

MEDIA RELEASE

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES THE SAM MINI MOBILE MUSEUM

The travelling art exhibition will take place throughout SAM's building redevelopment period



Rodel Tapaya's commission for the SAM Mini Mobile Museum, responds to a suite of four dioramas created by Tapaya in 2009, that are currently in SAM's National Collection. Image from left to right: Pedro and the Witch, The Hunter of Pinamaloy, Origin of Grain and The Wise Monkey and the Foolish Giant. Image courtesy of the artist.

Singapore, 14 March 2019 – The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) takes contemporary art out of the galleries and into the libraries with the SAM Mini Mobile Museum. A travelling art exhibition held in partnership with the National Library Board, the SAM Mini Mobile Museum brings contemporary art out to the Regional Libraries of Tampines, Woodlands and Jurong, as the museum buildings undergo renovations. Through this initiative, SAM aims to introduce the multifaceted nature of contemporary art through a selection of SAM's National Collection artworks, adapted for non-museum spaces and created by Southeast Asian artists.

The first installment of the SAM Mini Mobile Museum will take place at the Tampines Regional Library on 4 April. Opening with *May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears)*, an artwork by award-winning Filipino artist Rodel Tapaya, the commissioned artwork on display is an adaptation of the suite of dioramas created by Tapaya in 2009 that are currently part of the National Collection. Tapaya's works have long drawn from the rich mythology of the Philippines, harnessing the fables, folklore and legends of the many indigenous groups that once existed across the archipelago. The commissioned artwork for the SAM Mini Mobile Museum brings these tales of yore into the current-day by weaving in contemporary issues such as environmental damage, urban poverty, pollution and land scarcity.

May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears) comprises 62 modular hexagonal lightboxes grouped around themes of Land, Water, Fire, Plants, Animals, Human and Spirit World. Each lightbox depicts an individual story or scene. The work responds to a suite of four diorama artworks created by Tapaya in 2009, that is part of the National Collection: *Pedro and the Witch*, *The Hunter of Pinamaloy*, *Origin of Grain* and *The Wise Monkey and the Foolish Giant*.

“The SAM Mini Mobile Museum exhibition is a great opportunity for SAM to connect with communities in Tampines, Jurong and Woodlands, with commissioned artworks specially developed for the library environment, and that encourage close study and experience. We expect that the fables and narratives that have inspired Rodel Tapaya’s artwork *May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears)* will resonate with viewers at Tampines Regional Library, allowing them to draw connections on cultures and storytelling between Singapore and the region.” says June Yap, Director of Curatorial, Programmes and Publications, Singapore Art Museum.

“It is wonderful to partner SAM to host the specially curated art exhibition. It is a tie up which will give patrons a varied learning experience when they visit our libraries. They can learn more about Southeast Asian contemporary art not only through the exhibition, but also the programmes and our collection. We believe that this will inspire more people to read and learn.” says Valerie Cheng, Director, Content & Services, Public Library Services, National Library Board.

Every exhibition will be accompanied by self-guided and interactive activities for families, and a special selection of library books that relate to the artwork themes will be on display. At the Tampines Regional Library, Rodel Tapaya will be leading on-site workshops based on his work for various groups.

The SAM Mini Mobile Museum will take place throughout the period of SAM’s building redevelopment. More information can be found in the Annexes below. Images are available for download at: <http://bit.ly/SAMMiniMobileMuseum>. 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

Annex A: Artist Biography

Annex B: Artwork Information

Annex C: Exhibition Venue and Dates

Annex D: Public Programmes and Workshops

Annex A: Artist Biography

At the heart of Rodel Tapaya's work is his ongoing amalgamation of folk narrative and contemporary reality within the framework of memory and history. Utilising a range of media – from large acrylic on canvasses to an exploration of under-glass painting, traditional crafts, diorama, and drawing – Tapaya filters his observations of the world through folktales and pre-colonial historical research, creating whimsical montages of his characters.

Each work has its origin in Tapaya's reflections on a particular time or place that possesses an enduring resonance, from its correspondence with the formalistic and psychological implication of the grid in his earlier works to protracted ventures which excavate and interpret myth and folk aesthetics. Inherent in the work is a tension between objective investigations of art and the subjectivity of perception and experience, providing his work with an enigma that comes from the impossibility to paint a story without revealing inflections made by the painter's hand.

Rodel Tapaya (b. 1980, Montalban, the Philippines) is a widely recognised artist in Southeast Asia today. His breakthrough came when he was awarded the Top Prize in the *Nokia Art Awards*, which allowed him to pursue intensive drawing and painting courses at Parsons School of Design in New York and the University of Helsinki in Finland. Tapaya also won the Grand Prize of the *Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize* in 2011. He has exhibited internationally, including a solo presentation at the National Gallery of Australia (2017), at the *20th Biennale of Sydney* (2016) and *10th Gwangju Biennale* (2014). He completed his studies at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts. He lives and works in Bulacan, the Philippines.

