



Michael Lee

Sparrow (after National Theatre, 1963-86, on Clemenceau Avenue) from the series “City Planned: Tracing Monuments”

2005-2006

White bristol board

34.5 x 100 x 90 cm

Singapore Art Museum collection

Exhibition Guide: page 24 – 25

Pre-SAM

TASK: Understand the significance of a building as a social memory and cultural heritage to Singaporeans, and the importance of balancing the advancement of city planning with heritage conservation.

SUBJECT(S): Art, History, English

Start the lesson by giving the students the following background information:

The National Theatre held many performances, concerts and conferences, and had been a popular wedding shoot location before it was demolished. It closed on 16 January 1984 as it was deemed not to be structurally safe. The decision was made to demolish the building to make way for a flyover along Clemenceau Avenue that was to become part of the Central Expressway.

Get the students to imagine that they are part of the Singapore Heritage Society and have been tasked to advocate the conservation of the National Theatre as a protected heritage site. They are to write a petition to the government OR a letter to the newspaper. Some ideas to get them started:

- Interview people to collect their memories of the National Theatre
- Brainstorm on what the theatre can be used for
- Brainstorm on why the theatre should be conserved. Some factors include social and historical significance and architectural appreciation

In-SAM

TASK: Develop and communicate ideas effectively.

SUBJECT(S): Art, Literature, English

Bring an old image of the National Theatre to the exhibition. Ask the students to compare the artwork and the photograph. Get them to point out the similarities and differences.

Get the students to imagine that they are the spokespeople of a conservation committee whose petition to conserve the National Theatre was successful. Task them to write a speech to announce the conservation efforts and the future plans for the site that would be delivered in a press conference.

Have selected students deliver their speech next to the artwork.

Post-SAM

TASK: Identify and define ideas in visual expressions.

SUBJECT(S): Art, Literature

The architectural model presented is white, plain and simplified. Get the students to consolidate their ideas and re-design (through alteration and addition) the building to give it a more lively and vibrant appearance. Some ideas to start the students off:

- Retain the iconic identification of the building (façade) and come up with a new extension behind the façade.
- Design murals to go onto the building.
- Retain the original structure but change the colours.

Students can sketch out their designs OR build an architectural model.

SOVA supplement

TASK: Draw links between the Study Of Visual Arts (SOVA) and contemporary artwork in the museum.

ARTWORK(S): Thomas Heatherwick, *Seed Cathedral*, UK Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010

The National Theatre's façade design was based on the crescent and 5 stars of Singapore's National Flag. Get students to find out the design inspiration behind the many protrusions of the Seed Cathedral and its link to United Kingdom's identity.

Lee's artwork is his memory of the National Theatre. Get students to sketch a black and white line drawing of **Heatherwick's** *Seed Cathedral*, based on their memory. Have them share their drawings to compare the similarities and differences.

Task students to design the Singapore Pavilion for the 2020 World Expo at Dubai, UAE. Get them to research on the themes and come up with a proposal for the pavilion design. It can be in the form of a sketch, a written report or a presentation.

Further Readings:

Michael Lee's website

<http://michaelllee.sg/>

Interview of Michael Lee by Indesignlive

Available [here](#).

Information on National Theatre

Available [here](#).

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