

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS

SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICT'S ANONYMOUS

Featured artists: ERNEST CHAN, CHEN KEZHAN,
YANYUN CHEN, CHEONG SOO PIENG, CHUA EK KAY,
CONDRO PRIYOAJI, MARTIN CONSTABLE, NONA GARCIA,
KAYLEIGH GOH, HAN SAI POR, F. X. HARSONO, JEREMY
HIAH, HONG LING, HONG SEK CHERN, JUMAADI,
KHVAY SAMNANG, LATIFF MOHIDIN, JANE LEE, LEE WEN,
LIM TZE PENG, SUSIE LINGHAM, LOW PEY SIEN,
I GUSTI AYU KADEK MURNIASIH, WAWI NAVARROZA,
NGUYEN TRUNG, ONG SI HUI, GARY-ROSS PASTRANA,
SEMSAR SIAHAAN, SIM CHI YIN, GUO-LIANG TAN,
MELISSA TAN, TAN TEO KWANG, TANG DA WU, NATEE
UTARIT, KAWITA VATANA, JYANKUR, RONALD VENTURA,
SUZANN VICTOR, KHAIRULDDIN WAHAB, ASIM WAQIF,
WONG KEEN, WONG PERNG FEY

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Private MUSEUM

CURATED BY
LOW SZE WEE
MICHELLE HO
MICHAEL LEE

Private
MUSEUM
SINGAPORE

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS

**SELECTED WORKS FROM
ART ADDICT'S ANONYMOUS**

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS
FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
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PREFACE
THE ART OF COLLECTING:
COLLECTORS AS
PATRONS

AARON TEO

Associate Director
The Private Museum Singapore

Chronic Compulsions:
Selected Works from Art Addicts Anonymous marks
a significant milestone in the history of The Private
Museum Singapore.

Presented as a monumental showcase as part of Singapore Art Week in January 2024, it is the debut exhibition of the collectors' circle known as Art Addicts Anonymous (AAA). This unique collaboration between the museum and AAA highlights participating private collections, curated with the collaborative effort of three local curators, and featuring selected artworks from a wide array of artists. The exhibition provides a nuanced view into the art collections within Singapore's arts and cultural landscapes, aligning with the museum's vision to serve as a dynamic space, a dedicated place, and an inclusive platform for the appreciation of art.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of Art Addicts Anonymous (AAA), initiated by John Chia in 2014, this important occasion commemorates the decade-long journey of AAA—from a small circle of art-lovers to a thriving community boasting over 30 collections. The name, "Art Addicts Anonymous," explores the notion of art collecting with a playful nod toward a potential medical condition—akin to addiction. This resonates with the group's early origins which predominantly consisted of professionals, particularly those with a strong presence in the medical field. Over time, the group has grown far and beyond into a diverse community, welcoming individuals from all walks of life. In a similar whimsical manner, responding to the idea of addiction and the sense of community among "addicts", the title "Chronic Compulsions" arises and hints that, within all its diversity, a unifying thread binding the collecting community together is their shared love for art.

This major exhibition stands as the museum's most extensive collectors' showcase to date—a bold initiative integrating works from 15 distinct collections, each contributing a personal narrative. Inspired by AAA's collective interest towards art collecting, the curation process resulted in an eclectic presentation—weaving the stories and personal insights that intimately connect each collection to another.

With a strong emphasis on showcasing local art practices, the exhibition features a total of 41 artists, with two-thirds hailing from Singapore or being Singapore-based, and the remaining artists representing Southeast

Asia and East Asia. Notably, the selection entails a rich combination of works by both modern and contemporary artists, encapsulating a myriad representation of artistic expressions from artists of various backgrounds. This deliberate curation aims to reflect the collecting insights—providing a profound glimpse into the minds of the collectors. The final selection comprises a dynamic showcase of 53 artworks, curated to offer an experiential visit for museum goers. The exhibition spans a wide spectrum of artistic mediums, encompassing painting, sculpture, video, and installation. Each artwork is thoughtfully chosen to contribute to the overall narrative of the exhibition, inviting viewers to explore the evolving landscapes of art collecting in Singapore.

The extensive year-long development of this exhibition embodies the transformative power of collaboration. It began with a conversation between me and Linda Neo, an AAA member, where we ideated on the prospect of a large-scale collectors' exhibition for AAA, especially considering the museum's impending expansion to a new home. Following this initial discussion, the idea gained further momentum and evoked greater excitement. The collaborative journey took a structured turn, with the collectors taking the proactive step of forming a core committee group initiated by AAA committee chairperson, Joanne Ngeow. Although AAA began as an informal group, the commitment to form committees for the 10-year anniversary exhibition emerged as an important and strategic decision. This decision introduced a necessary layer of organisation, especially in navigating complex tasks such as exhibition coordination and managing communications among the 15 private collections involved in the exhibition.

