

HO TZU NYEN Time & the Tiger

24 NOV 2023 – 3 MAR 2024
TANJONG PAGAR DISTRI PARK

LEARNING RESOURCE

This educational resource features selected artworks
and guiding questions suitable for aged 13 and up.

singaporeartmuseum.sg    singaporeartmuseum

Image: *One or Several Tigers* (2017); Collection of Singapore Art Museum. Image courtesy of the artist.



Artist Ho Tzu Nyen. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

HO TZU NYEN

何子彦

- Ho Tzu Nyen (b. 1976) is a visual artist and filmmaker who lives and works in Singapore.
- His works often explore **myths and motifs**, question **how history is formed**, and **whose stories are told**.
- He focuses on **communication** and **political movements between Asia and the West**, with an emphasis on the **complexities of Southeast Asia**.
- **Aggregation** (the process of collecting information from multiple sources) plays an important role in Ho's approach to both his works and the research behind them.

Having represented Singapore at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), Ho is one of Singapore's most recognised contemporary artists. His works have been collected internationally by institutions including the Guggenheim Museum, Tate Modern, Gwangju Biennale Foundation and SAM.

EXPLORING THE EXHIBITION

About the exhibition

Ho Tzu Nyen: Time & the Tiger is a mid-career survey exhibition of the artist's practice, which features paintings, films, theatrical performances and video installations created in the past two decades. Ho's works often draw from historical events, documentary footage, art history, music videos and myth to investigate the construction of history, the narrative of myths and the plurality of identities.

Ho Tzu Nyen: Time & the Tiger is co-organised between Singapore Art Museum and Art Sonje Center.



Video Installation

Artists have been creating video installations since the 1960s. Video art is a core component of Ho's artistic practice. When you watch his videos, think about the sound, music and interactive aspects of the experience.

Pre-visit

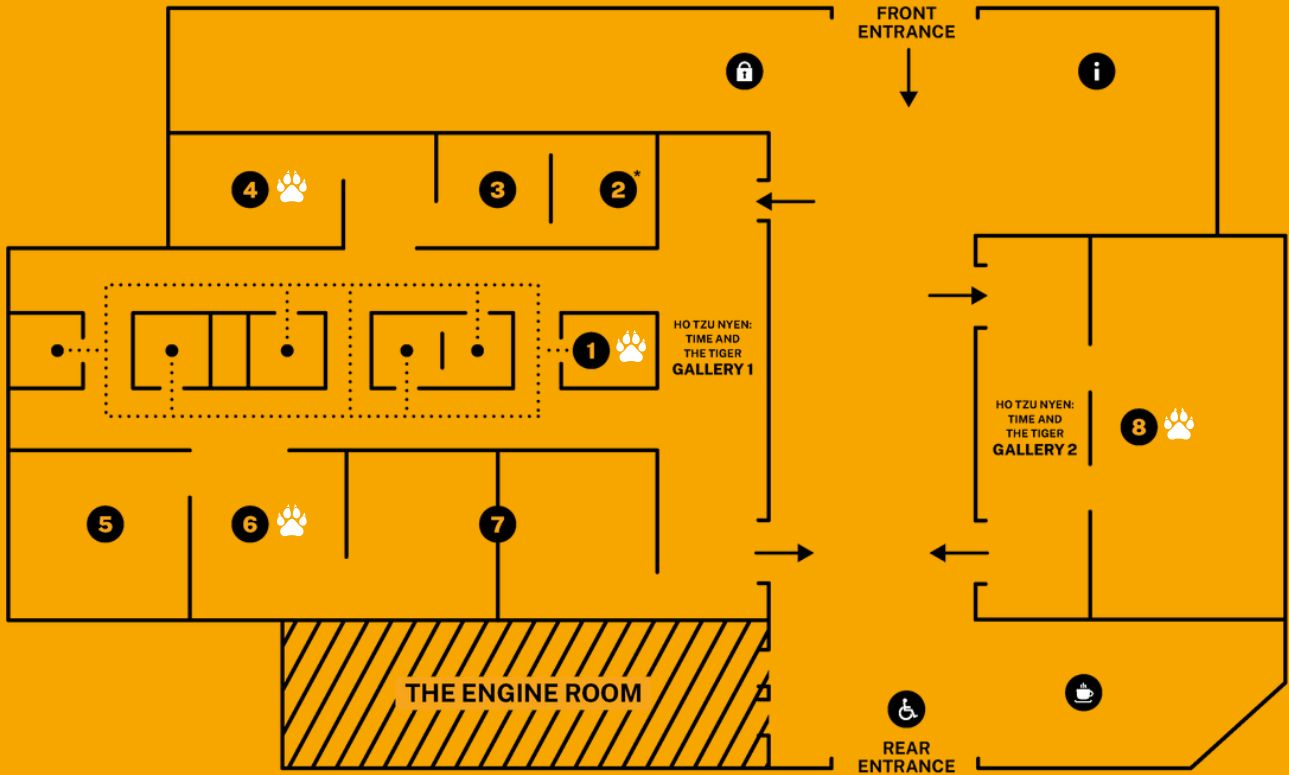
- What do you think video art/installation is? Name some artists who have created video art/installations.
- Ho uses many motifs (recurring images, themes or patterns) in his works. What are some of these motifs?

