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# WHAT IS NOT VISIBLE IS NOT INVISIBLE

**Explore the National Museum's latest exhibition featuring more than 30 thought-provoking artworks**

*'What Is Not Visible Is Not Invisible' debuts a selection of international artworks from the French Regional Collections of Contemporary Art (FRAC) for the first time in Asia Pacific*

**Singapore, 4 October 2016** – Imagine walking into the National Museum of Singapore and being confronted by outdoor environments such as a mound of lush grass, or a beach inviting you for a tan? How about unexpectedly having artwork appear in front and around you, or actually being part of the final puzzle piece to an installation? These are among the experiences visitors will encounter at ***What Is Visible Is Not Invisible – Featuring selected artworks from the French Regional Collections of Contemporary Art (FRAC)***, the latest contemporary art exhibition at the National Museum of Singapore, and a parallel project of the Singapore Biennale 2016.

*What Is Not Visible Is Not Invisible* presents over 30 artworks by French and international artists from FRAC, one of the most important public collection of contemporary art founded in 1982 and anchored by 23 institutions across all the regions in France. The show is curated in collaboration with Platform<sup>1</sup>, the network of FRACs, and marks the first time that this selection of the collection is being presented in Asia Pacific.

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<sup>1</sup> The FRAC association that spearheads collaborative projects with the FRAC collections in France and abroad.

Director of the National Museum of Singapore, Angelita Teo, said, “History inspires art, and art develops our understanding of history and ourselves. This collaboration between our museum and Platform presents significant artworks of our time from the FRAC’s collection to audiences in Singapore, and encourages our visitors to engage with contemporary art which is relevant and often inspired by history.”

### **An Experience for the Mind and Senses**

*What is Not Visible is Not Invisible* broadly surveys the imaginary and the temporary, and takes visitors on an experiential and progressive journey of the mind and senses through the artworks specially selected from FRAC’s collection of 26,000 works. Through the use of unconventional approaches in art-making, the exhibition of multi-media installations invites new ways of perception and brings each visitor into a new state of mind through personal interpretations of the presentations, its surrounding space, and context.



*What is not visible is not invisible, 2008*  
Julien Discrit  
© Julien Discrit

*Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore, National Heritage Board*

The title and design of *What is Not Visible is Not Invisible* takes inspiration from the artwork of the same title by French artist Julien Discrit, which walks the line between physical and philosophical. At first glance, three infrared lightbulbs are strung from the ceiling in front of an unassuming blank wall. When triggered by the viewer’s presence, the bulbs light up to reveal the ultraviolet text on the wall: “What is not visible is not invisible”. The work only appears when it is seen, highlighting that to express the invisible, one needs to paradoxically have to make it visible.

The visual paradox initiated in this modest yet profound works sets the premise for the themes and artworks that visitors will engage with at the exhibition. Artworks such as *Grass Grows* by Hans Haacke where a mound of grass greets visitors to the exhibition, and *Repulse Bay* by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, where a beach is recreated indoors instantly captures the audiences' attention through the displacement of what is expected to be outdoors, suddenly appearing indoors. The recreation of environments in unassuming spaces creates new perspectives and transports visitors into a new state of mind.

“As a former Ambassador of France to Singapore, I welcome the opening of this exhibition which enhances cultural dialogue between France and Singapore, one of the most dynamic countries in the world focused on research and creativity,” said Mr Bernard de Montferrand, President of Platform. “This exhibition presents a selection of works from the FRAC network located in all regions of France that is committed to making contemporary art accessible to the public, encouraging them to discover and understand it through the eyes of the young artists and designers.”

### **A Showcase of Pioneer Contemporary Artists**

FRAC counts 5,400 French and international artists in its collection, and is credited to be the starting platform of many established artists and presents many household artists in its collection such as Gilbert & George, Andy Warhol, and Subodh Gupta, whose work will be presented at the National Museum of Singapore's rotunda as part of Singapore Biennale 2016.

*What Is Not Visible Is Not Invisible* is an opportunity to be acquainted with prominent contemporary artists of our time – pioneers who pushed boundaries to set the scene for we know today. For example, visitors will be presented the much-celebrated *Work N°262* by British multimedia artist Martin Creed, an installation that engages with the mind and senses as it invites visitors into a space of balloons, to contemplate and respond to the idea of the physical space. Martin Creed is most known for his controversial Turner Prize-winning piece *Work N°227: The lights going on and off* – in which an empty room with lights flickers on a timer – which made international headlines.