After laying the foundation through numerous gatherings and conversations, involving both virtual and in-person interactions, with the museum team and collectors, the next key phase welcomed three curators—Low Sze Wee, Michelle Ho, and Michael Lee—into the project. Each curator brought a distinct set of research focuses and specialisations, contributing their expertise to the collaboration. Our collective aim was to enrich the project with varied perspectives, ensuring a comprehensive and nuanced approach to curating the collections. Adding a personal dimension to the process, the curators were strategically assigned to oversee specific collections, fostering intentional pairings that sought to elevate the curation of each collection.

These personal exchanges between curators and collectors were important in deepening the understanding of the processes behind each collection. Together, these dialogues formed a coherent and compelling narrative that binds the entirety of the exhibition. The collaboration between curators, collectors, and the museum team showcased the depth of individual stories and the collective effort that breathed life into the exhibition.

The essays contributed by the curators in this book delve into different themes such as the history of collecting in Singapore, the psychological aspects of collecting, and the observations made curating the collectors' exhibition. This multifaceted exploration underscores the significance of diversity and collaboration in the curation process. It not only provides valuable insights into the intricate worlds of art collections, but also offers visitors a window into the motivations behind art collecting.

Since August 2023, the museum opened the doors of its new home at 11 Upper Wilkie Road. This recently inaugurated space is more than just a physical location; it is a historical building with over a century's worth of stories delicately woven into its walls. Nestled in an art enclave surrounded by artist studios and a theatre school, the museum's new home spans two levels and an attic, significantly surpassing the scale of our former gallery space at 51 Waterloo Street. This expansion anchors a transformative moment for the museum—ushering in a new era of possibilities. It not only ensures the continuation of the museum's programming, but also unlocks the potential for ambitious projects, exemplified by the current exhibition where numerous collections are housed under one roof. The building serves as a larger monument for new artistic collaborations and possibilities in the arts and culture ecology in Singapore, nurturing an environment where diverse perspectives converge.

The exhibition reflects the museum's slogan "Private Collections in a Public Museum", emphasising the significance of sharing privately owned artworks with the public. The museum, a repository of private pleasures, transforms into a platform where collectors transcend the role of art consumers to become patrons of the arts, with the philanthropic aim to foster wider appreciation. Beyond its purpose for public display, the exhibition serves as an invaluable resource for students studying past works by artists. Simultaneously, it offers a unique opportunity for the artists themselves to revisit their earlier works, some dating back decades. In line with the museum's commitment to accessibility, admission is free, allowing the public to enjoy the exhibition for a brief yet impactful 2.5-month period. This approach strikes an oddly interesting balance, enabling individuals to both own and share art. The essence of sharing is what sets this exhibition apart, turning it into a special celebration of artistic expression, in both artmaking and the art of collecting.

With the unveiling of *Chronic Compulsions: Selected Works from Art Addicts Anonymous*, a pivotal collectors' exhibition in our museum's history, the opening reception was graced by our Guest-of-Honour, Mrs Rosa Daniel, whose presence added a meaningful touch. Representing the sentiments of the museum founders, Daniel Teo and Rachel Teo, I extend our sincere appreciation to all state agencies that have supported the realisation of this project, with special gratitude to the National Arts Council for its Singapore Art Week grant. A big thank you to our three curators, the artists, and the project team for the hard work and time spent in ensuring the success of this exhibition. Additionally, I would like to extend thanks to all our partners who played a crucial role in both the creation of the exhibition and of this book. Your contributions have been key to the success of this project. Finally, my heartfelt gratitude goes towards all the collectors for their trust and dedication, particularly the AAA committee members without whom the exhibition and this book would not have been possible. ✨

Aaron Teo
Associate Director
The Private Museum Singapore

FOREWORD

JOHN CHIA

Collector
Art Addicts Anonymous

Art collecting is compulsive.
It is objectified desire—the unconscious
will, expressing itself, seeking
embodiment in the world.

Art collecting is the act of manifesting disquiet. It is a disagreement with the status quo; an argument with the world. Art is full of secrets. It is deeply personal, going down many layers into the substratum, into the deepest fibre of the collector's being. Everyone has their own reasons for art collecting. Everyone is on their own journey.

