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STEP BACK INTO HISTORY AS THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE RE-OPENS ITS PERMANENT GALLERIES

*Everyone is invited to come and re-discover Singapore's history, and take part in
a fun-filled Opening Weekend Carnival on 19 and 20 September*

SINGAPORE, 14 September 2015 – The National Museum of Singapore re-opens its permanent galleries on Saturday, 19 September 2015. To celebrate the re-opening, the National Museum has put together a fun-filled Opening Weekend Carnival that will take place on Saturday and Sunday, 19 and 20 September. Everyone is invited to celebrate the museum's re-opening at the carnival and to take a refreshed look at Singapore's history in the new galleries.

The permanent galleries comprise the **Singapore History Gallery**, the **Life in Singapore: The Past 100 Years** galleries and the **Goh Seng Choo Gallery**. These galleries present Singapore's history and national collection in more immersive and innovative ways, and also showcase artefacts that have never been displayed before.

Ms. Angelita Teo, Director of National Museum of Singapore, says, "After a break for almost a year, we are excited to finally be able to re-open the permanent galleries to visitors. With a refreshed layout and updated narrative, visitors can look forward to a more engaging and immersive experience; a bit like stepping back in time to the different periods of our history. Innovative displays, interactive elements and compelling personal stories make history and the artefacts come to life, and through them, we hope that visitors will form a greater emotional connection to the museum and to Singapore's history. We hope that everyone will take time in this shared space to discover more about our history, explore how far we have come, and reconnect with the Singapore story."

Significant Artefacts, Compelling Stories

Over 1,700 artefacts are displayed in the new galleries. Many are significant historical artefacts from the national collection, such as the Singapore Stone which dates back to the 10th–14th centuries, the 19th-century *Sejarah Melayu*, and the larger-than-life portraits of Sir

Frank Athelstane Swettenham, Sir Shenton Whitelegge Thomas and Sir Cecil Clementi Smith.

Among the new artefacts displayed are personal objects and objects of national significance, as well as family heirlooms that hold a special significance to the people or institutions who donated or loaned them to the museum. New artefacts recently donated to the museum include a 1959 flexidisc recording of “Majulah Singapura” before it became the national anthem, a full set of the first National Service uniform, a Singapore National Registration Identification Card first issued in 1966, as well as a sewing machine used during the war.

Other objects loaned to the museum for the permanent galleries include a wedding certificate, wedding wash basin, wedding rings and family photo belonging to Mr and Mrs Lai Kok Wah, who met and got married during World War Two, as well as the Surrender Table on which the British ceded control of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942. The table is displayed at the National Museum on a one year loan from the Australian War Memorial. More information on the key artefacts in the permanent galleries can be found in Annex 4.

Immersive, Interactive Galleries

The stories and significance behind the artefacts are brought to life in the galleries through contextual displays, ambient sounds, multimedia platforms as well as interactive platforms, providing visitors with an immersive experience as they rediscover Singapore’s history.

Relive the day when Singapore’s independence was declared, step into the kitchen of an HDB flat from the 1970s and 1980s, be greeted by the aroma of afternoon tea on entering an old colonial bungalow, watch a new film in a drive-in cinema from the 1980s and experience what life was like during the Japanese Occupation. These are some of the immersive experiences visitors will discover in the new galleries, which use exhibition design, scents, multimedia and technologies to contextualise artefacts and evoke moments or the atmosphere of an era.

Visitors will be able to contribute their own stories on an interactive map in the Singapore History Gallery’s Global City section. The map contains memories of places in Singapore from the Singapore Memory Project and lesser known facts about Singapore’s global footprints. Visitors are also invited to submit their own stories or share their knowledge of Singapore’s other international connections for other visitors to enjoy. Another interactive highlight that visitors can look forward to is the artwork *GoHead/GoStan: Panorama Singapura* by Singaporean artists Brandon Tay and Safuan Johari, which will take them on an audio-visual expedition of the various periods in Singapore’s history. This is the first time the museum has commissioned and included an art installation within the gallery’s narrative.

This multimedia art installation unveils a tapestry of familiar images derived from the nation's historical, geographical and social memories that explore the Singaporean consciousness, articulated through the lens of its changed and changing landscape of the past and present.

The museum has also received the support from leading fragrance and flavour developer Givaudan, to develop scents that add another sensory dimension to the galleries. Givaudan has created two ambient scents – the “After Rain” scent in the *Transforming the Landscape* section of the Singapore History Gallery, and an “Afternoon Tea” scent in the *Life in Singapore: Modern Colony* gallery. They have also created seven scent stations for visitors to discover scents such as that of tembusu flowers, the breadflower and even the old polluted Singapore River. As part of the collaboration, Givaudan has also launched “City”, a new fragrance created especially for Singapore's 50th year of independence. “City” is sold at the National Museum's Museum Label shop and proceeds will be donated to the museum. Please see Annex 5 for a full list of scents created by Givaudan.

Discover the new galleries and join in the festivities at the Opening Weekend Carnival

The National Museum invites everyone in Singapore to join in the museum's festivities and enjoy the first preview of the new galleries on 19 and 20 September. Admission is free for all for both days. Visitors can take part in guided tours or play a game of bingo that will take them through the galleries and allow them to redeem traditional snacks such as *kachang putih* and other nostalgic treats after completing a series of activities. Other fun activities include henna-painting, making paper planes and hats from the different eras, listening to stories from yesteryear, dressing up in vintage costumes for photographs, as well as playing on popular bouncy playgrounds outside the museum. The full Opening Weekend Carnival programme is in Annex 6.

As parking at the museum is limited that weekend, visitors are advised to park at other nearby carpark or travel via public transportation. For more information, please visit www.nationalmuseum.sg.

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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

The National Museum of Singapore is an institution of



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE VISITOR INFORMATION

GALLERY OPENING HOURS

10am to 7pm (last admission 6.30pm)

ADMISSION

Free admission for Citizens, Permanent Residents (unless otherwise stated) and visitors aged 6 years and below.

Others

Adults \$10

Students & Seniors aged 60 \$5

and above with valid ID

Each ticket includes admission to all permanent galleries and exhibitions. Please present proof of eligibility to enjoy concessions.

Tickets are available from the National Museum Visitor Services counter and SISTIC.

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours commence from 3 October 2015. The tours only cover the Singapore History Gallery.

English

Monday—Friday 11am & 2pm

Saturday & Sunday 11.30am, 1pm, 2pm, 3.30pm (October & November)

Saturday & Sunday 11.30am, 2pm & 3.30pm (December)

Mandarin

Monday 1.30pm

Saturday & Sunday 11am & 1.30pm

French

Every first Thursday of the month (from 8 October 2015) 12pm

Japanese

Monday—Friday 10.30am

Every first Saturday of the month (from 3 October 2015) 1.30pm

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS & LOCKERS

Lifts provide easy access to galleries.

Lockers are available for visitors' use.

NATIONAL MUSEUM ONLINE

www.nationalmuseum.sg

www.facebook.com/National.Museum.of.Singapore

twitter.com/natmuseum_sg

ABOUT THE NEW PERMANENT GALLERIES

SINGAPORE HISTORY GALLERY

Level One

The Singapore History Gallery's updated narrative charts the development of the island as it was known through the years as *Singapura*, *Crown Colony*, *Syonan-To*, and finally, *Singapore*. In celebration of 50 years of independence, this gallery is refreshed with updated stories and content on Singapore's history, capturing the nation's defining moments, challenges and achievements from its earliest beginnings 700 years ago to the independent, modern city-state it is today.

Singapura (1299–1818)

Where does Singapore's history begin? Geology tells us that the oldest rock formations on Singapore date from the Paleozoic Era. From prehistoric tools found in western Singapore and Pulau Ubin, there may have been a settlement here several thousand years ago.

The earliest written records to mention Singapore describe it as a thriving port in the 14th century. It was known by different names then: Chinese trader Wang Dayuan called it Danmaxi (Temasik or Temasek), while in the *Sejarah Melayu* (*The Malay Annals*), it was called Singapura.

From archaeological finds, we know that Singapura was a place where Chinese porcelain wares and stoneware were traded, along with locally-made pottery or natural products such as hornbill casques and *laka* wood. The settlement was probably ruled by an elite class who lived on what is now Fort Canning Hill, and Singapura, though small, was connected by trade and politics to not only the Malay Archipelago, but also Siam (Thailand), China and India.

The *Sejarah Melayu* and other histories say that Singapura was attacked by foreign invaders in the late 14th century. After that, it was inhabited primarily by the Orang Laut ("sea people" in Malay). They knew the regional waters well and, at different times, were allied with the Melaka or Johor sultanate.

Crown Colony (1819–1941)

In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles and Major William Farquhar arrived in Singapore. They struck a deal with the local Malay rulers to set up a British trading port, which Raffles declared would be "open to ships and vessels of every nation free of duty". This brought in traders and ships from as far away as Arabia and Africa. By the 1850s, Singapore was the centre of trade in Southeast Asia.

Singapore became a Crown colony in 1867, together with the other Straits Settlements of Melaka and Penang. As the British empire flourished, so did Singapore. The population swelled with migrants from the Malay Archipelago, China and South Asia. Some came to trade, as before, but many more came to work in the port city and in the plantations and mines of Malaya.