*Work n°262, 2001*  
**Martin Creed**  
 Collection FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon  
 Photo M. Brucker



*You and I, Horizontal, 2005*  
**Anthony McCall**  
 Collection FRAC Île-de-France  
 © Anthony McCall

Contemporary art aficionados will also be thrilled to be in contact with Anthony McCall, through his renowned 2005 work *You and I, Horizontal*. The British-born, New York-based artist is synonymous with solid-light installations, and is considered by many to be a pioneer who created works before his time in the 1970s. His art is immediately recognisable, and lauded for how fundamental audience's direct sensory experience is to his work.

### Involving Audience and Environment

The artworks in *What is Not Visible is Not Invisible* are curated to encourage audience interaction, and to leave room for personal interpretation. Many of the artworks call for the audience and the environment to play a key role in the artwork and its presentation. For example, *Speech Bubbles* by Philippe Parreno is an installation where a space is filled with helium balloons in the shape of speech bubbles, bringing to life what a person's thoughts would *literally* look like – animating visitors as though were part of a real-life comic strip once they step into installation.



*Speech Bubbles, 1997*  
**Philippe Parreno**  
 Collection FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais  
 © Philippe Parreno. Photo : Emmanuel Watteau



*Définition/méthode 131. Entourant le tableau, 1973/1981*  
**Claude Rutault**  
 Collection FRAC Auvergne  
 © Claude Rutault

The National Museum of Singapore's own collection also plays a part in an artwork, with the lithograph of the original steel engraving of the *Plan of the Town of Singapore*, as the centrepiece in *Définition/méthode 131. Entourant le tableau* by Claude Rutault. This ever-changing piece from the FRAC Auvergne collection, specifies a set of instructions for the presenting institutions to create the artwork, resulting in a different outcome each time. Responding to the ideals of Rutault's approach in his piece, the *Plan of the Town of Singapore* too functions as a set of instructions and guidelines that determined the layout of the city.

*What Is Not Visible Is Not Invisible* will be on display from 7 October 2016 to 19 February 2017. The exhibition is open daily from 10am to 7pm, except Thursdays when it opens from 1pm to 7pm. Details on admission and guided tours are available on [www.nationalmuseum.sg](http://www.nationalmuseum.sg)

**Curators:**

**FRAC and Platform:** Laurence Gateau and Anne-Claire Duprat

**National Museum of Singapore:** Angelita Teo and Iman Ismail

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## **About the National Museum of Singapore**

With a history dating back to its inception in 1887, the National Museum of Singapore is the nation's oldest museum with a progressive mind. Its galleries adopt cutting-edge and multi-perspective ways of presenting history and culture to redefine conventional museum experience. A cultural and architectural landmark in Singapore, the Museum hosts innovative festivals and events all year round—the dynamic Night Festival, visually arresting art installations, as well as amazing performances and film screenings—in addition to presenting thought-provoking exhibitions involving critically important collections of artefacts. The programming is supported by a wide range of facilities and services including F&B, retail and a Resource Centre. The National Museum of Singapore re-opened in December 2006 after a three-year redevelopment, and celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2012. The Museum refreshed its permanent galleries and re-opened them on 19 September 2015 for Singapore's Golden Jubilee. For more details, please visit [www.nationalmuseum.sg](http://www.nationalmuseum.sg).

## **About Platform**

Platform is an association created in 2005 by the FRACs to pool their resources and their collections, and to work together on collaborative projects both in France and abroad, thus bolstering their impact and effects.

Since the beginning, the 23 FRACs have been working in partnership around a triple common objective of development and cooperation to:

- Foster group reflection about the FRAC common missions and issues and defend their interests on the national level,
- Spread the circulation of their collections by interregional and international projects so as to rise up new cultural and artistic collaborations,
- Create a centre of resources and information for their members and the partners of the association.

The aim of Platform is to give a better visibility and understanding of the FRACs by a common program of communication and events. Therefore Platform develops joint projects with new networks so as to make Frac collections more accessible to new forms of public, in France and abroad. For more details, please visit [www.frac-platform.com](http://www.frac-platform.com)

## **About FRAC**

The Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain (Regional collections of contemporary art – FRAC) are public collections of contemporary art created in 1982 as part of the policy of devolution of power set by the government via regional councils in order for art to be present in each and every one of France's region. Their first mission is to gather a collection, to display it for all

kinds of audiences and to invent new ways to educate to contemporary creation. Today, the FRAC collections gather 26,000 works from 5,400 French and foreign artists.

FRAC collections online: <http://www.lescollectionsdesfrac.fr>

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