

Media Release

For Immediate Release

President's Young Talents 2015 Announces Artist List

Presenting A New Generation of Singapore's Contemporary Artists

14 April 2015, Singapore, – The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is proud to announce the artist selection for the 2015 edition of the *President's Young Talents*, Singapore's premier exhibition of commissioned artworks. The *President's Young Talents* recognises and supports promising Singaporean artists below the age of 35, whose practices chart new dimensions in Singapore contemporary art today. The five artists are: **Ang Song Ming, Bani Haykal, Ezzam Rahman, Loo Zihan and Ong Kian Peng**. They were selected by an independent curatorial committee of local art professionals for the strength and promise of their practice, their potential for growth, and the contributions they will make to the larger contemporary art scenes both internationally and locally. For more information on the artists, please refer to Annex A.

The *President's Young Talents* is Singapore's earliest art award dedicated to contemporary art practices. Inaugurated in 2001 as an exhibition to recognise the contemporary art practices of emerging local artists, the *President's Young Talents* has supported emerging generations of Singapore artists such as Heman Chong and Lim Tzay Chuen, who have gone on to advance their practices on various fronts like the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Curatorial Committee and Selection Process

The *President's Young Talents* selection process is guided by a rigorous set of criteria and is overseen by a curatorial committee comprising four independent art professionals and one curator from the Singapore Art Museum. Participation is open to Singaporeans and Permanent Residents with at least three to four years of strong artistic practice and a substantive body of work, presented through curated exhibitions or projects. As part of the selection process, the curatorial committee looks out for artists who are able to demonstrate critical and discursive strengths in their work and practice and articulate contemporary issues and concepts at both the formal and conceptual levels. As each nominated artist is expected to present a newly commissioned work for the *President's Young Talents* exhibition, the committee also seeks out artists with the promise and ability to push themselves to new heights of artistic creation and development.

Members of the 2015 committee propose artists for consideration and decide on the final shortlist of five artists for the exhibition. The final selection is based on interviews with the

artists, artist presentations and studio visits. This year's curatorial committee is made up of artists, curators and art educators. They are: Mr Ian Woo, Mr Noor Effendy Ibrahim, Ms Twardzik Ching Chor Leng, Mr Vincent Leow and SAM curator Ms Michelle Ho. For more information about the curatorial committee please refer to Annex B.

The 2015 committee jointly stated, "We're excited to be working with the five selected artists. We had a diverse array of talented artists to choose from, representing genres of contemporary art such as sound art, video art and multi-disciplinary art. There were several top nominees to choose from, and it took a rigorous selection process and intensive discussions for us to shortlist down to the five artists. The committee is very encouraged by the number of artists and art practices who have the potential to add to the ever-growing contemporary landscape in Singapore."

Curatorial Mentorship

A very important and unique aspect of the *President's Young Talents* exhibition is curatorial mentorship. The artists will each be paired with a member of the curatorial committee, who will mentor and guide them in developing their proposal for the commissioning project. This allows for an exchange of ideas and critical discourse between the artists and curator-mentors. In-depth dialogue, critical thinking and exchanges with the curator-mentors will help the artists refine their art making process and the development of their work.

"The *President's Young Talents* is an important hallmark exhibition on SAM's calendar, as it gives space to young artists who have demonstrated commitment to their practice and are active in Singapore's contemporary art scene. A significant role for us, as a contemporary art museum, is to support these artists in their exploration of new ideas, presentation of ambitious works, and connection with the larger public. We are pleased to be able to work with and present the next generation of artists who will chart new paths for contemporary art practices in Singapore, and offer fresh perspectives on both art and life," says Dr Susie Lingham, Director, Singapore Art Museum.

The *President's Young Talents* exhibition will be on from 20 August 2015 to 31 January 2016. The exhibition will be accompanied by programmes for the public, which will include artist talks and curator tours. More details about *President's Young Talents* online at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg.

