of the Bank's corporate philosophy. As the long term corporate sponsor of the Singapore Art Museum, Credit Suisse is delighted to help stage the biennial President's Young Talents exhibition, and present the *President's Young Talents Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award*. This award is a meaningful demonstration of our active investment and commitment to nurture the arts and young talent in Singapore."

The *President's Young Talents 2013* exhibition is currently on show at the Singapore Art Museum till 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Credit Suisse is the presenting sponsor for the *President's Young Talents 2013* exhibition as part of the Bank's long-term support of the Singapore Art Museum under its banner "Credit Suisse Innovation in Art" series since 2007.

Please visit [www.singaporeartmuseum.sg](http://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg) for more details on *President's Young Talents 2013*.

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## **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](http://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: The President's Young Talents 2013 artists



The six President's Young Talents 2013 artists (from left to right): Mr Boo Junfeng, Mr Liao Jiekai, Mr Zaki Razak, Ms Grace Tan, Mr Robert Zhao Renhui, Mr Ryf Zaini;



President Tony Tan together with the six President's Young Talent artists and curatorial committee. From left to right, front row: Mr Lito Camacho, Vice Chairman Asia Pacific and Singapore Country CEO, Credit Suisse; Mr Liao Jiekai; President Tony Tan; Mr Boo Junfeng; Ms. Jane Ittogi, Chair, Singapore Art Museum; Mrs Rosa Daniel, CEO, National Heritage Board & Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth; Mr. Tan Boon Hui, Director, Singapore Art Museum

From left to right, back row: Mr Ahmad Abu Bakar; Ms Shirley Soh, Mr Zaki Razak; Ms Grace Tan; Ms Tan Siuli, Ms Tay Swee Lin; Mr Ryf Zaini; Mr Robert Zhao Renhui; Mr Cheo Chai-Hiang

## Annex B: About the President's Young Talents Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award recipients

### Boo Junfeng

Trained in film schools in Singapore and Spain, Boo Junfeng is one of Singapore's notable young film-makers whose works often centre on themes of identity, memory and sexuality. His short films have won him acclaim internationally. Boo's debut feature film, *Sandcastle*, which premiered at Cannes Film Festival's International Critics' Week in 2010, garnered several awards from film festivals around the world, and was listed by The Wall Street Journal as one of Asia's most notable films that year.

### Artwork presented at the President's Young Talents 2013 exhibition:



### ***Mirror***

2013

Two-channel high-definition video

*Mirror* was inspired by the artist's visit to Bukit Brown Cemetery, where exhumations of over 3,000 graves are taking place for the construction of a new highway, cleaving the old burial ground into two. This bifurcation is also visited upon the soldier, a recurring figure in Boo's cinema: one serves the present-day Armed Forces; the other the Malayan Communist Party from the past.

Both soldier-figures are lost in what appears to be the same space. As the dual realities echo and diverge from each other, this short film collapses temporal realities and narratives, reiterating the point that our present and future are inextricably tied to our past, while underscoring the critical distance one might need to view history.

With support from The Puttnam School of Film, LASALLE College of the Arts.

## Liao Jiekai

Liao Jiekai graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is a Singapore-based film-maker and artist. He is a founding member of film collective 13 Little Pictures, and has directed several short films. In 2010, his debut feature film *Red Dragonflies* – an exploration of people, places and time – won him critical acclaim at various international film festivals. Liao has also collaborated with artists on projects such as *Don't Sit On Me* (with Cheo Chai-Hiang), and *The Flying Method of an Artist with a Fear of Flying* (with Nedko Solakov) at the *Singapore Biennale 2011*.

### Artwork presented at the President's Young Talents 2013 exhibition:



### *Brothers' Quarters*

2013

16mm film installation

Dimensions variable

Liao Jiekai's site-specific work for the *President's Young Talents* occupies a space formerly known as the Brothers' Quarters of the old St Joseph's Institution school. In 1990, the building underwent renovation to be reborn as the Singapore Art Museum. This section of the original building was deemed historically and culturally 'insignificant' to warrant preservation, and was demolished while other parts of the school were preserved. A new wing was erected in its place, its façade designed to mirror the main conservation building, and yet certain architectural features are discernibly different. These slippages and disjunctures inspired Liao's work, where he investigates the 'afterlife' of conservation buildings, how it is decided which buildings (and by extension, which memories) are deemed worthy of preserving, and whether there are any echoes or cadences of 'past lives' in the present.