Indeed, Malayan rubber and tin powered Singapore's growth into an export and international financial centre – on a smaller scale, but not too different in character from what it is now. By the time Singapore celebrated its Centenary Day in 1919, it was a modern city, boasting the second largest dry dock in the world and modern conveniences such as electricity, motorcars and international telegraph and telephone connections.

Syonan-To (1942–1945)

Well before World War Two began, the British had developed the "Singapore strategy" to defend the British empire in Asia. In Singapore, they built a naval base at Sembawang, strengthened the air force and installed large 15-inch coastal guns. Singapore became known as the "Gibraltar of the East" or "Fortress Singapore".

At the same time, the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 stirred up the Chinese community in Singapore. They formed “patriotic” organisations, which raised funds for China’s war effort and organised boycotts of Japanese goods and businesses.

On 8 December 1941, Singapore experienced war for the first time when the Japanese bombed the city. On the same day, Japanese troops landed on the northeast coast of Malaya and began their invasion. After a swift 70-day campaign, the Japanese – to almost everyone’s surprise – defeated the British and occupied the Malay Peninsula and Singapore.

The British surrendered on 15 February 1942. Singapore was placed under military occupation and renamed Syonan-To (“Light of the South” in Japanese). While the war continued elsewhere, the Singapore population struggled with food and fuel shortages, disease and, at its worst, violence and harassment from the Japanese. The occupation ended only when Japan surrendered to the Allies in 1945.

Singapore (1945 to present)

After World War Two, a wave of decolonisation began to sweep through Asia and Africa. Singapore was no exception. The British defeat in 1942 had destroyed the image of Western superiority and invincibility, and a growing national consciousness emerged among the people in Singapore.

Different political parties and groups contended for influence, while the British introduced constitutional reforms to prepare for democratic elections. In 1959, Singapore was granted self-government and the first general election for a fully-elected government was held. The People’s Action Party (PAP) won and its leader, Lee Kuan Yew, became Singapore’s first prime minister. Mr Lee and his cabinet ministers continued to seek Singapore’s independence. Through merger and later separation from Malaysia, Singapore became a fully independent nation in 1965.

Over the next two decades, the PAP-dominated government tackled the problems it had inherited, such as high unemployment and insufficient housing. It took bold steps to introduce industrialisation, encourage foreign investment and tourism, provide modern public housing and education, and clean up the environment. By the 1980s, Singapore was an economically successful, thriving city-state with the makings of the global city that Singaporeans today call home.

There are seven sub-section sections within Singapore (1945 to present); *Rallies and Riots, Merger and Separation, A Nation in the Making, Building an Economy, Building a Home, Transforming the Landscape and Becoming a Global City.*

LIFE IN SINGAPORE: THE PAST 100 YEARS

Level Two

Spanning the last 100 years, these four galleries present snapshots of everyday life through the different eras in Singapore’s history. In the gallery examining the 1920s–1930s, discover how modern and progressive people were in colonial times. Gain a deeper appreciation for the resourcefulness and resilience of those who found hope and love in the gallery covering the years of the Japanese Occupation. See the 1950s–1960s through the eyes of a child growing up alongside the nation, as this gallery captures the dreams and aspirations of a generation. Self-expression and creativity take the front seat in the 1970s–1980s gallery, which explores how a new, confident, Singaporean identity emerged.

Modern Colony

Migrants from China, who arrived in Singapore in the 1920s, often described it as modern and developed. By the end of the 19th century, Singapore was already a global city brought about by an influx of people, ideas and goods from Asia and Europe. The island was progressing as a major port city, aided by its strategic location and breakthroughs in maritime communications. The industrialisation of the West introduced new ideas, technologies and cultures which were quickly adapted and expressed in unique ways by the people of Singapore.

Set in a 1920s black-and-white bungalow, this gallery explores the cosmopolitan nature of Singapore as a British Crown colony from the 1920s to 1930s, through an examination of the everyday lives of the affluent Straits-born and migrant Chinese. Singapore's progressiveness was perhaps most evident in the evolution of women's identity and their enhanced social status during this period.

With more educational opportunities for girls and the influx of female immigrants from China in the 1920s, women began to occupy more visible public roles previously dominated by men. Some of these women went on to make important contributions in a number of women's causes, such as education and charity, which helped to enhance the welfare of women at the time. The gallery also examines how the women of the household expressed their modern identities and the challenges they faced in working out their roles in an increasingly cosmopolitan Singapore.

Surviving Syonan

On 15 February 1942, the British surrendered Singapore to the victorious Imperial Japanese Army. Japan's Rising Sun flag now flew from all corners of the city, heralding the start of the darkest chapter in Singapore's history.

This gallery shines the spotlight on how the people of Singapore coped with daily life and responded with grit and resourcefulness to the Japanese Occupation, a period of great adversity and abject scarcity. It celebrates their resilience, tenacity, resourcefulness and self-reliance; values that remain important and relevant today. Snapshots of these past lives are presented in an immersive cityscape of crumbling walls, evocative of the uncertain and shattered world these survivors of the war endured.

But amid the devastation, hope remained. The gallery's concluding section presents stories and artefacts that celebrate courage, hope and love in a period marked by fear, hardship and oppression.

Growing Up

The 1950s and 1960s were a momentous time for Singapore. From self-government (1959) to Merger with Malaya (1963) to Independence (1965), it was a period when Singapore was beset with uncertainties and challenges as it sought an identity it could call its own. The post-war generation, like Singapore, was also trying to find its footing while searching for its future. But in spite of the political turbulence and social unrest, children growing up in those times were still able to enjoy happy childhood years.

The *kampung* (Malay for "village"), school and popular entertainment venues were familiar spaces in which children spent most of their time. Although living conditions were poor and outbreaks of fires and diseases were common in the *kampung*, it was a community space where children lived and played together. For a child going to school in those days, life was anything but uneventful. Many Chinese middle school students were involved in anti-colonial movements in the 1950s, protesting against what they saw as the government's unfair treatment towards them. Schools also provided a platform, both within and outside the classroom, for students of all races to learn about the commonalities among them and experience an emerging new national identity. The entertainment scene, be it through public venues or the mass media, inspired many with its diverse range of performances and opportunities.

Set against the larger historical context of Singapore's early years as a young nation, this gallery offers the parallel societal changes in the tumultuous 1950s and 1960s through the *kampung*, school and entertainment venues. In these social spaces, children found friendship, shared their experiences and looked out for one another. The displays here offer insight into how these different spaces spurred a child's imagination, and how, in spite of the political and social strife, those growing up in post-war Singapore were inspired to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

Voices of Singapore

The building of Singapore involved not only transforming the island into a nation, but also improving the lives of its people. In this excerpt, the poet attributes the success of these efforts to Singapore's pioneer leaders. By the end of the 1970s, mass industrialisation and pro-business policies had ushered in economic success. Near to full employment and high wages also contributed to the creation of an affluent society. More importantly, economic policies that guided education, housing and population initiatives created a social environment in which the nation took precedence.

The Singaporean identity is inherently plural. In the 1970s, race, culture and language were formalised and enshrined into categories that were at once distinct and discrete. By the mid-1980s, these characterisations were debated and articulated in many different ways by Singapore's artistic practitioners. They created original works that emphasised expressions of national identity and belonging. In the process, they shaped a vibrant society that could accommodate multiple voices and communities – a legacy that continues to inspire us today.

Through cultural artefacts including music, performances, television and theatre, this gallery explores how Singaporeans constructed a complex terrain of self-expression in the 1970s and 80s. The newly commissioned film installation in the back room is a creative expression of Singapore's distinct identity. It is also a testament to the National Museum of Singapore's commitment towards producing new cultural responses to the past.

GOH SENG CHOO GALLERY

Level Two

Discover the fine line between *Desire and Danger* at this stimulating new exhibition at the Goh Seng Choo Gallery. Featuring creatures that arouse appetites and instil fear, and exotic plants sought for their ability to induce pleasure or pain, this selection of drawings from the *William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings* explores the complex and sometimes uneasy relationship between man and nature.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NEW PERMANENT GALLERIES

All the National Museum's permanent galleries have been carefully designed to incorporate elements of the themes and time periods, which they explore or are set in. The choice of colours, textures and specific design elements contribute to create immersive experiences for visitors. The designs for the display of artefacts also took into account the stories and context behind each artefact so that visitors can better appreciate the significance of the artefacts.

For example, the *Modern Colony* gallery is designed to resemble a pre-war colonial bungalow with the scent of afternoon tea in the verandah to welcome visitors. There is also the contextual set-up of an HDB kitchen of the 1970s and 1980s, to show how the space and appliances on display reflect the modern conveniences and lifestyles desired by Singapore families.

The galleries contain 12 interactive stations, including scent stations. There are over 60 multimedia stations located throughout the galleries that provide more information, stories, personal accounts and archival footages of significant historical events and important artefacts. These stations include a multimedia section in the Singapore History Gallery that looks at the greening efforts of Singapore over the years and recounts Singapore's rich natural heritage, as well as a specially commissioned zoetrope for the *Growing Up* Gallery. For the first time, the museum has also commissioned and located an art installation within the Singapore History Gallery as part of the gallery's narrative.