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About the Singapore Art Museum

The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) focuses on contemporary art practice in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia within the global context. It advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. 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. These encompass cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges, research and publications, as well as outreach and education. SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011 and 2013.

SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013 and has moved from the National Heritage Board to the Visual Arts Cluster (VAC) under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY). The other institutions under the VAC are the National Gallery, Singapore and STPI.

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Annex A: President's Young Talents – Artists Biographies

Ang Song Ming

Song-Ming Ang focuses on music as a subject in his art practice. His work is rooted in the everyday, and made from the overlapping perspectives of an artist, fan, and amateur. For his work *Backwards Bach* (2013), Ang learnt and performed a Bach prelude backwards as an untrained harpsichordist. In *Parts and Labour* (2012), he apprenticed at a piano workshop over four months to restore a disused piano.

Ang holds an MA in Aural & Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College (London). He has presented works with Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Berlin), Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Witte de With (Rotterdam), and Spring Workshop (Hong Kong). In 2011, he received the Young Artist Award from the National Arts Council of Singapore.

Bani Haykal

Bani Haykal experiments with text + music.

His work stretches across various disciplines and mediums including installation, poetry and theatre, investigating cultural and socio-political climates coupled with perceptual and behavioural affects. As a soloist, he works primarily with acoustic instruments, both traditional and/or hacked, and his studies revolve around narratives, structured improvisation and spoken word. He is a member of both OFFCUFF and b-quartet.

Haykal has exhibited, performed and toured internationally, participating in festivals including Media/Art Kitchen (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Japan), Liquid Architecture, da:ns Festival and The M1 Fringe Festival (Singapore) among others.

Ezzam Rahman

Ezzam Rahman is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Singapore. Ezzam is most comfortable with installation art and performance art. His works vary from the choice of medium, concepts and strategies of presentation. He favours narratives due to the ability to convey his ideas, to inform, as well as to tease the audience. Ezzam also uses unconventional materials, such as found objects to further his frequent research on impermanence and value verses worth.

One of his experimental short films is part of a traveling showcase titled Human Frames, by French video art distributor *Lowave*. His most recent series of miniature artist's skin sculptures were commissioned by the Singapore Art Museum and showcased in an exhibition entitled *Unearthed* in 2014. Ezzam also presented an installation art cum performance artwork at *SingaPlura*. Ezzam is a member of The Artists Village, The Singapore Sculpture Society, Angkatan Pelukis Aneka Daya.

Loo Zihan

Loo Zihan is a performance and moving-image artist based in Singapore. His work strives to reconcile the tension between the 'flesh' of the performing body and the 'bone' of the archive. He emphasises the labour and malleability of memory through various representational strategies that includes performance re-enactments, essay films and data visualisation.

His performance work has been presented at various events such as the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival in 2012 and 2015. His moving-image work has been screened at various international film festivals like AFI Fest (Los Angeles) and Pusan International Film Festival

(South Korea). He has also attended artist residencies in countries such as Spain and France.

Ong Kian Peng

Ong Kian Peng is a media artist who works across multiple disciplines, ranging from media installations to theatre productions, using a media arts perspective as a point of entry. He is inspired by natural phenomena, the human sensorium and information consumption. These thematic areas converge into his body of works that are situated at the intersection of art, science and technology.

His works have been presented in festivals such as the Singapore M1 Fringe Festival, Asian Students and Young Artists Festival, Sao Paulo FILE Festival, Japan Media Arts Festival and IFVA Hong Kong Arts Festival. He has also exhibited locally and internationally in shows such as Sound: Latitude and Longitude @ ICA Singapore (2014), Solo Show at Arebyte Gallery London (2014), Substation Sound Art Open Call (2011). His relatively short foray into the performing arts includes "Fluid" and Arts Fissions "Make It New".

Annex B: President's Young Talents – Curatorial Committee Biographies

Ian Woo

Ian Woo is a painter working in the language of abstraction. Influenced by forms of modernism, perceptual abstraction and the sound structures of music improvisation, his work is characterised by a sense of gravitational and representational change. He often uses the term 'picture making' when describing his position and approach, maintaining the discipline and evolvement of painting as a vehicle for pictorial reflexivity.

