

For Immediate Release

**SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM INTRODUCES A
SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR THE VISUALLY-IMPAIRED COMMUNITY**



SINGAPORE, 30 OCTOBER 2018 – Singapore Art Museum introduced the **SAM Touch Collection** today, one of several educational and outreach initiatives by SAM to extend the contemporary art experience to audiences of all backgrounds and abilities. A portable and interactive collection of artwork adaptations, the SAM Touch Collection is specifically developed to travel and engage with the visually-impaired community.

The works in the SAM Touch Collection are based on artworks by Singaporean artists in the museum's collection, especially those which relate to historical, cultural and social aspects of Singapore. It currently includes adaptations by David Chan of his SAM Front Lawn commission in 2015, titled *Utama's Cat*; Justin Lee of his artwork titled *East & West*, presented at the Singapore Art Show at SAM in 2009; and Zulkifle Mahmud of his artwork titled *Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls*, commissioned for SAM's *5 Stars* exhibition in 2015. To cater to the needs of the visually-impaired community, the artwork adaptations are accompanied by supplementary resources and materials, such as audio guides and reproductions of finer artwork details to enhance interaction and understanding.

The development of the SAM Touch Collection began with research that started in 2014. It included focus group discussions and consultations with international institutions, visually impaired persons, artists and professionals. With more artwork adaptations in the pipeline by other Singaporean artists, it is a growing collection that will continue to be shaped through feedback and research sessions with communities and schools. The SAM Touch Collection may later be made available for other community groups, such as the elderly and those with special needs, after more research has been carried out.

“The creation of the SAM Touch Collection reflects the changing roles of museums, where audience engagement goes beyond observation and reflection, to interaction and creation of experiences that are active, personal and inclusive. Contemporary art should be accessible to all communities, and the development of programmes like Quiet Hour at SAM and the SAM Touch Collection are first steps in rolling out the type of programming that we intend to facilitate in the future at the museum,” says Wang Tingting, Manager of Programmes (Education) at SAM.

The museum has been working on making contemporary art accessible to audiences with special needs by providing opportunities for more inclusive interactions. In 2017, SAM started the “Quiet Hour at SAM” programme, an initiative that provides free transportation to and from the museum for closed-door access to SAM’s exhibitions, as well as tailored tours and workshops for special needs visitors. In the same year, SAM established a Quiet Room at the museum, ensuring children or visitors with special needs have a calming space to retreat to, should they become over-stimulated by external environments or interactions.

SAM’s other outreach and community engagement projects include hosting of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (including non-profit social service agencies, children’s charities and senior organisations) for tailored exhibition tours and workshops, collaborating with schools through the year-long *Think! Contemporary Programme*, and working with inmates as they express their rehabilitative journeys through the Yellow Ribbon Community Art Exhibition.

The programme is supported by Ascendas-Singbridge Gives Foundation and Our Singapore Fund, and champions the SG Cares movement. The SAM Touch Collection and other access programmes are available for booking by schools or community groups. For more information, please visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

Images of the SAM Touch Collection and other access programmes: bit.ly/Media-SAMTouchCollection

ABOUT THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Singapore Art Museum (SAM) 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 was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013 and 2016, and 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.

www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

www.facebook.com/singaporeartmuseum

www.instagram.com/singaporeartmuseum

www.youtube.com/SAMtelly

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ABOUT OUR SINGAPORE FUND – SG CARES

SG Cares is a social movement championed by public agencies, corporate and community partners to build a more caring and inclusive home for all. The movement invites all Singaporeans and people who live in Singapore to put values into action through active volunteerism, ground-up efforts and everyday acts of care. It also aims to build capability and share resources across various sectors and organisations to grow opportunities for volunteering. By inspiring and supporting one another, we can show the world that we are a nation that cares. SG Cares is co-led by NVPC, NCSS, and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and Ministry of Social and Family Development. #SGCares

ANNEX A

About the SAM Touch Collection

The SAM Touch Collection – a set of interactive, durable and portable works – aims to make contemporary art accessible to the visually-impaired. The collection comprises adaptations of selected artworks in the National Collection which address concepts and themes relating to the historical, cultural and social aspects of Singapore.

The SAM Touch Collection and other access programmes are available for booking by schools or community groups. For more information, please visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg or email education@singaporeartmuseum.sg

TOUCH COLLECTION: *Utama's Cat*

David Chan

Utama's Cat

2015

Wood and mild steel

224 x 195 x 100 cm (internal); 350 x 215 x 169 cm (external)

Singapore Art Museum Collection



Utama's Cat was commissioned for the SAM Front Lawn by the Singapore Art Museum during Singapore Art Week 2015. Exploring how history and myth can intermingle, *Utama's Cat* looks at the curious mystery of how Singapore derived its name.

ADAPTATION: *Utama's Cat*

2018

Plastic and wood

Various dimensions

SAM Touch Collection



Artist David Chan was commissioned to create the adaptation, which consists of a model of the casing using wood and a replica of the lion through 3D printing. He also put together different types of hardwood samples to illustrate the original material used for the lion.

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David Chan (b. 1979, Singapore) creates works which are executed in a realistic style and often feature subjects such as animals, humans and animal/human hybrids. Though comical and bewildering at first glance, his paintings and sculptures also proffer critical social commentary on issues such as popular culture and genetic engineering, as well as human behaviour in our current times.

TOUCH COLLECTION: *East & West*

Justin Lee

East & West (2009)

Fibre glass

Dimensions variable

Singapore Art Museum Collection



East & West was originally commissioned as part of the Singapore Art Show 2009. The artwork included a small army resembling terracotta warriors adorned with headphones, exploring concepts relating to national identity, commercialisation and consumerism.

ADAPTATION: *East & West*

2009

Fibre glass

Various dimensions

SAM Touch Collection



Artist Justin Lee had earlier produced miniature replicas of the warriors, and four of these figurines were acquired for the SAM Touch Collection. Additional figurines, such as the wooden test piece of the warrior, were also acquired for teaching and learning, whilst symbols that are present in the figurines were produced through 3D printing to enhance understanding.

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Justin Lee (b. 1963, Singapore) creates works which are witty yet often thoughtful, combining traditional Eastern imagery and with Western iconography. He uses pop art as a playful medium to contrast Asian values against more modern lifestyles dominated by capitalism.

TOUCH COLLECTION: *Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls*

Zulkifle Mahmud

Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls

2015

Mixed media installation, copper pipes, solenoids, e-bows, amplifiers, sound files

Dimensions variable

Singapore Art Museum Collection



Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls was originally commissioned by the Singapore Art Museum for its SG50 exhibition in 2015, titled *5 Stars: Art Reflects on Peace, Justice, Equality, Democracy and Progress*. Through a reimagining of Singapore's national anthem, the artwork is an exploration of the value of 'Progress'.

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ADAPTATION: *Raising Spirits and Restoring Souls*

2018

Copper pipes, solenoids, strings with electromagnets, speakers, wooden drawer system

65 x 32 x 55cm

SAM Touch Collection



Artist Zulkifle Mahmud was commissioned to create an adaptation of his work, using the same materials from the original artwork, and assembled in a form that is interactive and portable.

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Zulkifle Mahmud (b. 1975, Singapore) is at the forefront of a generation of sound-media artists in Singapore. He adopts a multidisciplinary/multi-genre approach that also includes drawings, prints, sculptures and ready-mades.