Here is some information about selected highlights of the permanent galleries:

Contextual Set-up of an HDB kitchen



The HDB kitchen of the 1970s and 1980s was a modern space, both in actual homes and as depicted in advertisements and magazines. The kitchen design, layout and equipment reflected the modern conveniences and lifestyles desired by families.

Many of the home appliances on display were once the prized possessions of Singapore families – their first such appliance, purchased only when the family could afford it. With more women entering the workforce, “time-savers” such as rice cookers and mixers also became popular with families.

“Tree” installation in Transforming the Landscape section



This installation showcases the sounds, smells, images and footage of native flora and fauna that can be found in urban areas such as gardens, parks, housing estates and roadsides. Visitors are invited to step closer to the “tree” and rediscover the wonders of Singapore's rich natural heritage.

The native plants featured in this installation were filmed at Pasir Panjang Nursery with assistance from NParks' Horticulture and Community Gardening Division. Pasir Panjang Nursery has played an important role in

Singapore's greening efforts since the 1970s – supplying close to 200,000 plants a year to green up Singapore's roads and plants..

Global City Installation



Despite its small geographical size and lack of natural resources, Singapore has developed into a vibrant global city. In order to compete and survive, it is important for Singapore to maintain its relevance on the world stage. Visitors can engage with the interactive world map to learn about Singapore's global footprints, which range from international trade and talent inflows to active diplomacy on regional and international platforms.

Local visitors will also be invited to key in their postal code in this interactive. Upon doing so, a number of stories from fellow Singaporeans will emerge. These memories are primarily set in the 1980s and may centre on the lives of these Singaporeans, or a particular experience that resonated with them in their postal district. This component is created in collaboration with the National Library Board's Singapore Memory Project.

There is an opportunity here for this installation to be a growing and dynamic platform where museum visitors can share memories of their residential districts and add their input on Singapore's international connections.

Singapore History Gallery Art Installation

This is the first time the museum has commissioned an art installation as part of the narrative of its galleries. Located in the Singapore History Gallery, *GoHead/GoStan* ends off the gallery experience and invites visitors to ponder on Singapore's unique identity and history.



GoHead/GoStan: Panorama Singapura

Brandon Tay and Safuan Johari

2015

Acrylic Boxes of Variable Dimensions, Projection Mapping

4 minutes, loop

The Singapore landscape has undergone tremendous change over the centuries, from its humble beginnings as a deep water harbour to the prosperous city-state that it is today. *GoHead/GoStan: Panorama Singapura* explores the Singaporean consciousness, articulated through the lens of its changed and changing landscape of the past and present.

GoHead/GoStan (the colloquial versions of "Go ahead" and "Go astern") alludes to the artists' intent to take viewers on an audio-visual expedition of the various periods in Singapore's history. In this immersive multimedia installation, artists Brandon Tay and Safuan Johari unveil a tapestry of familiar images derived from the nation's historical, geographical and social memories.

The projection mappings superimpose non-chronological narratives and shifting social trends from Singapore's earliest beginnings to its colonial legacy and the Japanese Occupation, as well as the nation's journey to independence and nationhood, and its current status as a flourishing global city. Individually, each social trend represents the diverse cultural influences of a particular era. Collectively, they reveal the essence and spirit of Singapore's unique identity.

About the artists

Brandon Tay

Brandon Tay is a motion designer and interactive designer for non-web spaces and is based in both Melbourne and Singapore. He has worked on projects for MTV Asia, Sci-Fi Channel and Animax, and

has created visual accompaniment for bands such as The Observatory and participated in the Singapore Design Festival 2009. Tay has collaborated with noted media artists such as Ulf Langheinrich and Gina Czarnecki on large-scale media installation projects. "LAND", the project on which he assisted Langheinrich, has been featured in the Liverpool Biennial and the Shanghai Arts Festival 2009.

Safuan Johari

Safuan Johari, also known as Max Lane on stage, is a sound-designer and music producer/performer. Safuan has graced many stages around the world, including the Gilles Peterson Worldwide Festival in France. A founding member of the audio-visual collective Syndicate, he is the label manager who oversees the collective's digital releases and music catalogue distribution. Safuan is also one half of NADA, a visual arts/sounds project that explores the myth and history of a fabricated group (of the same name), which celebrates the golden era of Malay traditional and popular music.

Contributing Artist: Speak Cryptic



Modern Colony backroom projection

Through magic mirrors in the back room of the Modern Colony gallery, visitors can discover the different lifestyles and poignant stories of two types of women - one modern and the other traditional - in colonial era Singapore.

Zoetrope



The zoetrope in the *Growing Up* gallery is inspired by stories of Singapore's local female Olympians in the 1950s. Tang Pui Wah was the first female Olympian to represent Singapore at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. She was studying in Nanyang Girls' High School at the time. Life as an athlete was tough as she had to juggle both schoolwork and training, but she received support from classmates who helped her with her homework. Her love for Singapore and her school was the main driving force behind her perseverance in sports.

Tang was popularly known as the "Helsinki girl" in the local press and a role model for other younger athletes such as Janet Jesudason and Mary Klass (who were the only women to represent Singapore at the Melbourne Olympics in 1956).

The zoetrope features a "passing the torch" animation to highlight the legacy of these local pioneer sportswomen in the 1950s.

Ambient Scents and Scent Stations

Swiss perfumer and fragrance maker Givaudan has sponsored a series of ambient scents and scent stations for the museum's galleries.

Ambient scents add a sensory dimension to the visitor experience in galleries. Light ambient scents greet visitors as they step into certain sections of the galleries, such as the "After Rain" scent in the



Transforming the Landscape section in the Singapore History Gallery, and the “Afternoon Tea” scent that greets visitors to the *Life in Singapore: Modern Colony* Gallery.

Some of the galleries also feature scent stations, such as the various floral scents in the Goh Seng Choo Gallery. The two scents in the Singapore History Gallery’s *Transforming the Landscape* section – Tembusu flowers and the polluted Singapore River – were conceptualised to convey the different milestones of Singapore’s environmental story.

Information about the ambient scents and scent stations created for the galleries are in annex 5.

KEY ARTEFACTS

SINGAPORE HISTORY GALLERY

Singapura (1299–1818)

The Singapore Stone (10th–14th centuries)
Singapore River mouth
Inscribed sandstone
National Museum of Singapore collection



When the British arrived in Singapore in 1819, they found relics dating back to the 14th century. One of these was a sandstone boulder at the mouth of the Singapore River. It was split into two nearly equal parts, which faced each other at an angle of about forty degrees. According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, the boulder had been hurled from nearby Fort Canning Hill by a strongman known as Badang.

In 1843, the British blew up the boulder to build military quarters. All that remains in Singapore is the fragment on display here, which is known as the Singapore Stone. Two other fragments were sent to the Calcutta Museum in 1848, but their exact whereabouts are unknown.

The Stone has been dated from the 10th to 14th centuries. The inscription is written in Kawi script and contains some Sanskrit words, but it has never been fully deciphered.

The Singapore Stone is presented in a contextualised setting that allows visitors to better appreciate the story behind this artefact and its significance.

Gold earrings and armlet (14th century)
Fort Canning Hill (Bukit Larangan)
National Museum of Singapore collection



These objects were discovered in 1928. The earrings each have a socket joint and wire hinge.

The armlet bears a plaque of repoussé work depicting the Javanese *kala*. The *kala* motif is a protective symbol found at the entrance of Javanese temples dating from the 8th to 14th centuries. The armlet also has flexible chains, some of which were already broken when it was discovered. A statue from West Sumatra made in the mid-14th century shows a king wearing the same kind of jewellery at his waist.

***Sejarah Melayu* (The Malay Annals, 19th century)**

Paper

National Museum of Singapore collection

The *Sejarah Melayu* is a chronicle of the Malay courts of Singapore and Melaka from the 14th to 16th centuries. It remains a fundamental text of Malay history today. The oldest known version was compiled in 1612 by Tun Sri Lanang, a court official at the capital of the Johor sultanate.

Most existing manuscripts of the *Sejarah Melayu* date from the 19th century. This is the original manuscript in Jawi from which the 1896 edition in the collection of Reverend Dr W. S. Shellabear was printed. Shellabear's English translation of the *Sejarah Melayu* is still in print today.

Crown Colony (1819–1941)

Singapore from the Rocky Point

1819

John Michael Houghton

Grisaille on paper

Collected in the album *Views of the China Seas and Macao taken during Capt. D. Ross' Surveys by M. Houghton*

National Museum of Singapore collection



Houghton was a midshipman on the survey ship, HMS *Discovery*. It was commanded by hydrographer Captain Daniel Ross, who successfully assisted Raffles in the search for a new trading port near the entrance to the Strait of Malacca in 1819.

An inscription below Houghton's drawing reads, "This was the appearance of Singapore when they first landed to form a settlement". This painting is thus possibly the earliest surviving view of Singapore and an eyewitness pictorial account of Raffles's initial landing on the island on 28 January 1819.

Edinburgh Advertiser newspaper

14 January 1820

Paper

On loan from the collection of Mr & Mrs M. Yao



In 1820, the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, a twice-weekly newspaper, published extracts of a letter by an anonymous East India Company officer. The officer had accompanied Raffles on his first visit to Singapore the year before and observed the existence of “not above [more than] 30 Malay houses”.