Post-visit

- How has your impression towards video installation changed after visiting the exhibition?
- Share about your favourite artwork from the exhibition. List the elements of the artwork that shaped your experience, e.g. its special effects.



RECOMMENDED FOR LEARNING TRAIL



1 *Hotel Aporia* 🐾
2019

2 ^{*} *CDOSEA*
2017

CDOSEA:
Square Stack (Faces)
2019

CDOSEA:
Square Stack (Landscapes)
2019

3 *F for Fold*
2021

4 *The Cloud of Unknowing* 🐾
2011

5 *T for Time*
2023

6 *T for Time: Timepieces* 🐾
2023

7 *The Name*
2015

The Nameless
2015/2017

8 *One or Several Tigers* 🐾
2017

**contains some mature themes*

This exhibition features loud sounds, flashing lights, smoke machines and mature themes.

Due to dim lighting, please be reminded to walk carefully through the exhibition. We encourage schools to stick to the recommended artworks in the Learning Trail.



Ho Tzu Nyen. *Hotel Aporia*. 2019. Image courtesy of SAM.

Hotel Aporia

2019

Video, automated fan, transducers, show control system

Video: six-channel projections, 4:3, colour and 24-channel sound, 84 min 1 sec

The Waves: 12 min; *The Wind*: 24 min; *The Children*: 24 min; *The Void*: 24 min 1 sec

Collection of Singapore Art Museum



Did You Know?

- This video installation features four main sections, each with video projections fitted to spaces that mimic the interiors of a Japanese-style inn, or *ryokan*.
- It draws on stories from various historical figures from World War II, including pilots, filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, animator Ryuichi Yokoyama and philosophers from the Kyoto School.
- The books on display – combined with correspondence between Ho and his previous Japanese collaborators – form the basis of the videos in the rooms, which feature footage taken from Yasujiro Ozu and Ryuichi Yokoyama’s films produced from the 1940s to 1950s.
- The faces of the actors are removed using a process called rotoscoping, which leaves behind a blank space on which viewers may imagine their own faces or that of other characters.
- In *Hotel Aporia*, videos are shown concurrently running on several screens, offering different perspectives. By layering these stories together, the artist juxtaposes films by Ozu and Yokoyama, inviting viewers to compare them and develop a deeper and more holistic understanding of the history that they represent.



