

**Media Release**

**SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM APPOINTS NEW MUSEUM DIRECTOR**

Eugene Tan to become Director of SAM in addition to his role at National Gallery Singapore



1 The Singapore Art Museum is pleased to announce Dr Eugene Tan as the Director of SAM with effect from 1 April 2019.

2 Eugene is currently the Director of National Gallery Singapore, a role which he will continue while being Director of SAM. Under his leadership at the Gallery, he led an ambitious exhibitions programme. He spearheaded successful partnerships with international museums such as Tate, Centre Pompidou, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT), to organise major exhibitions, including *Latiff Mohidin: Pago Pago (1960-1969)* which toured to Centre Pompidou, Paris, and Ilham Gallery, Kuala Lumpur as well as *Awakenings: Art in Society in Asia, 1960s–1990s* which showed at MMCA and MOMAT.

3 An accomplished curator, Eugene curated important exhibitions that highlighted the perspective of Southeast Asia in global art history such as *Reframing Modernism: Painting from Southeast Asia, Europe and Beyond* and *Minimalism: Space. Light. Object*. His exhibitions programme also raised awareness of artistic forerunners and movements to our publics like *YAYOI KUSAMA: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow* and *Century of Light*, which placed Southeast Asian masters Raden Saleh and Juan Luna alongside Impressionist masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay. Eugene is on the Board of CIMAM (International Committee of Museums and Collections of Modern Art), Museum of

Contemporary Art in Antwerp (MuHKA) and Mori Art Museum's International Advisory Committee.

4 His career in the visual arts began in the contemporary. Before joining the Gallery, Eugene oversaw the development of the Gillman Barracks Art District with the Singapore Economic Development Board. He was previously Director for Contemporary Art at Sotheby's Institute of Art – Singapore, and Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore. He was also co-curator of the inaugural Singapore Biennale in 2006, and curator for the Singapore Pavilion at the 2005 Venice Biennale. In 2007, he co-authored the publication "Contemporary Art in Singapore".

5 Mr Edmund Cheng, Chair of the SAM Board said, "We are delighted to have Eugene Tan come on board as the Director of SAM. We are at an important juncture for our museum's development as we undergo a major revamp of our premises. We have great confidence in his ability to make a positive impact and advance SAM's role as a leading museum of contemporary art through a shared vision and strong collaboration with our curators, programmers, and SAM team."

6 "I have worked with Eugene on past occasion, when he curated the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2005, and when we were both at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore. I look forward to working together with him at SAM to bring about new ideas and initiatives that will position the museum for the future." said Dr June Yap, Director of Curatorial, Programmes and Publications at SAM.

7 Eugene said, "SAM has an important and distinct role to play as the beacon of creativity and inspiration for our publics in Singapore and Southeast Asia, by leveraging on the power of contemporary art and demonstrating the possibilities that art and creativity holds for our societies today. I look forward to contributing to this exciting future for SAM to become a globally leading contemporary art museum for the 21st Century, to play a role in defining global discourses on the nature of art and its role in our societies, and to using my roles as Director of SAM and National Gallery Singapore to engage our publics and the arts community in Singapore in a more holistic way."

8 SAM's buildings are now closed for redevelopment works. This major undertaking includes the preservation of the buildings' heritage architecture, blending the old and the new. When SAM re-opens, visitors can look forward to an iconic space to experience and engage with art. SAM's exhibitions and events will continue at partner venues for the duration of the redevelopment.

More information can be found below. Images are available for download at: <http://bit.ly/SAMImages>. Image credits are as per file name.

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**About the Singapore Art Museum**

Singapore Art Museum is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art- thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice.

Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges.

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

SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013 and 2016. SAM will continue to organise the next two editions in 2019 and 2022. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. To find out more, visit [www.singaporeartmuseum.sg](http://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg)

## About Dr Eugene Tan



Eugene Tan has been Director of National Gallery Singapore since May 2013. Prior to this, he served as Programme Director (Special Projects) at the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) and oversaw the development of the Gillman Barracks art district. He has also held various positions including Director of Exhibitions for Osage Gallery, Director of Contemporary Art at the Sotheby's Institute of Art – Singapore, as well as Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore. He received his PhD in Art History from the University of Manchester.

Tan has curated various exhibitions including the Singapore Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale (2005) and the inaugural Singapore Biennale (2006). Selected exhibitions he has curated at the National Gallery Singapore include: *Awakenings: Art in Society in Asia, 1960s to 1990s* (2019); *Minimalism: Space, Light and Object* (2018); *Reframing Modernism: Painting from Southeast Asia, Europe and Beyond* (2016); *Between Dreams and Declarations: Art of Southeast Asia since the 19th Century* and *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art from Singapore since the 19th Century* (2015). Other selected exhibitions include: *Of Human Scale and Beyond: Experience and Transcendence* (2012) at the Hong Kong Art Centre; *The Burden of Representation: Abstraction in Asia Today* (2010) at Osage Gallery, Hong Kong, as well as solo exhibitions by Danh Vo (2016), Lee Mingwei (2010), Jompot (2010), Charwei Tsai (2009), Nipan Oranniwesna (2009) and Jane Lee (2009).

Co-author of the publication *Contemporary Art in Singapore* (2007), Tan has contributed writings to exhibition catalogues and publications by NUS Press, Hatje Cantz and Phaidon, as well as various art journals and periodicals. He also serves as a board member of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM), the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (MuHKA) and is a member of the Mori Art Museum's International Advisory Committee.