At the time of his writing in August 1819, he gave a positive report of the settlement’s development. Notably, he recognised Major William Farquhar’s contribution to the settlement’s reputation with the Malays, much owing to Farquhar’s status among them as the “Rajah of Malacca”.

Portrait of Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham

1904

John Singer Sargent

Oil on canvas

England

National Museum of Singapore collection



This portrait, commissioned by the Straits Association, commemorated Sir Frank Swettenham's long service as Resident-General of the Federated Malay States (1896–1901) and Governor of the Straits Settlements (1901–04). It was painted by John Singer Sargent, the most celebrated portraitist of his time.

Swettenham is portrayed as a strong leader exuding power and authority. He is dressed in an immaculate white uniform and seated on a gilded armchair covered in Malay silk brocade. Visible above him, on the left, is the lower half of a globe on a gilt stand, showing a segment of the Malay States.

Portrait of Sir Shenton Whitelegge Thomas

1939

Xu Beihong

Oil on canvas

National Museum of Singapore collection



Sir Shenton Thomas was the Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Federated Malay States from 1936 to 1946. He is associated with the battle for Malaya and the fall of Singapore to the Japanese during World War Two.

This portrait was painted by Xu Beihong, one of the best-known figure painters in pre-war China. His oil paintings combined compositional elements from traditional Chinese paintings with those of European realism.

Xu composed this portrait while on a visit to Singapore in July 1939. The Governor's stiff posture could be Xu's attempt to capture the political tension before the outbreak of the Pacific War.

Portrait of Sir Cecil Clementi Smith

1891

John Callcott Horsley

England

Oil on canvas

National Museum of Singapore collection



Sir Cecil Clementi Smith was one of the more popular governors of the Straits Settlements (1887–93). He abolished secret societies through the Societies Ordinance of 1890 and established the Queen's scholarship for outstanding local students. He also formed the Chinese Advisory Board, with representatives from all Chinese dialect groups, to provide a formal link between the colonial government and the Chinese community.

This portrait captures Sir Clementi Smith's tall and stately frame. It was painted in England by his friend, J. C. Horsley of the Royal Academy. The portrait came about at the invitation of Chinese merchant Cheang Hong Lim, who covered the cost of the painting.

Revere Bell

1843

Bronze

National Museum of Singapore collection



This bell was cast in the Revere foundry in Boston in the tradition of the American patriot, Paul Revere. His daughter, Maria, was married to Joseph Balestier, the first American consul in Singapore (1837–52).

Maria Revere Balestier presented the bell to the Church of St Andrew (the predecessor to St Andrew's Cathedral). Her condition was that it sounded the curfew every night at 8 p.m. This would remind sailors in the town to return to their ships and to alert residents to be watchful after dark for robberies and assaults.

Letter from Sir Stamford Raffles to Colonel Addenbrooke

10 June 1819

Paper

National Museum of Singapore Collection



This letter to Colonel John Peter Addenbrooke, equerry to the late Princess Charlotte of Wales, was written on Raffles's second visit to Singapore. On the page displayed, Raffles describes Singapore as "a child of my own", and comments that "it is impossible to conceive of a place combining more advantages", referring to its location at the heart of the Malay Archipelago and in proximity to China.

On the reverse page, Raffles insists that his objective was "not territory but trade" and expresses his hope that this "one free port" would "eventually destroy the spell of Dutch monopoly".

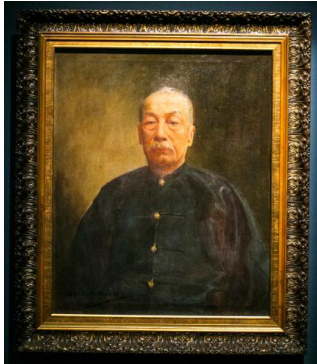
Portrait of Wong Ah Fook

c1924

Alexander H. Kirk

Oil on canvas

On loan from Mrs Vivienne Tan, in memory of Mr SY Wong



Wong Ah Fook came to Singapore from Canton (present-day Guangdong) and rose from rags to riches to become a contractor, plantation owner and banker in Johor and Singapore. He was close to Sultan Abu Bakar and built many royal residences and government buildings in Johor, including Istana Besar, the Sultan's palace.

In Singapore, he built the Istana Tyersall, the Sultan's residence in Singapore, and Victoria Memorial Hall. He also started Singapore's first Chinese bank, Kwong Yik Bank, and co-founded Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital. The establishment of Kwong Yik Bank in 1903 paved the way for the Chinese to set up modern banks in Singapore, marking the beginning of Singapore as a financial centre.

Based on a 1910s photograph of Wong, this portrait was painted by Alexander Kirk, an artist who arrived in Singapore in late 1923 at the invitation of Kirk's brother-in-law, Chief Justice Sir Walter Shaw. The portrait was commissioned by Wong's son, SY Wong.

Portrait of Temenggong Abu Bakar
1860s
Oil on canvas
National Museum of Singapore Collection



Abu Bakar succeeded his father Temenggong Ibrahim in 1862. He attracted merchants from Singapore to start plantations in Johor, and also travelled extensively in Europe, East Asia and Southeast Asia. He negotiated with the British to be recognised as the Sultan of Johor and is now regarded as the father of modern Johor.

This portrait depicts a young Abu Bakar, possibly just after his succession. He received a Western education and built a reputation among the British for being an “English gentleman”, as this painting suggests.

Syonan-To (1942–1945)

Anchor from the RMS *Empress of Asia* troopship (1940s)
Metal
National Museum of Singapore collection



This anchor was salvaged from the RMS *Empress of Asia*, a pre-war passenger liner converted into a troopship. It transported last-minute reinforcements of British troops from England to Singapore. On 5 February 1942, the ship was spotted by Japanese planes as it approached Singapore. It was the slowest and last ship in the convoy, and it was bombed and sunk despite the fierce defence put up by nearby ships. The ship's crew and most of the troops were rescued, but all the weapons on board were lost. After the British surrender, the rescued soldiers were taken as prisoners-of-war and many were sent to the Thai-Burma “Death Railway”.

Type 95 Ha Go Japanese tank
Replica



The Type 95 Ha Go was the most common Japanese tank used in World War Two. Introduced in 1935, this light tank was equipped with a Mitsubishi diesel engine and armed with a 37-mm gun and

two 7.7-mm machine guns. The fast and highly manoeuvrable tank could even compete against Allied light tanks in 1941. Over 2,000 such tanks were produced before the war ended.

The tank saw action in Malaya and the Pacific war. During the battle in Singapore, these tanks broke the British defence and reached Bukit Timah within a few days of the initial Japanese army landings in northern Singapore.

This replica was one of four that were constructed for Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg's television mini-series, *The Pacific* (2010). The replica weighs 3.5 tonnes and the tank's track was based on an original in the collection of the Australian War Memorial.

The Surrender Table

1940s

Teak

On loan, courtesy of the Australian War Memorial



On 15 February 1942, the British surrendered unconditionally to the Imperial Japanese Army. The commander of Malaya Command, Lieutenant-General Arthur E. Percival, signed the Instrument of Surrender document on this Table in the boardroom of the Ford Factory on Bukit Timah Road. All British and Allied forces were ceded to Lieutenant-General Tomoyuki Yamashita of the Imperial Japanese Army.

The British surrender came after the Japanese army's successful invasion of Malaya and Singapore, in which they covered over a thousand kilometres in slightly over eight weeks. During and after the war, the Table continued to be used in the boardroom. It was donated by Ford Malaysia to the Australian War Memorial in 1964.

Significance

In the year of our Golden Jubilee where we reflect on and commemorate milestones of our nation's history, the revamped History Gallery of the National Museum will re-open in September 2015 as part of our key SG50 celebrations. The Surrender Table will be showcased in the revamped History Gallery, as one of the artefacts that represent a pivotal point in Singapore's history – the Second World War. The War remains an important chapter of history in both Singapore and Australia. Singapore is therefore heartened that Australia has loaned us the Surrender Table, as a gesture of friendship rooted in deep historical ties between Singapore and Australia.

Gold necklace

Late 19th/early 20th century

Gold

Gift of Bridget Choy Wai Fong



This gold necklace, in the shape of a snake, is of Indian workmanship. It was a family heirloom given to Lady Daisy Thomas, the wife of Governor Shenton Thomas, by her grandmother. After World War

Two, Lady Thomas gave the necklace to Elizabeth Choy, as a token of gratitude for Mrs Choy's help and kindness in bringing her medicine and daily necessities while she was interned during the occupation. Mrs Choy later gave the necklace to her eldest daughter, Bridget, as a present for her 21st birthday.

Singapore (1945 to present)

5-1-3 by Choo Keng Kwang

1954

Woodblock print (one of 12 on display in the gallery)

National Museum of Singapore collection



Woodblock prints were a popular medium of expression in the 1950s and 1960s. They reflected the social and political reality of post-war Singapore. In this print, the title 5-1-3 refers to 13 May 1954, when Chinese middle school students protested against the National Service Ordinance. The students felt this was unfair as it required them to defend the British colonial government. This is the artist's impression of the protest, which turned violent.

