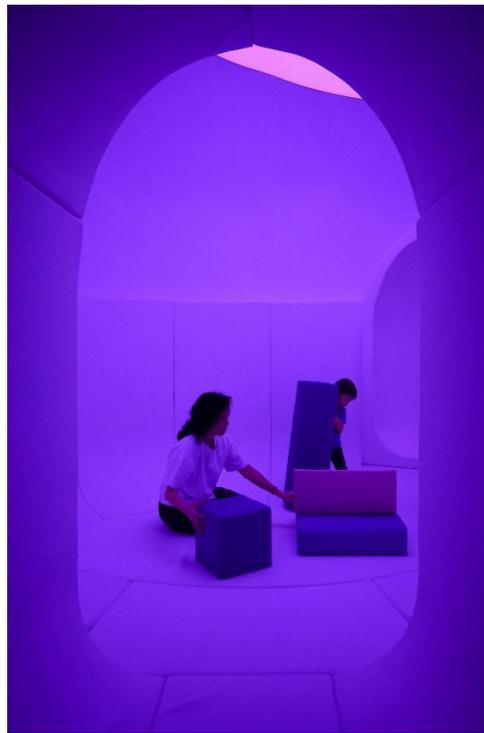


National Museum of Singapore launches its Quiet Room

The room is one of the many initiatives introduced by the museum to enhance accessibility and inclusiveness for visitors with additional needs



Photography by Khoo Guo Jie
Images courtesy of Lekker Architects

Singapore, 1 August 2019 – The National Museum of Singapore will be launching its latest accessibility initiative, the Quiet Room, on 1 August 2019. Supported by BNP Paribas Singapore, the Quiet Room provides a dedicated space for children who might experience sensory or social overstimulation, in particular children on the autism spectrum, who may need a calmer environment before resuming their museum visit. The creation of the room adds to the National Museum's resources that were introduced in 2018 to better support the visits of families with children with additional needs and seniors. This is the museum's commitment to being an inclusive and accessible museum, in line

with Our SG Heritage Plan that seeks to make museums and heritage more accessible to underserved communities.

Creating a Conducive Environment for Children with Additional Needs to Learn About Singapore's History

Since 2016, the National Museum has been piloting initiatives for children with additional needs. This included opening an hour earlier for visits by Special Education (SPED) schools, to enable the students to experience the Museum in a quieter setting, and co-creating learning experiences with the teachers for their students. The initiative was well-received by the SPED schools and the community, and was re-introduced as a regular initiative from December 2018, with the first Saturday and the first and third Thursdays of each month designated as "Quiet Mornings".

Feedback from Quiet Mornings, and from engagement sessions with teachers from SPED schools and parents of children with and without additional needs, showed that there is interest for children with additional needs to learn about Singapore's history and heritage, in a safe and welcoming environment which the Museum can offer. The engagement sessions also offered the National Museum insights into the challenges faced by schools and parents when planning trips to museums or any places of interest.

The Museum has since introduced several accessibility initiatives and programmes, which include *GosTan Back*, an interactive in-gallery theatrical experience designed for both children with and without additional needs to experience the Singapore History Gallery together, as well as tools that visitors can use in planning for or during their visit to the Museum. These include sensory maps, sensory bags, social stories and an accessibility page on the museum website (**see Annex A**).



Photography by Khoo Guo Jie
Images courtesy of Lekker Architects

Design and Features of the Room

The 25sqm room is designed to be “dream-like”, with an inner chamber shaped like a womb to provide a soothing and safe environment for the child. It provides a neutral, modular space with elements that can be tailored by caregivers to suit the mood of the child. The room can comfortably fit seven individuals (inclusive of adults and children) each time. Features of the room include:

- A transition area with cubby holes for users to store their shoes and belongings
- A padded inner chamber designed to resemble a womb, for the visitor to rest and self-regulate
- An alcove in the inner chamber for a child to retreat to
- Geometric-shaped cushions a child can hug for soothing purposes. These cushions can also be used to modify the physical environment around the child, and can fit together in multiple combinations
- Soft, even lighting with changeable colour settings that caregivers can toggle between to suit the child’s preferences
- Grey and white tones in the room to reduce visual noise

These features are designed to cater to children’s various senses – such as sight (through the colours of the light, and shapes and colours of the cushions); sound (through a heavily dampened acoustical

environment); touch (by ensuring a soft environment throughout and cushions of different shapes and sizes); and vestibular (through the womb-like inner chamber, the alcove within the room, and cushions that can customise surfaces for balance and motion).

The room will be made available to children who require a quiet and conducive space before resuming their museum visit, and to Special Education Schools that visit the National Museum during Quiet Mornings or any regular day.

Wong Hong Suen, Deputy Director, National Museum of Singapore, said, “The National Museum hopes to create a safe and inclusive space where visitors can come together to learn and appreciate Singapore’s history and heritage. We will continue to work closely with Special Education Schools, social service organisations and community groups to introduce them to our “Quiet Mornings”, and invite families and their children with additional needs, particularly children with autism, to participate in our programmes. The generous contributions by donors such as BNP Paribas allow us to pursue more of such meaningful initiatives.”