Yet, how does one look at art? How does one even begin to collect art? The Art Addicts Anonymous (AAA) was formed as a self-organised community, wherein everyone, despite being “mostly” outside of the art world, found themselves keenly interested in viewing and collecting art. The group started out with individuals who kept bumping into each other in galleries and museums, took a chance to talk to “strangers”, and embarked on a very long conversation and friendship centred around collecting art. Art Addicts Anonymous (AAA) is hence a circle of friends. Friends who love art—who are addicted to art. Friends who have gathered around the hunt, and committed themselves to upkeeping a collection.

Who are these strange people? What do they buy? What are their motivations? Comprising of doctors, lawyers, bankers, civil service, and business owners, the group spans many ages and backgrounds. What brings it together is a common love of beauty, and the desire to collect good artworks. Some of the most amazing artworks are collected in the shadows. They may never be seen once they leave the gallery studio, perhaps accessible only to a tight circle of friends. Art connoisseurship is a private affair, for pure private enjoyment. It carries no social responsibility. It speaks personally to the collector. But once in a while, artworks are borrowed for display at events and shows, and they surface in the world. Here, they speak again.

Chronic Compulsions features over 50 artworks from 15 collections, and is where AAA comes together to share and talk

about their collections. Collectors, young and old, gather to share knowledge, experience, and most of all passion—for what is life, if it is not lived with beauty, love, and passion? The exhibition also marks the 10th year since the group's inception, a starting point marked by the creation of the group's distinctive WhatsApp community. The group remains ever-evolving in identity, whether it is around newer members or “old birds”—sometimes taking on a modernist bent, other times contemporary, with a hint of Chinese ink. Yet, it is also always on the hunt, building up around the ethos of friendship, and that of sharing and collecting.

In a world full of conflict, suffering, and strife, art's capacity for multiple interpretations and meanings may provide people with a way to navigate the contradictions of life. To be able to look at the world through different lenses is art's gift to us. Perhaps paradoxically, art adds both weight and lightness to our lives. By seeding this special journey with friendships, and sharing the joy in art, this community has made this wonderful journey of collecting all the more sweeter, and all the more special. 🍷

John Chia

Collector

Art Addicts Anonymous

INSTALLATION VIEWS

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS OF ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

The Private Museum
11 Upper Wilkie Road

Chronic Compulsions
SELECTED WORKS FROM
ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
11.01.2024 — 24.03.2024

Curator: Michael Lee
Co-curator: Michelle Ho
Sponsor: The Singapore Art Museum

Start to end of the exhibition
is a continuous process
of discovery and learning
to understand the complexities
of addiction and recovery.

EDM

INSTALLATION VIEW: ARRIVAL HALL, LEVEL 1

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS



EXIT

CHRONIC
COMPULSIONS
1.10.2014 - 14.11.2014
SELECTED WORKS FROM
ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

CURATED BY
LINDSEY WHEAT
MICHELLE DE KUIP
MICHAEL LEE

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT HELPS ARTISTS WITH ADDICTIONS RECOVER AND REBUILD THEIR LIVES. WE OFFER A SAFE SPACE FOR ARTISTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER. WE ALSO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR THE ARTS COMMUNITY.

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INSTALLATION VIEW: SOPHIA STAIR, LEVEL 1

CHRON CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS



INSTALLATION VIEW: SOPHIA STAIR, LEVEL 2

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

Caroline Terrace



INSTALLATION VIEW: OSBORNE HALL, LEVEL 2

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS



Caroline Verandah



Emily Gallery

Caroline Terrace





INSTALLATION VIEW: CAROLINE VERANDAH, LEVEL 2

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS



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INSTALLATION VIEW: EMILY ARCADE, LEVEL 2