Lee Kuan Yew's barrister robe

1950s

Wool

Gift of Lee Kuan Yew



A Cambridge-trained lawyer, Lee Kuan Yew became politically active in the early 1950s, when he acted as legal advisor to several trade unions. He became widely recognised as an advocate for union workers, helping them to negotiate for better pay and employment terms. This barrister robe was bought by Mr Lee upon his admission to the English bar. The robe was made by Ede & Ravenscroft, an established wig and robe maker in London.

National Language Month medal

1965

Metal

National Museum of Singapore collection



Regarded as the national language, Malay was seen as language that would help foster a common Malayan identity among the people of Singapore. National Language Month was launched in 1965 to promote the use of the Malay language among the people of Singapore and to raise the competency in the language. Various programmes were organised in conjunction with the campaign, such as book

exhibitions and essay writing contests. This medal was awarded by the organising committee for one such contest.

Majulah Singapura flexidisc

1959

Gift of Low Kam Hoong

Majulah Singapura vinyl record

c1960

National Museum of Singapore collection



“Majulah Singapura” was originally written in 1958 by Zubir Said for the Singapore City Council. The only known recording of this composition is on this flexidisc, a souvenir marking Singapore’s attainment of internal self-government in May 1959.

In December 1959, “Majulah Singapura” was chosen as Singapore’s state anthem, with some modifications to the tempo, tune and lyrics. A recording was released on a 7-inch vinyl record.

William Oh’s national service uniform

1969

Cotton drill, metal, leather, rubber

Gift of William Oh



William Oh was among the first 9,000 men called up for national service in 1967. After a two-year deferment, he began his service in 1969. This was one of the sets of uniforms issued to him upon his enlistment.

Commonly known as “Temasek Green”, this uniform was the first to be issued by the Singapore Armed Forces. It replaced the drill uniforms used by the British. It was worn by full-time national servicemen until 1979, when the colour was replaced by a darker green. By the 1980s, Temasek Green was replaced by a camouflage-print uniform.

Light House mosquito coil boxes
1960s
Paper
National Museum of Singapore collection



During the early years of industrialisation, Singapore welcomed all types of industries in a bid to create jobs for the population. The focus was on low-skilled labour-intensive manufacturing as factories were built in rapid succession in industrial estates throughout Singapore in the 1960s. The Light House brand of mosquito coil was manufactured by Malaysia Mosquito Spiral Manufacturing Company Limited. The company received pioneer status (which exempted it from taxes for five years) from the Singapore government and opened in Jurong Industrial estate in 1965. The factory produced mosquito coils for both local consumption and export.

Setron television set
Late 1960s to early 1970s
Wood, plastic, glass
National Museum of Singapore collection



Setron was a household name in Singapore during the 1960s and 1970s. It was set up by local businessmen from a coffee trading company whose Indonesian-based business had been affected by Konfrontasi. Setron manufactured television sets and radios at its factory at Tanglin Halt. When it began manufacturing in late 1964, it was the first television assembly plant in Southeast Asia.

Moulinex mixer
c1974
Metal, plastic
Gift of the Seah family, of the late Kong Lim Mei



This Moulinex mixer belonged to the donor's mother, Madam Kong, and remained her favourite baking tool till she passed away in the early 2000s. It was her first cake mixer and Madam Kong was only able to pursue her interest in baking in the 1970s when she moved into a bigger HDB flat with a larger kitchen space. The meticulous mending of the tear and wear on the mixer, evident on the mixer bowl, reveals its value to Madam Kong as it was one of the earliest kitchen appliances that she could afford.

Branch from the first tree planted by Dr Goh Keng Swee at the first Tree Planting Day in 1971
1990
Wood
National Museum of Singapore Reserve Collection



At the inaugural Tree Planting Day on 7 November 1971, acting Prime Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee planted a rain tree (*Albizia saman*) at the summit of Mount Faber. On that day, a total of 8,400 trees and 21,677 shrubs and creepers were planted by volunteers at schools, community centres, army camps and HDB towns.

This branch was taken in 1990 from that first rain tree planted by Dr Goh and placed inside the Singapore 2015 time capsule, which was buried in front of the Empress Place building on 29 December 1990 and unearthed in July 2015. The branch was deposited by Sim Cheng Hai from the Parks and Recreation Department, who prepared the accompanying memorandum. The rain tree planted by Dr Goh still stands at Faber Point.

LIFE IN SINGAPORE: THE PAST 100 YEARS

Modern Colony Gallery

Portrait of Song Ong Siang

Julius Wentscher

1936

Oil on canvas

National Museum of Singapore collection



This portrait of Straits-born Chinese Song Ong Siang (1871–1941) was commissioned by the Straits Chinese Consultative Committee, with funds from the Straits British Association, when Song became the first Chinese recipient of a British knighthood from Malaya in 1936.

Painted by German artist Julius Wentscher, Song is portrayed seated beside a table of law books and a Bible. He wears his knighthood badge around his neck, and the silver star of the order and the Colonial Auxiliary Forces medal on his chest. Song was awarded the Queen's scholarship in 1888 and read law at Downing College, Cambridge. At age 22, he started law firm Aitken and Ong Siang in Singapore. A devout Christian, Song was also a volunteer preacher to the Chinese Presbyterian congregation and served as the Chairman of the Chinese Christian Association for many years. The painting was displayed in Victoria Memorial Hall, together with the other images of dignitaries in Singapore, until the gallery was dismantled in 1959.

Best known for his contributions towards reforming the Chinese community in the Straits Settlements, Song led the formation of the Straits Chinese Magazine, the Straits Chinese British Association and the Singapore Chinese Girls' School.

Another of Song's important contributions is his 1923 book, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*. It is a detailed survey of the Chinese in Singapore, in particular the Peranakans, dating from 1819 to 1919.

Study desk with two side cabinets

Early 1900s

Teakwood

Gift of Dr Margaret Lim Toan Keng

This two-in-one study desk comes with a foldable writing surface, drawers and two side cabinets. When not in use, the table top could be stowed by folding it upwards and locking it in place. Typical of the late 19th-century European style, the desk is equipped with cabriole legs, distinguishable by their upper convex arch and lower concave arc with claw and ball feet. It belonged to the family of Dr and Mrs Albert Lim Liat Juay. Dr Lim was one of the earliest general practitioners in Singapore. He received his medical education at the University of Edinburgh.

Yue Tai Cheong Tailor shop box
1930s
Paper
Gift of Mr Koh Beng Swee



Before plastic carrier bags were introduced in the 1960s, it was common practice for tailors to place custom-made *cheongsam* in boxes for their customers, so that the dresses would not crease easily. This also served as a useful advertising tool for the tailor as the shop's name, address and services were printed on the cover and the sides of the box. Beautiful women in *cheongsam* would sometimes also be illustrated on the boxes. Yue Tai Cheong was located on 29 South Bridge Road and was probably one of the earlier places where Singapore women would purchase fabrics and have cheongsam custom made in the 1920s. The first wave of Shanghainese tailors is believed to have arrived in Singapore in the 1910s. By the 1930s, many of them were operating in the Bukit Timah area and along High Street and Orchard Road.

Blue *cheongsam* with black binding and knotted buttons
Late 1920s
Silk damask



The cut of this cheongsam is wide and loose, resembling a man's robe. The length of the dress, which is slightly below the knee, and its wide sleeves suggest that it was influenced by the "new civilised outfit" (*Wenming Xinzhuang*), an ensemble popular with female students after the 1911 Revolution in China. There are hardly any embellishments on the dress other than the simple black fastenings and piping. Two of the earliest groups of women to wear the *cheongsam* in Singapore were female teachers who had come from China, and the wives and young daughters of wealthy Chinese and Peranakan families, who had strong connections to China and were influenced by the latest fashion trends in Shanghai. The *cheongsam* of the 1920s was an important signifier for modernity and the liberation of women.

Women's shoes

Late 19th century to 1920s

Beads, cotton, sequins, leather, gold thread, plastic, velvet, suede, silk satin and wood

Shanghai, China, Singapore

Gift of Mr Lim Tiong Guan

Gift of Ms Woon Choy Yoke

Gift of Mr Wong Peng Cheong



The types of shoes worn by women reflected their evolving identities in Singapore during the early 20th century. The tiny pair of embroidered silk shoes for bound feet in the centre was typical of those worn by women in wealthy Chinese families, symbolising beauty and status in Singapore during the late and early 20th century. Measuring just 3 inches long, the wearer's feet would have been crushed and wrapped in bandages since she was young. Most women with bound feet stayed home as these shoes impeded movement. On the contrary, utilitarian black shoes were worn by female domestic servants working in the homes of the wealthy.

Handmade high-heeled shoes imported from the West were favoured by modern women in Singapore during the 1920s and 1930s. The blue silk and satin shoes with embroidered flowers and the pink wedding shoes with beaded tassels were both made in Shanghai, China. Sometimes, Chinese influences were incorporated into the design of such shoes. The pink satin high-heeled shoes with floral embroidery, for example, are decorated with both a huge bow and an embroidered peony motif in the centre. The crossed straps over the instep fastened with buttons make them appropriate for ballroom dancing, which had become very popular in Singapore by the 1920s.