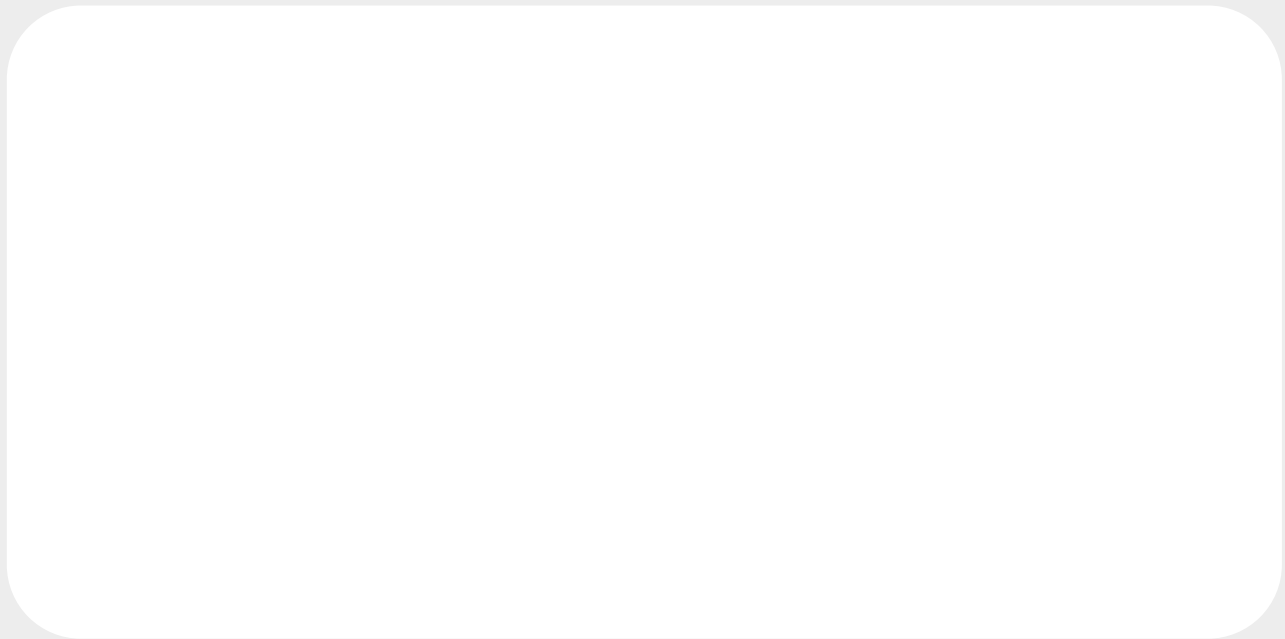
Think!

- What are the ways that we learn about history?
- How do you think different people might view a historical event?
- Do you think it is important to read up on various sources when you are researching historical events? Why?



Activity!

Think of a place with historical significance. Conduct some research on this place and use the space below to draw a fact that you have learnt.



Ho Tzu Nyen. *Hotel Aporia*. 2019. Image courtesy of SAM.



Ho Tzu Nyen. Still from *The Cloud of Unknowing*. 2011. Image courtesy of SAM.

The Cloud of Unknowing

2011

Video, smoke machine, lights, show control system

Video: single-channel HD projection, 16:9, colour and 13-channel sound, 28 min

Collection of Singapore Art Museum



Did You Know?

- In 2011, Ho represented Singapore at the Venice Biennale with this installation, *The Cloud of Unknowing*.
- The video shows a block of Housing & Development Board (HDB) apartments on the eve of their demolition. The shifting representation of clouds in the video connects a diverse group of characters that live solitary lives in these apartments.
- In this artwork, Ho uses the motif of the cloud to explore the multifaceted history of art. He refers to clouds from a range of sources, including the works of Correggio from the Italian Renaissance, who saw clouds as a path to divine closeness; Surrealist painter René Magritte, known for his depictions of cloud-laden skies; and Chinese ink painter Mi Fu, whose portrayal of cloud-wrapped mountains hints at our fleeting existence within the vast cosmos.
- With its ever-changing form, the cloud serves as a metaphor that reminds us that reality is not always as it seems.