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS





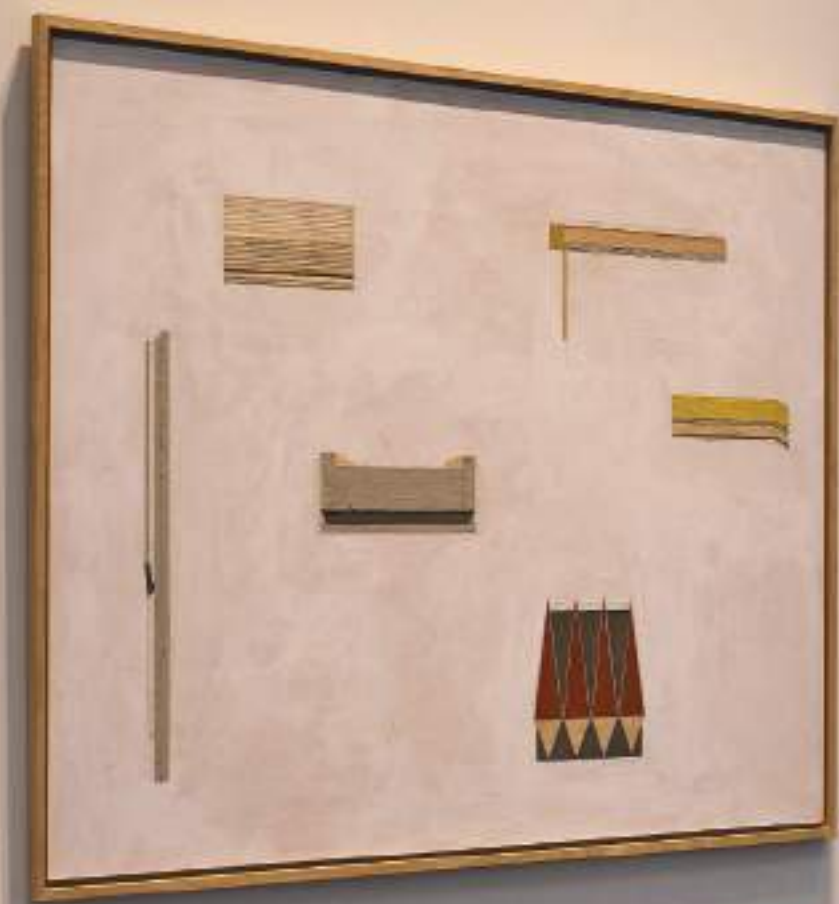
INSTALLATION VIEW: EMILY GALLERY & ALCOVE, LEVEL 2

CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

Emily Alcove







INSTALLATION VIEW: SOPHIA GALLERY & ALCOVE, LEVEL 2



CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS







INSTALLATION VIEW: ATTIC



CHRONIC COMPULSIONS: SELECTED WORKS FROM ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS



ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS: A POSITIVE PROGNOSIS

LOW SZE WEE

Curator

Ten years ago,
a few art lovers in Singapore started a
Whatsapp group among themselves,
primarily for ease of communication and
sharing information.

As they were also art collectors, they called themselves “Art Addicts Anonymous” (“AAA”), a tongue-in-cheek reference to the more famous “Alcoholics Anonymous” which is a fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problems! Despite coming from diverse backgrounds such as medicine, law, finance, business, and even the civil service, they were bonded by their common love of art, and affliction by the “collecting fever”!

As recalled by AAA member John Chia, the group started out with “individuals who kept bumping into each other in galleries and museums” and eventually struck up “a friendship centred around collecting art”. Till this day, this group of friends remains an informal one. Its composition is ever-evolving, with new members joining and others dropping out, as interests, commitments and priorities change over time. Over the past ten years, AAA members have embarked on individual projects and pursued personal areas of interest such as starting their own spaces, lending artworks for exhibitions, organising their own exhibitions, and even donating works and fundraising for museums. On the occasion of AAA’s 10th anniversary, the group decided to embark on its first collective project—an exhibition based on their collections.

AAA’S PRECEDENT

However, groups like AAA did not emerge from a historical vacuum. A closer examination of AAA and the wider art historical context reveals interesting connections across time. Indeed, throughout the 20th century, the Singapore art scene had seen the emergence of different collectors and collecting groups at different periods, of which AAA represents one of the most recent and significant developments.

- 1 Dr Ng, Pock Liok (FOFA member); Personal interview; 15 July 2021.
- 2 Tan, It Koon; “Foreword” in *The Joy of Art – Paintings from Singapore Collections*, Forum of Fine Arts, Singapore; 1993; unpaginated.
- 3 Toh Lam Huat’s book provides a useful overview on the history of ink collecting in Singapore. *Du Nanfa; Ge’an kanshan – shuhua mingjia fangtan lu* [Looking at mountains across the water – interviews with masters of Chinese painting and calligraphy]; Shanghai shudian chubanshe, Shanghai; 2010.
- 4 Yeo, Mang Thong; *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1886-1945)*; National Gallery Singapore; 2019; pp34–35.