John Little & Co. advertisement poster

c1910

Paper, wood

National Museum of Singapore collection



English education and the rise of Hollywood played a key role in how women came to adopt Western fashion and attitudes. Hollywood introduced the culture of fashionable, liberal young women known as "flappers", while local magazines in both Chinese and English featured the latest in Western fashion trends. Girls cut their hair short, wore make-up, went to the movies and aspired to look like their favourite movie stars. The affluent could shop for the latest luxury goods at department stores such as John Little & Co. and Robinson & Co. Each item on this advertisement poster bears a serial number for reference with the department store's catalogue.

Tableware from Government House

(Top Left) Sauce boat, casserole dish with lid, cheese plate with lid, teapot, cream jug, sugar bowl, bread dish

(Middle Left) Toast rack, butter dish, a condiment set for salt, pepper and mustard; champagne glass, ice cream cup, coffee cup with saucer and spoon, tea cup with saucer and spoon

(Bottom Left) Cutlery, dessert plate, serving plate, soup bowl

Silver, ceramics

1940s to 1950s

Sheffield, England

National Museum of Singapore collection



This set of tableware comes from the Government House (the Istana today) collection. Each item bears the royal cypher of the names of Britain's reigning monarchs, as well as the Coat of Arms of the Colony of Singapore (1948–59). The royal cyphers of King George VI (GRI stands for *Georgius Rex Imperator* – George King and Emperor) and Elizabeth Royal II each comprised the monarch's initials and titles. Here, they appear either interwoven or surmounted by a crown. The silverware bears the marks of "Mappin & Webb" and "Walker & Hall", two established silverware companies from Sheffield, England. Similar tableware could be purchased from John Little & Co. and Robinsons & Co. at the time.

Accompanying the display is a feature showcasing the dining tastes, manners and housekeeping tips related to silver and glassware of the Straits Settlements. By the early 1900s, cold storage facilities and imported frozen meat, fresh butter, fruit and other products from Australia and New Zealand, among others, were available to Europeans and wealthy Asians in Singapore through the Cold Storage Company. Although their palates were heavily influenced by the "British Imperial Taste", regional dishes such as curry, local fish and seasonal tropical fruit found their place on the menu.

Gold spiderweb lace dress with matching bolero jacket

1930s

London, United Kingdom

Lace

National Museum of Singapore collection



This dress is cut on the bias, or diagonally across the fabric. When worn, it drapes gracefully on the body and accentuates the wearer's curves. The dress comes with a matching short jacket. By the end of the 1920s, the flapper look had come and gone. It was replaced by outfits with a slim silhouette that emphasised the waistline and bodice. They were also characterised by low backs and deep V-necks at the front. With the growing popularity of cinemas, women began to turn to their favourite actresses for fashion inspiration. Likewise, the slim silhouette was adopted in China, Hong Kong and Singapore, as reflected in the 1930s' *cheongsam* style.

Comb for *sor hei* (combing up) ceremony

1930s

Wood

Donated by Wong Peng Cheong



Most *amahs* underwent a *sor hei* (combing up) ceremony where they took an oath before a statuette of Guan Yin (Goddess of Mercy) to remain unmarried and celibate. *Sor hei* literally means to “comb up” the hair into a bun or plait. As with a wedding, this ritual was often performed by a mistress of ceremony, usually an older *amah* or an elderly unmarried lady. Many *amahs* chose to undergo *sor hei* as a socially accepted form of singlehood, choosing sworn sisterhood as an alternative to the institution of marriage.

A pair of wine decanter with eight cups

Early 20th century

Glass, brass

National Museum of Singapore collection



Consisting of a pair of decanters and matching miniature cups, decorative glassware items such as these were extremely popular in Peranakan homes at the turn of the 20th century. Considered a symbol of wealth, this Western-invented serving set is mounted on a vine-like frame made of twisted brass. The handles and the sides of the frame are decorated with vine leaves, and the cups can be hung from the hooks. A decorative grapevine motif has been applied to the decanters and cups in glossy enamel paint. Wine, port or similar liquids would have been slowly poured into the decanter to separate the sediment from the rest of the drink.

Foldable vanity box with mirror

c1920s

Teakwood, mother-of-pearl inlay

Gift of Doris Lim



Decorated with birds, foliage and auspicious symbols associated with *shou* (寿), or longevity, in mother-of-pearl inlay, the cover of this vanity box features the Star of Longevity (寿星) holding a symbolic peach and accompanied by deer. The box is flanked by two doors adorned with a double fish symbol, symbolising abundance. When opened, two box drawers swing out to reveal extra hidden compartments, and the top can be lifted to display a large mirror. The vanity box is used to hold cosmetics and jewellery.

Glided armchair
c1900s
Teakwood, brocade
National Museum of Singapore collection



This gilded armchair belonged to Mrs Lee Choon Guan (Tan Teck Neo), the daughter of Baba tycoon and community leader, Tan Keong Saik. The crown and the vertical columns flanking the cushioned back of the armchair are decorated with berries and leaves. The arms end with an open-mouthed dragon head and the armchair also has cabriole legs. Notably, the red and gold brocade upholstery with plum blossom motifs and gold trimmings is not the original.

Tan married Straits-born Chinese businessman and philanthropist Lee Choon Guan in 1900. Together with a group of 23 Chinese ladies, she founded the Chinese Ladies' Association (renamed Chinese Women's Association in 1960) and became its first president in 1915. The Association's objective was to encourage the general improvement of young Chinese ladies by providing an avenue for them to learn skills, exchange ideas and render social services to the wider Chinese community in Singapore. Mrs Lee loaned her home, Magenta Cottage in Killiney Road, for these purposes. In 1918, Mrs Lee was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in recognition of her charitable efforts and contributions to the British Red Cross during World War One.

Surviving Syonan Gallery

Japanese staff at Syonan Museum
July 1943
Photographs on paper
Singapore
Gift of Mdm Michiyo Haneda



The Raffles Museum was renamed Syonan Museum during the Occupation. The main photograph, taken outside the museum building, features Marquis Tokugawa (seated at centre), Dr Haneda (seated on right) and Secretary Sugawara (standing, far left), among others. These photographs provide a rare glimpse into an obscure part of wartime history, when dedicated scientists on different sides worked together to preserve cultural and scientific materials.

Sewing Machine**1940s****Singapore****Wood, metal****Donated by Elizabeth Mahadevan**

Severe shortages of basic necessities during the Occupation compelled people to re-use materials from old clothes, curtains and bed sheets to make new garments, and mend worn ones. Sewing machines were an indispensable tool in many households for this purpose.

This sewing machine was a gift from Joseph Linus to his wife Grace, both from Kerala, Southwest India. During the war they nearly lost it to a looter, but Linus managed to retrieve the machine by producing its serial number (EC749402) as proof of ownership.

Wedding basin**1970s****Singapore****Metal****On loan from Mr and Mrs Lai Kok Wah**

This wedding basin holds great sentimental value for Yeok Ying as a powerful reminder of the original one she received as a young bride. About a month after her wedding, she had bumped into two Japanese soldiers on her way to wash at the common area with her wedding basin. They were about to drag her away, but a quick-thinking Hakka woman begged them on her knees to free her. The soldiers relented, sparing Yeok Ying an unimaginable fate.

Kok Wah and Yeok Ying's wedding rings**1942****Singapore****Gold****On loan from Mr and Mrs Lai Kok Wah**

This pair of gold rings was custom-made for the wedding. The ring on the right belongs to Yeok Ying.

The ring on the right belongs to Yeok Ying and bears Kok Wah's name, while the one on the left, which is Kok Wah's, is engraved with Yeok Ying's name. They paid Weng Cheong Goldsmith, which is still in business at South Bridge Road today, about 60 Straits dollars for the rings as well as the cost of engraving.

Kok Wah and Yeok Ying's wedding certificate

1942

Singapore

Paper

On loan from Mr and Mrs Lai Kok Wah



The couple had their marriage registered six months after their customary wedding on 19 August 2602 (1942). The certificate contains two errors: Kok Wah's age was recorded as 31 instead of 26, and his occupation was listed as a fishmonger instead of a fish wholesaler. It was signed and sealed by the Registrar of Marriages of the Municipality of Syonan, H. E. Woodford. In the early months of the Japanese Occupation, many civil servants remained in service using documents left by the British, before the Japanese military government issued new ones.

Movie poster of *The Fall of Singapore*

1942

Singapore

Paper

National Museum of Singapore collection



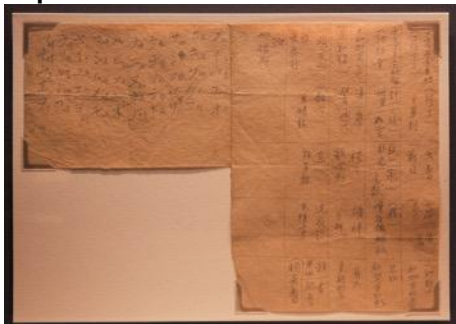
This poster boldly taunts cinemagoers to see “how the invincible imperial army” brought about the fall of Singapore, “a much vaunted impregnable fortress”. The film was presented by *Eiga Haikyusha* (Japan Film Distribution Company), which took full control of film distribution and all theatres in Syonan. Visiting the cinema during the Occupation period could be hazardous, however, as the Japanese were known to round up people in the *gekijo* (theatres) for forced labour.