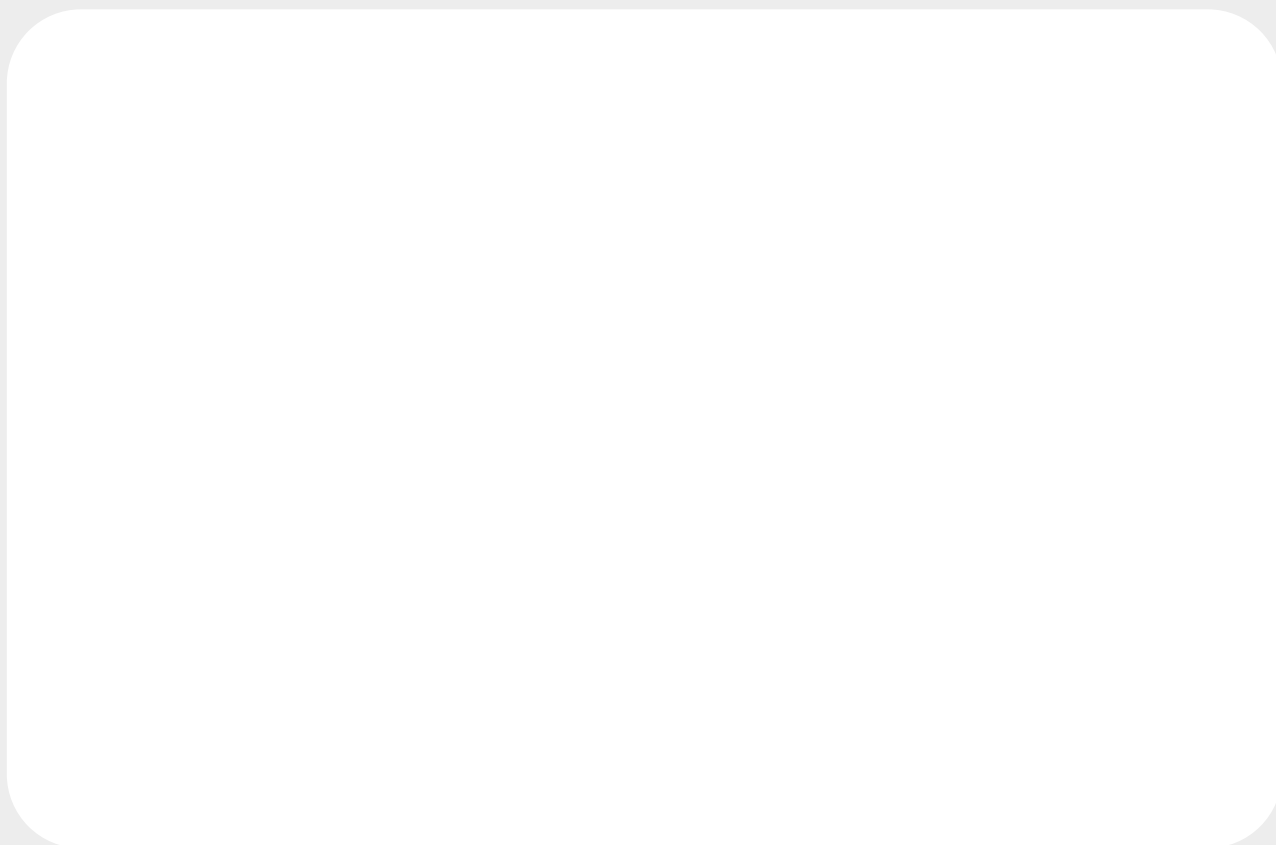
Think!

- How did the artist depict clouds in the video?
- If you could recreate this artwork, what approach would you take? How would you represent a cloud? Compare your answer with a friend.
- This video and some of Ho's other artworks feature blank screens from time to time. Why do you think the artist chose to include these moments of blankness?



Activity!