In 1999, Woo was the recipient of the UOB Painting of the Year award in the Abstract category. He was also the Juror's Choice for two consecutive years in South East Asia's Philip Morris Award in 1999 and 2000. His works are in the collection of major institutions such as ABN AMRO, Singapore Art Museum, the Istana Singapore, National Gallery Singapore, UBS, and the Mint Museum of Craft & Design, USA. He is currently the Programme Leader of the MA Fine Arts programme at the Faculty of Fine Arts, LASALLE College of the Arts.

Michelle Ho

Michelle Ho has curated numerous exhibitions, including *The Collectors Show: Weight of History* (2013), *Amanda Heng: Speak to Me, Walk with Me* (2011) and *The Artists Village: 20 Years On* (2008). A SAM curator who is in charge of the museum's Southeast Asian contemporary art collection, she curated the 2013 exhibition *Not Against Interpretation: Untitled*, a selection of untitled artworks in the museum collection exploring the relationship between art, language, meaning-making and the critical role of audience interpretation.

Her research interests include Thai contemporary art, and she has contributed to noted Thai contemporary art exhibitions such as *Thai Transience* (2012) and *Natee Utarit: After Painting* (2010). Also a Singapore Biennale 2013 co-curator, Ho holds a Masters in Curatorship and a BA in Studies in Religion from the University of Sydney, Australia.

Noor Effendy Ibrahim

Noor Effendy Ibrahim has served as a member of the National Arts Council (NAC) Board from 2004 to 2006 and on several other consultative panels and committees on arts and culture in Singapore. He was a recipient of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Singapore Foundation Culture Award 2007 and the NAC Cultural Fellowship 2014. Effendy was Artistic Director of The Substation from 2010-2015 and Teater Ekamatra from 2001-2006.

An interdisciplinary artist, Effendy has worked with arts groups such as Teater Kami, Cake Theatrical Productions and Maya Dance Theatre. He began his artistic journey and career in 1991 as a playwright and theatre director. Since then, he has written and directed over 30 theatre productions and performed in over 20 theatre and dance performances locally and internationally. He also does set and costume design for the theatre. As an arts educator Effendy has taught and conducted theatre and performance courses and workshops from pre-school to tertiary.

Twardzik Ching Chor Leng

Twardzik Ching Chor Leng has been practising Installation art and Land art for more than 15 years. She has exhibited extensively in group and solo exhibitions internationally and locally. Founder of the arts group Landing Space that promotes Land Art in Singapore, she is also an independent curator as well as a member of WITA (Women in the Arts), Singapore. She has received meritorious awards and scholarships including the Hanna Kristmanson Ceramic Scholarship, the Ceramics Canada Award, and the Crown Life Entrance Award, she was also nominated for the President's Young Talent Award 2009.

She has lectured in Lasalle College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. She was the Head of Fine Arts at the NUS High School of Math & Science from 2004-2009. Currently, she is a lecturer at NIE, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. As an artist-educator, Chor Leng believes in developing local talent and resources in the arts.

Vincent Leow

Vincent Leow is an artist and an art educator whose practice spans a wide range of genres from sculpture, installation, performance art to painting and mixed-media. He has exhibited internationally and regionally; his works has been collected and commissioned by various public institutions such as museums, corporate companies and private collections both locally and internationally.

Leow was awarded the Culture Award (2002) by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry for his contribution to the arts in 2002. Leow represented Singapore in the 52nd Venice Biennale of contemporary art (2007), "9th Indian Triennial of contemporary art", New Dehli, India (1997), "1st Asia Pacific Triennial of contemporary art", Brisbane, Australia (1993). Currently, Leow teach at SOTA and has taught art at LASALLE, College of the Arts and Sharjah University, College of Fine Arts and Design in the United Arab Emirates.