Movie poster of *Tsubasa no Gaika*
 1942–43
 Japan
 Paper
 National Museum of Singapore collection



This is a colour poster for *Tsubasa no Gaika* (A Triumph of Wings), a Japanese wartime movie co-written by Akira Kurosawa and released in 1942 by the Toho Film Company. Many such films were screened in Singapore and other parts of Asia to instil belief in Japanese military supremacy and extol *seishin* – the Japanese spirit of loyalty, discipline and determination. A lack of alternative movie choices coupled with natural curiosity meant that many people did eventually watch these films.

Chinese notes on Japanese pronunciation
 1942–45
 Singapore
 Paper



These handwritten notes, likely by a native Hokkien speaker, demonstrate a creative attempt at learning basic Japanese.

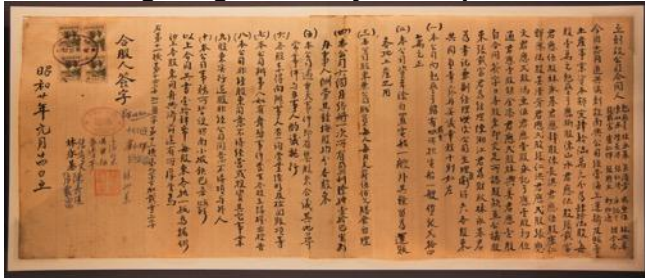
The portion on the right is a set of transliterations of Japanese words in Chinese characters. By devising his own phonetic renderings of Japanese terms such as “*mizu*” (water) and “*sentaku*” (washing clothes) which were reasonably similar to the original in pronunciation, the writer probably hoped to acquire the new vocabulary quickly.

On the left portion is an improvised Chinese transliteration of the *katakana* Japanese syllabary.



An interactive installation *Nippon Phonics* showing Hokkien words used by people then to learn basic Japanese accompanies this display.

Business contract for setting up of shipping and trading company
1945
Singapore
Paper
Gift of Song Seng Chan Bicycle Shop at Joo Chiat Road (1932 to 2013)



This agreement dated 24 January 1945 was signed by 14 parties, including Loh Jin Hwee, for the purpose of setting up a shipping and trading company named Nan Xing. It listed details such as start-up capital, each shareholder's entitlement, the appointments of the various shareholders and company by-laws. The purchase of a commercial vessel, staff salary and even a whistleblowing policy to guard against fraud were also mentioned.

Loh Jin Hwee was the founder of Song Seng Chan bicycle shop, which originally opened under the name Chop Song Seng in 1932 at 479 Joo Chiat Road. The shop was endorsed by the Japanese during the Occupation for bicycle repairs. The enterprising Loh also started a trishaw rental business and partnered with others to build a commercial vessel for a shipping and trading company during the war years.

Union Jack
1940s
Britain
Wool
Donated by Michael Alves on behalf of the Alves and de Souza families



This flag is highly symbolic as it marks the end of the darkest period in Singapore's history. It was raised by Force 136 at Bahau in September 1945, after the Japanese surrender. During repatriation, a British officer gave the flag to Mickey Alves, who was just a boy at the time living with his adopted Eurasian family at the colony. Mickey kept it for decades before handing it to his cousin, Fiona Hodgkins, who donated it to the museum.

Growing Up Gallery

Raleigh "Sports" three-speed bicycle
1963
Singapore
Steel
Gift of Lee Hsien Loong



This bicycle belonged to Lee Hsien Loong, the current Prime Minister of Singapore. His paternal grandmother, Chua Jim Neo, had bought the bicycle for him as a present for his 11th birthday. With

its origins dating back to the 1880s, the Raleigh Bicycle Company was once the largest manufacturer of bicycles in the world. Its bicycles were popular in Singapore up to the 1970s.

**Participant's medal belonging to Tang Pui Wah from the Summer Olympics in Helsinki
1952**

Helsinki

Metal

National Museum of Singapore collection



Tang Pui Wah took part in the 80-metre hurdles and 100-metre sprint at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki and was the first sportswoman to represent Singapore at the Games. Although the cold weather, the unfamiliar track and the size of the crowd intimidated Tang and she did not qualify for the events, her presence in the Games helped to raise local public awareness of women in sports.

***Shi Jie Er Tong* (世界儿童, Children of the World)**

1953

Singapore

Paper

National Museum of Singapore collection



Although not the first magazine published locally for children in the post-World War 2 era, the *Children of the World* magazine series was one of the most popular in Singapore. It featured the views and experiences of young readers on various topics.

Poster for Hindi film *Singapore*

1960

Singapore

Paper

National Museum of Singapore collection



Directed by Shakti Samanta, this Bollywood film was shot on location in Singapore and portrayed the country as an exotic locale. Starring famous local Malay actress Maria Menado, the plot revolves around murders and hidden treasures in a rubber plantation in Singapore.

Voices of Singapore Gallery

New installations commissioned for this gallery are the highlight.

Pursuit of Leisure TV Wall Projection



The rapid industrialisation of Singapore in the late 1960s and 1970s led to the creation of a new social culture where work and leisure were seen as separate entities. Improvements in education, jobs, housing and affluence also supported the pursuit of leisure. Infrastructure such as new hotels, shopping complexes, amusement centres and theme parks were built to encourage shopping, eating out and entertainment. Tourism was also a major industry by the 1980s and had, through its campaigns, created an attractive, modern Singapore as a holiday destination.

This wall installation presents a nostalgic view of leisure activities in Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s.

Video footage, Courtesy of Professor Vincent Ong and Y T Seeto and the National Archives of Singapore

Remembering the Jurong drive-in cinema



This video installation is inspired by the drive-in cinema in Jurong (1971–1985). One of Asia's largest drive-ins at the time, the popular cinema could accommodate nearly 900 vehicles. The two nightly and Saturday midnight screenings attracted packed audiences. These numbers dwindled by the mid-1980s, largely due to the advent of video. The drive-in cinema was part of a group of leisure spots in western Singapore, which included the Jurong Bird Park (opened in 1971), Japanese Garden (built in 1974) and Chinese Garden (built in 1975).

The montage was created by Eva Tang, an acclaimed young Singaporean filmmaker. She is inspired by the different film genres and themes popular with Singaporean audiences in the 1970s and 1980s.

Goh Seng Choo Gallery

Danger and Desire

Discover the fine line between Desire and Danger at this stimulating new exhibition at the Goh Seng Choo Gallery. Featuring creatures that arouse appetites and instil fear, and exotic plants sought for their ability to induce pleasure or pain, this selection of drawings from the *William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings* explores the complex and sometimes uneasy relationship between man and nature.

Breadflower / Bunga kerak nasi / *Vallaris glabra* **National Museum of Singapore collection**



Breadflowers, also known as *bunga kerak nasi*, are widely grown throughout the Malay Archipelago. The drawing is accompanied by a scent station which captures the breadflower's gentle and sweet fragrance. Visitors will gain an understanding of how this delicate white flower is typically used in Malay weddings and special occasions.

Ipoh / Pohon upas / *Antiaris toxicaria* **National Museum of Singapore collection**



Blowpipe with spear head (Early 20th century, Sarawak) **National Museum of Singapore collection**



Displayed in conjunction with the Ipoh tree drawing, this blowpipe with spearhead highlights how Ipoh trees have long been used to make *upas*, a poison applied to weapons for hunting and warfare.

Emanuel Godinho de Erédia, a 16th-century Portuguese-Bugis explorer, observed that warriors in the Malay Peninsula often employed "bows and arrows, and blow-pipes with poisoned darts". He added:

“The ‘Ipo’ is a tree with a deadly poison: should its juice in any manner come into contact with a wound, however slightly the skin be broken, instant death results, and the same effect occurs if it be drunk; if the least drop of the juice should happen to fall on the body, very severe agony is caused; lastly, there is no antidote for this poison.”

Straw-headed bulbul / Burung barau-barau / *Pycnonotus zeylanicus*
National Museum of Singapore collection



The practice of keeping cage birds is an ancient tradition in the region and remains a popular pastime in Singapore. Unfortunately, unconstrained demand for songbirds has threatened some species with extinction.

One example is the straw-headed bulbul. The bulbul’s call has been described as the “most beautiful song of any bird native to Melaka and Singapore ... liquid, rich and melodious”. Aptly, an inscription on the back of the painting describes the bird as the “Molucca nightingale”.

White gutta / Nyatoh putih / *Palaquium obovatum*
National Museum of Singapore collection



Gutta-percha slab (20th century)
On Loan from Cotra Enterprise (Private) Limited



Palaquium trees produce gutta-percha, greyish-white latex that hardens at room temperature. It is a natural plastic, which is easily moulded when heated but becomes stable and waterproof when cooled. This made it an ideal material for insulating undersea cables. Vast quantities of gutta-percha were exported from Singapore in the 19th century. A touch display of a gutta-percha slab gives visitors an opportunity to feel this material.

ABOUT THE AMBIENT SCENTS AND SCENT STATIONS

Adding a sensory dimension to the visitor's experience in the galleries are ambient scents and scent stations. The scents are produced and sponsored by Givaudan for the National Museum.