In terms of the history of collector groups in Singapore, there was a precedent to AAA’s emergence in 2014. This occurred 23 years earlier in 1991 with the establishment of Forum of Fine Arts (“FOFA”). The society was also set up by a group of art lovers, led by Chee Choong Seng. The initial members were mainly English-speaking doctors who bonded over their common interest in collecting Chinese ink paintings. As fellow doctors, there was a strong sense of camaraderie among them, and it was easy for them to keep in touch as many happened to work at the same Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre. They started to meet monthly in the 1980s, usually at Chee’s home. At these sessions, local artists like Chua Ek Kay and visiting Chinese artists such as Guan Shanyue were invited to give talks and demonstrations. Collectors also brought their paintings to show one another. Eventually, Chee suggested that they should be formalised as a society so that they could organise more public-facing events. After FOFA was registered in 1991, the group continued to organise art appreciation sessions, artists’ talks, museum visits, and even classes on Chinese ink painting. In 1993, FOFA held an exhibition at the Victoria Memorial Hall, showcasing 112 artworks from their members’ collections and publishing an exhibition catalogue as well.¹ Given FOFA members’ interest in Chinese ink painting, it was unsurprising that Chinese ink painting and calligraphy formed 80% of the exhibited works then.²

EARLY ART COLLECTIONS IN SINGAPORE

In terms of demographic profile, FOFA and AAA members were fairly similar. Most were English-speaking professionals between their thirties and fifties, drawn together by their love of art. However, there are also interesting differences. Hence, an analysis of both groups provides a useful lens to examine developments during two key periods of Singapore’s art scene: the first from the 1970s to the late 1990s, and the second from the 2000s onwards.

The earliest account of art collecting in Singapore dates back to the late 19th century. At the time, art was mainly collected by a few educated literati who identified with Chinese culture, or affluent merchants who wanted to support artists or worthy causes in China.³ A prominent example was the scholar-poet Khoo Seok Wan (1874–1941) who collected calligraphy and paintings.⁴ In the early 20th century, this trend became more pronounced when China’s political and social instability led more artists, such as Xu Beihong and Liu Haisu, to travel to places like Singapore to exhibit and sell works to wealthy overseas Chinese. After the end of World War Two, some of these rich merchants like Tan Tsze Chor, Yeo Khee Lim, and Low Chuck Tiew continued to collect, but their sources of acquisition became more diverse. Due to geo-political tensions, overseas travel became

more difficult for Chinese artists, and local collectors could no longer buy from artists directly. Instead, collectors relied more on art dealers, galleries, and auction houses in Singapore and Hong Kong. High-quality works from China became available for overseas acquisition since there was little demand for such items in China after the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949. Consequently, local collectors were able to expand their collections rapidly during that period.

FROM 1970S TO 1990S

When China re-opened to the world after the end of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s, Chinese artists could travel and exhibit overseas again. In Singapore, commercial galleries like Sin Hua Gallery and Orchard Gallery were actively selling works sourced from China, and inviting Chinese artists like Liu Haisu, Xie Zhiliu, Cheng Shifa, and Wu Guanzhong to exhibit in Singapore. That period coincided with Singapore’s economic industrialisation and a growing middle-class. It saw the rise of a pool of largely English-educated professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, who became interested in collecting ink paintings. This was a departure from the few collectors active in the post-war period. The latter were mainly wealthy, Chinese-educated businessmen who preferred to collect antique classical paintings, rather than works from living artists. The interest in collecting ink painting peaked in the 1990s, with local galleries organising frequent exhibitions, at the rate of almost one every fortnight. Many collectors living in cosmopolitan Singapore were open to new trends in ink painting. Hence, modern Chinese artists found a ready audience in Singapore who appreciated their innovative efforts. This included Wu Guanzhong who was criticised in China for his artistic experimentations in the 1980s, but whose works sold well in Singapore.⁵ Many collectors were also attracted by the relative affordability of such works, compared to paintings by European or American artists.⁶

At the same time, Singaporean society was ready to embrace the arts. As noted in 1993 by FOFA’s president Chee Choong Seng, the “social and economic conditions have improved so that it is now more conducive for us to progress towards a society of civilised and gracious living.”⁷ What were some of these social and economic conditions which Chee alluded to? At the national level, once Singapore’s economic livelihood had been secured after the 1970s, there was increasing government support for the arts.⁸ For instance, an art gallery annexe to the National Museum of Singapore was set up in 1976. For the first time in Singapore, there was a government-funded space where the public could view important works by local and foreign artists. In 1979, the Cultural Medallion scheme was established—the nation’s highest honour awarded to living artists. In the 1980s, the government encouraged philanthropy by giving tax reliefs for