The cloud is an important motif in *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Choose another motif that you would use to create an artwork and draw three different ideas that this motif may represent.



Ho Tzu Nyen. *The Cloud of Unknowing*. 2011. Image courtesy of SAM.



Ho Tzu Nyen. *T for Time: Timepieces*. 2023. Image courtesy of SAM.

T for Time: Timepieces

2023–ongoing

39 flatscreens (various dimensions), apps and videos, various durations (1 sec to infinite)

Co-commissioned by Singapore Art Museum and Art Sonje Centre with M+ Hong Kong, in collaboration with Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo and Sharjah Art Foundation



Did You Know?

- *T for Time: Timepieces* is a collection of Ho's notes and speculations on time. This work encompasses a variety of themes, from symbols and concepts of time to timekeeping traditions in Asia and the West.
- Each of the timepieces functions as an emblem of time. These range from short video loops of 15 seconds to apps that operate in cycles ranging from 24 hours to 165.8 earth years (the equivalent of a year on Neptune).
- Collectively, *T for Time* and *T for Time: Timepieces* represent Ho's model for a prospective machine that continuously generates new stories, speculations and hallucinations of time – in real time.



Think!

- How do people keep track of time? Describe one method of timekeeping that interests you the most and explain why.
- Identify your favourite timepiece in Ho's work and explain your choice.



Activity!

Design your own timekeeping device!





Ho Tzu Nyen. Still from *One or Several Tigers*. 2017. Image courtesy of SAM.

One or Several Tigers

2017

Video, smoke machine, automated screen, show control system, 14 *wayang kulit* puppets in aluminium frames
Video: two-channel HD video projections, 16:9 format, colour and 10-channel sound, 33 min 33 sec
Collection of Singapore Art Museum



Did You Know?

- Unfolding across two screens that face each other, *One or Several Tigers* is a video installation featuring a surreal duet between a Malayan tiger and George Drumgoole Coleman, the Irish architect and road surveyor who helped to shape modern Singapore.
- Throughout the duet, it becomes increasingly unclear who is singing as the two identities begin to merge. This transformation represents the possibility of becoming something else, apart from ourselves.
- Tigers and weretigers represent Southeast Asian's cosmologies and the shapeshifters who populate Ho's body of work.
- Comprising of videos, moving screens and *wayang kulit*, or Javanese shadow puppets, Ho's *One or Several Tigers* combines traditional and technological art forms to convey a tale that is situated in the past and yet still relevant to people of the present.



Think!

- What do you think the tiger represents? (It may have more than one meaning!)
- Why do you think the artist chose to use two screens instead of one? How did it shape your experience of the artwork?

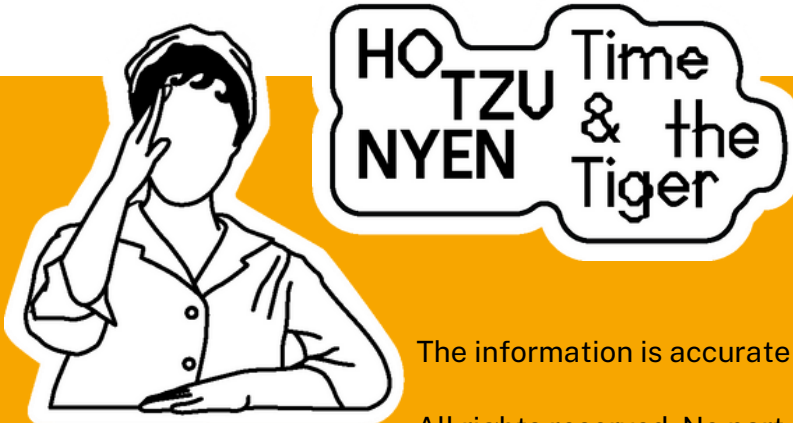


Activity!

Design your own wayang kulit tiger!



Ho Tzu Nyen. *One or Several Tigers*. 2017. Image courtesy of SAM.



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