Annex B: Artwork information

<Artwork image available for download here: <http://bit.ly/SAMMiniMobileMuseum>>

Rodel Tapaya (Philippines)

May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears), 2018

Lightboxes comprising of wood, photographs, plexiglass, LED lights

40 x 46 x 15 cm (approx.) each; installation dimensions variable

Collection of the Artist

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

Rodel Tapaya's works have long drawn from the rich mythology of the Philippines, harnessing the fables, folklore and legends of the many indigenous groups that once existed across the archipelago. These stories were often origin tales, relating how fire, water or animals came into being, or how a local landmark got its name. Abundant with colourful characters such as spirits and monsters, such tales of bravery, deception and wit stirred the imagination and entertained. At the same time, they were also morality tales – imparting values and ethics, and conveying how one should behave in society or within the wider environment.

Transmitted orally – often told by an elder to a child – many of these stories were lost or forgotten during the period of western colonial rule, until more recent attempts to record them in printed word or in image. While the narratives depicted by Tapaya originate in the Philippines, such stories find familiar echoes in cultures across Southeast Asia as well as the rest of the world.

May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears) is a compilation of Tapaya's previous paintings on the themes of folk narratives. These stories can be related individually but can be interconnected to each other as well, similar to a hexagonal structure, puzzle or large honeycomb. For Tapaya, the hexagon is also a shape that, aside from the square or triangle, allows individual units to join up with one other without a gap; it is a shape that is both simple and complex.

Going beyond a visual depiction of these tales of yore, Tapaya brings them into the current day, weaving in contemporary issues such as environmental damage, urban poverty, pollution and land scarcity. No longer scenes of a distant history, these stories take on a urgency and highlight the grim issues of life today. In *May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears)*, past and present co-exist even as fiction and reality collide. In Tapaya's words, "Stories of myths and folktales are our ancestors' way of understanding the world. The work hopes to illuminate these stories of the past and find inspiration and understanding of the world in the present times."

Rodel Tapaya's commission for the SAM Mini Mobile Museum, *May tainga ang lupa (The Land has Ears)*, comprises of 20–30 modular hexagonal lightboxes, each measuring about 40cm wide. There may also be 1–2 larger lightboxes as well. Each lightbox will depict an individual story or scene, and they can be joined up together to form a larger structure. The work responds to a suite of four dioramas created by Tapaya in 2009, that are currently in the National Collection: *Pedro and the Witch*, *The Hunter of Pinamaloy*, *Origin of Grain* and *The Wise Monkey and the Foolish Giant*.

Annex C: Exhibition Venues and Dates

Tampines Regional Library: 3 April – 12 May 2019

Woodlands Regional Library: 15 May – 23 June 2019

Jurong Regional Library: 26 June – 4 August 2019

Addresses:

Tampines Regional Library 1 Tampines Walk, #02-01 Our Tampines Hub Singapore 528523	Woodlands Regional Library 900 South Woodlands Drive, #01-03 Woodlands Civic Centre Singapore 730900	Jurong Regional Library 21 Jurong East Central 1 Singapore 609732
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Opening hours: Mondays to Sunday: 10am to 9pm. Closed on Public Holidays.

Free admission for all.

Annex D: Public Programmes and Workshops

Young Children & Families, Adults, Seniors

A Date with SAM

Saturdays, 6 April* (Tampines), 18 May (Woodlands), 29 June (Jurong)
1:00pm – 2:30pm
Free with prior registration

Join *A Date with SAM* to find out more about the SAM Mini Mobile Museum. Each session will feature a #SAMInsider. Find out more and sign up at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg.

Young Children & Families

Toddler Art Workshops (18 months – 4 years old)

Sunday, 21 April* (Tampines)
Saturdays, 8 June, 22 June (Woodlands), 13 July (Jurong)
1:00pm – 2:30pm
\$25/adult-child pair

Kids Art Workshops (4 – 7 years old)

Saturdays, 20 April* (Tampines), 1 June, 15 June (Woodlands)
2:00pm – 3:30pm
\$25/child

These art workshops are developed by Jelly Bean Attic to help children grow and learn through sensory play. Each workshop includes sharing of a story inspired by the artwork, followed by an artmaking activity. The above programmes will commence with a minimum of 5 pax. Tickets can be purchased through APACTix.

Adults

Artmaking Workshop

Weekdays (Dates TBC)
3:00pm – 5:00pm
\$30/pax

Trained facilitators from the Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) Creative MINDSET Hub will deliver the art-making session to share how the art-making process can be used to promote expression, cope with stress, engage the senses as well as improve awareness of self and others. Find out more and sign up at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg.

Seniors

Kopi, Teh, and Contemporary Art

Fridays, 10 May* (Tampines), 31 May (Woodlands)
3:30pm – 4:30pm
Free (Limited to first 20 walk ins)

Discover contemporary art through these multilingual tours (Hokkien, Chinese, Malay and Tamil). Specially catered for seniors, there will be kopi and teh at the end of the tour.

**Dates might be subjected to change. Find out more at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg.*