In addition to the Quiet Room, the museum’s Singapore History Gallery also features access-friendly amenities such as “Quiet Corners”, which are designated rest spots within the gallery. These spots also feature a “Quiet Pod”—a sensory pod that provides a quiet space within a public space, allowing visitors some privacy to retreat from external stimuli.

More information about Quiet Mornings and the various accessibility tools are available on the National Museum’s Accessibility page.

A special collection by Singapore Fashion Runway

The *MUSEUM LABEL* store at National Museum of Singapore will also be presenting a series of special edition tee shirts designed by budding designers from the Singapore Fashion Runway, a social enterprise that provides a platform for people with special needs to express their creativity through fashion and retail (**see Annex B**). A portion of the proceeds from this collaboration will benefit programmes presented by the Singapore Fashion Runway.

Accessibility resources

The list of accessibility resources may be viewed [here](#).

Sensory map

The map enables visitors to identify high sensory areas as well as areas that are quieter, well-lit and less crowded, rest spots to take a break and a suggested wheelchair-friendly route of the museum. A specific sensory map is also available for the Singapore History Gallery which includes five quiet corners for visitors to retreat to when needed.

You may obtain a map from our Visitor Services counter on Level 1, or download a copy below.

- i. [Sensory map of the National Museum of Singapore](#) (large print version)
- ii. [Sensory map of the National Museum of Singapore](#)
- iii. [Sensory map of Singapore History Gallery](#)

Social stories

The social stories enable schools and family visitors to show children what to expect during a visit to our museum, to allow for a more enriching experience. There are three versions available – for families, school visits and galleries.

You may view the social stories from the link below:

- i. [Social Story for Families](#): My Trip to the National Museum of Singapore
- ii. [Social Story for School Visits](#): My Trip to the National Museum of Singapore
- iii. [Social Story for Exploring the Galleries](#) of the National Museum of Singapore

Visual schedule

This simple planner uses picture cards to communicate a series of activities to be done at the museum, and is useful for caregivers with children who have a need for structure and predictability in their lives, and who might need guidance with keeping track of activities or help with a sense of time.

Sensory bags

The Museum has prepared five sensory bags that are available for families with children on the autism spectrum. Each bag includes ear defenders, sensory maps, a visual schedule and sensory toys and is available for loan on a first come, first serve basis at the visitor services counter.

The museum is constantly evaluating its programming and resources to ensure that visitors feel welcome and have access to relevant tools to support their experience. Updates to accessibility initiatives and tools will be announced at a later date.



A special collection by Singapore Fashion Runway

This limited edition tee shirt series features designs by Singapore Fashion Runway, a social enterprise that provides people with special needs with a platform for creative expression through fashion and retail. The three designs were inspired by a visit to the National Museum of Singapore, Singapore’s oldest museum. Designs by Leong Si Jun, Bich Lien Tran and Nurul Farhana Bte Sulaiman put the museum’s iconic façade and architecture into focus.

A portion of the proceeds from this collaboration will benefit the programmes of Singapore Fashion Runway.

*Available only at MUSEUM LABEL at National Museum of Singapore in children and youth sizes, S\$35 each. Refer to **Product List** for additional information & retail prices.*

<p>National Museum and I Leong Sijun Singapore, 2019 Acrylic on paper</p> <p>This artwork by Leong Sijun reflects his love for buildings and architecture. Sijun, who has Down Syndrome, was inspired by the lines, textures and shapes of the museum.</p>	<p>National Museum and I</p>	
<p>My Colourful World Bich Lien Tran Singapore, 2019</p>	<p>My Colourful World</p>	

<p>Markers and color</p> <p>Candy colours and cheerful lines fill this playful portrait of the National Museum of Singapore by Bich Lien Tran, who has Down Syndrome.</p>		
<p>Window of My Eye Nurul Farhana Bte Sulaiman Singapore, 2019 Marker on paper</p> <p>The museum’s iconic rotunda caught the eye of Nurul Farhana Bte Sulaiman. The artist, who has intellectual disabilities, drew inspiration from the shapes and textures of its stained glass windows.</p>	<p>Window of My Eye</p>	

About Singapore Fashion Runway

Singapore Fashion Runway is a social enterprise which brings joy and hope to people with special needs and disadvantaged groups through programmes that nurture creativity and entrepreneurship. Through its Fashion for a Social Cause movement, beneficiaries gain experience and exposure in designing, modelling, performing and retail and events management.

About MUSEUM LABEL

MUSEUM LABEL is the retail brand behind the museum shops operated by Singapore’s National Heritage Board. Through vivid storytelling, relatable cultural experiences, and close

collaboration with community and partners, MUSEUM LABEL gives life to our heritage through well-designed merchandise.

Locations: National Museum of Singapore, Asian Civilisations Museum, Malay Heritage Centre, Indian Heritage Centre

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About the National Museum of Singapore

With a history dating back to 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. It refreshed its permanent galleries and re-opened them in September 2015 for Singapore's Golden Jubilee. In 2017, it celebrated its 130th anniversary. For more details, please visit www.nationalmuseum.sg