Singapore History Gallery

Ambient Scent: *After Rain* in *Transforming the Landscape* section

The gallery experience is enhanced by the light scent of *After Rain*, a combination of the smell of rain, moist soil, concrete and greenery. This scent was chosen to convey how rain is an important element in Singapore's greening efforts. Since 1971, Tree Planting Days have specifically been held on the first Sunday of November to coincide with the start of the monsoon season; a creative solution to minimise the need for watering while providing optimal growth for seedlings.

Ingredients: bergamot, green leaves, grass, water flowers, bamboo, soil, green apple, aloe vera, peach, lactonic

Scent Station: *Tembusu flowers*

Discover the strong, floral fragrance of tembusu flowers at this station. Indigenous to Singapore and known for its distinctive textured brown bark, the tembusu tree emits a sweet-smelling fragrance during the flowering season. However, the tembusu tree was not selected for divider or roadside planting in the 1960s, as its fully-grown roots could cause structural damage. Instead, practical choices such as angsa and rain trees were favoured because they grow quickly and their umbrella-shaped crowns provide much-needed shade in Singapore's hot and humid climate.

Ingredients: acacia, ylang, neroli, orange, jasmine, rose, white flowers, apricot, orange blossom, honey, muguet, osmanthus

Scent Station: *Polluted Singapore River*

For more than a century, the Singapore River was used as an open sewer by communities that lived and worked along the river, such as boat dwellers, squatters, hawkers and workers at light industrial factories. Many older Singaporeans remember the river's pungent smell before the clean-up from 1977 to 1987. The creation of the polluted Singapore River scent was inspired by what the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew wrote in his biography: "The Singapore River was an open sewer that smelt worse year by year from my school days at RI in the 1930s to 1980s ... The stench in the City was dreadful at low tide. In 1977, a blind clerk in Lee and Lee told my wife that he knew when his bus was approaching the Singapore River on his way to work. He could smell the sulphur dioxide." This scent station seeks to capture the different sources of pollution in the Singapore River, such as rotting garbage and human and industrial waste.

Ingredients: seaweed, marine, watery, moss, rotten eggs, tropical fruits, gasoline, rubbish, mud

Life in Singapore: The Past 100 Years Galleries

Modern Colony Gallery

Ambient Scent: *Afternoon Tea*

Step back in time into a pre-war black-and-white colonial bungalow and escape the heat and humidity with a relaxing cup of afternoon tea.

Ingredients: *longjing* tea, lemon tart, orange, cedar wood, various spices, verbena, delicate red musk

Goh Seng Choo Gallery: *Desire and Danger*

Scent Station: Agarwood

Discover the woody scent of agarwood (*gaharu*) and its historical uses via the resin-infused chips and burner objects on display in the gallery.

Ingredient: natural, identical Givaudan Agarwood Base

Scent Station: Kemenyan

Widely used in the Malay-Muslim world for rituals, *kemenyan* is a resin produced by Gum Benjamin trees. Discover the fragrance of *kemenyan* at this station.

Ingredient: Givaudan natural ingredient

Scent Station: Breadflower

This scent captures the distinct aroma, freshness and sweetness of the delicate white breadflowers (*bunga kesidang*) traditionally used in Malay weddings.

Ingredients: white flowers, *pandan*, jasmine, rice powder, *plumeria*, *tonka* beans, vanilla, coconut

Scent Station: Greater Galangal

Gingers have long been valued by people as food, spices and medicine. Galangal (*lengkuas*) is a ginger traditionally used to flavour *rendang* (meat simmered in coconut milk and spices). The scent at this station recreates the galangal's heady aroma.

Ingredient: Givaudan flavour base

City – the Limited Edition Fragrance in Celebration of SG50

City is a unisex fine fragrance specially created by Givaudan to celebrate Singapore's success over the past 50 years. *City* encapsulates the multifaceted dimensions that our Garden City uniquely embodies.

No other city can lay claim to such a diverse multicultural society set among clean, modern urban skyscrapers in an oasis of green lushness. The humid and tropical climate which gives Singapore a distinctive floral scent is markedly different to other big cities such as London, New York, Paris, and even Hong Kong.

The magical blend of local ingredients ranging from exotic orchids and spicy peppers to musky ambrette endeavours to capture the energy and dynamism of Singapore and evoke a sense of lushness and complexity with a surprisingly refreshing lift.

City is a special edition unisex fine fragrance crafted just for Singapore's Jubilee celebrations in collaboration with the National Heritage Board. It is available for a limited period at the National Museum of Singapore Museum Label store at SGD80.00 for a 50ml bottle of *eau de parfum*. Proceeds from the sale of *City* will be donated to the National Museum of Singapore.

Top notes: grapefruit, pepper

Middle notes: ylang, jasmine, magnolia, orchid

Bottom notes: amber, vetiver, ambrette

OPENING WEEKEND CARNIVAL PROGRAMME

19 and 20 September 2015 (Saturday and Sunday)

10:00am to 7:00pm

National Museum of Singapore

Free Admission

Come visit the new permanent galleries at the National Museum! Refreshed with updated stories and content on Singapore's history, the new galleries recapture the nation's defining moments, challenges and achievements from its earliest beginnings 700 years ago to the independent, modern city-state it is today. Celebrate the opening with guided tours, fun-filled activities where you can dress up in vintage costumes and take pictures, listen to mesmerising tales of yesteryear, treat yourself to some familiar local treats, and more! Museum hosts will also be on hand to guide you through new interactive platforms in the galleries to help enhance the experience as you rediscover Singapore's history.

PROGRAMME

Saturday, 19 September 2015

Time	Programme	Location
10:00am to 6:00pm	Bouncy Castles (Dove, Watermelon & Elephant)	Front Lawn
	Calligraphy Booth	Concourse, Level 1
	Sale of Old School Drinks	Food For Thought, Level 1
	Six Food Stalls of Yesteryear * (Kacang Puteh, Candy Floss, Kueh Tu Tu, Ice Cream Sandwiches, Biscuits and Ting Ting Candy) Tikam Tikam Stall (By donation) <i>* The snacks are only redeemable when a series of bingo activities related to the permanent galleries and carnival activity stations, has been completed.</i> <i>If all activities are completed, visitors stand a chance to win four admission tickets to the Treasures of the World from the British Museum special exhibition.</i> <i>Please approach the Visitor Services counter for the bingo sheet.</i>	Concourse, Level 1
	Photo Booth with Costume Change and Hat-Making Workshop	Platform, Level 2
	Make-a-Paper-Aeroplane Workshop	Outside Growing Up Gallery, Level 2
	Henna Art Painting	Outside Goh Seng Choo Gallery, Level 2

	Face Painting	Outside Voices of Singapore Gallery, Level 2
	Roving Balloon Sculptor	Various locations
10:00am to 12:00pm 4:00pm to 6:00pm	Children's 'Street Side Library'	Glass Atrium, Level 2
10:30am, 4:30pm and 5:30pm	Story Telling (30 mins per session)	Glass Atrium, Level 2
11:30am, 12:00nn, 12:30pm, 1:00pm, 1:30pm and 3:30pm	<p>Special Guided Tours</p> <p>Guides dressed up as historical characters will take you on a special tour of the Singapore History Gallery!</p> <p>Free. Each tour is one hour and limited to 20 persons per session.</p>	Meeting point: Rotunda, Level 1
12:00nn to 6:00pm	Sale of Ice Popsicles by Sng Bao Society	Front Lawn

Sunday, 20 September 2015

Time	Programme	Location
10:00am to 6:00pm	Bouncy Castles (Dove, Watermelon & Elephant)	Front Lawn
	Calligraphy Booth	Concourse, Level 1
	Sale of Old School Drinks	Food For Thought, Level 1
	<p>Six Food Stalls of Yesteryear * (Kacang Puteh, Candy Floss, Kueh Tu Tu, Ice Cream Sandwiches, Biscuits and Ting Ting Candy)</p> <p>Tikam Tikam Stall (By donation)</p> <p><i>* The snacks are only redeemable when a series of bingo activities related to the permanent galleries and carnival activity stations, has been completed.</i></p> <p><i>If all activities are completed, visitors stand a chance to win four admission tickets to the Treasures of the World from the British Museum special exhibition.</i></p> <p><i>Please approach the Visitor Services counter for the bingo sheet.</i></p>	Concourse, Level 1
	Photo Booth with Costume Change	Platform, Level 2
	Hat-Making Workshop	Glass Atrium, Level 2
	Make-a-Paper-Aeroplane Workshop	Outside Growing Up

		Gallery, Level 2
	Henna Art Painting	Outside Goh Seng Choo Gallery, Level 2
	Face Painting	Outside Voices of Singapore Gallery, Level 2
	Children's 'Street Side Library'	Glass Atrium, Level 2
	Roving Balloon Sculptor	Rotunda
10:30am, 1:30pm and 4:30pm	Story Telling (30 mins per session)	Glass Atrium, Level 2
12:00nn and 3:00pm	<p>Guided Tours</p> <p>Join in a guided tour of the Singapore History Gallery.</p> <p>Free.</p> <p>Each tour is one hour and limited to 20 persons per session.</p>	<p>Meeting point:</p> <p>Rotunda, Level 1</p>
12:00nn to 6:00pm	Sale of Ice Popsicles by Sng Bao Society	Front Lawn
4:00pm and 5:00pm	Recital of Teochew Folk Poems on Life During the Japanese Occupation	Glass Atrium, Level 2