- 5 Chan, Kok Hua (art dealer); Personal interviews; 12 August and 21 September 2021. Dr Ng, Pock Liok (FOFA member); Personal interview; 15 July 2021. Tan, Teo Kwang (art dealer); Personal interview; 27 May 2021.
- 6 Lee, San Chouy; “The fine art of buying art works”; *The Straits Times*; 10 July 1989; p5. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/straitstimes19890710-1.2.61.6.3?qt=%22earl%20lu%22&q=%22earl%20lu%22> (viewed on 28 December 2023)
- 7 Chee, Choong Seng; “Message”; *The Joy of Art – Paintings from Singapore Collections*; Forum of Fine Arts, Singapore; 1993; unpaginated.
- 8 Arts writer Chai Wai Hon regarded 1970s as “high point for art in Singapore” where the Ministry of Culture took on the role of promoting art with different programmes for different audiences and stakeholders. Chia, Wai Hon; “Post-Independence Art in Singapore (1959-1984)”; 1984; Say, Jeffrey and Seng, Yu Jin, eds.; *Intersections, Innovations, Institutions – A Reader in Singapore Modern Art*; World Scientific Publishing Co Pte Ltd, Singapore; 2023; pp304–305.

9 Hoe, Su Fern, & Chong, Terence; “Nurturing the cultural desert: The role of museums in Singapore”; *The state and the arts Singapore: Policies and institutions*; World Scientific, Singapore; 2018; pp241–265. https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/soas_research/2793 (viewed on 28 December 2023)

10 Hoe, Su Fern; “Global ambitions: Positioning Singapore as a contemporary arts hub”; *The state and the arts in Singapore: Policies and institutions*; World Scientific, Singapore; 2018; pp139–167. https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/soas_research/2791

11 Kerk, Corinne; “Galleries band together to brush up the art business”; *The Business Times*; 8 February 1996; p1. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/article/biztimes19960208-1.2.6?qt=art,%20galleries,%20association&q=art%20galleries%20association> (viewed on 28 December 2023)

12 “Our Members”; Art Galleries Association Singapore. <https://agas.org.sg/members/> (viewed on 28 December 2023)

13 “Singapore ranked second globally for best talent, only Asian nation in top 20”; *The Straits Times, Business*; 3 Nov 2022. <https://www.straitstimes.com/business/singapore-ranked-second-globally-for-best-talent-only-asian-nation-in-top-20> (viewed on 28 December 2023)

art donations to museums and donations of public sculptures. In addition, it was important to increase the general level of art appreciation in the country, so that there could eventually be a large enough base of collectors to support the creative outputs of local artists. Hence, the authorities enhanced the teaching of art in schools. The syllabus was revised to include art history, art appreciation, and criticism, with a widened range of art media and forms including local art. More importantly, in 1984, a new generation of government leaders announced their *Cultural Vision 1999 strategy*, which sought to transform Singapore into “a city of excellence and a society of distinction” with a standard of living equal to that of the Swiss in 1984, by 1999. It culminated in the landmark 1989 *Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts* report which provided a roadmap to make Singapore a “culturally vibrant society by the turn of the century”.⁹ That led to even greater resources for arts infrastructural development, such as the setting of the National Arts Council in 1991 and the National Heritage Board in 1993, as well as the opening of the Singapore Art Museum in 1996—the country’s first national museum dedicated to the visual arts.

The 1980s was also when Singapore faced its first post-war economic recession in 1985, after nearly two decades of uninterrupted growth. Among the new directions for Singapore’s future growth identified by the government-appointed 1985 Economic Review Committee, was the economic potential of the “cultural and entertainment sector”, which included film production, the performing arts, museums, and art galleries. Hence, in 1991, the Economic Development Board’s Creative Business Programme Unit was established to develop the arts as an emerging industry. This led to the active encouragement of auctions and art fairs to be held in Singapore, including Singapore’s first major international art and antiques fair *Tresor d’Art* in 1992.¹⁰ Over time, such efforts started to bear fruit and the local art market gradually expanded. In 1996, ten local galleries banded together to form the Art Galleries Association.¹¹ Since then, its membership has expanded nearly three-fold to 28 galleries in 2023.¹²

FROM THE 2000S ONWARDS

Those were the socio-economic circumstances that led to the growing collector base in Singapore and the formation of Forum of Fine Arts in 1991, the first formalised group of its kind in Singapore. However, by 2014 (the year of AAA’s founding), the profile of collectors had changed considerably. For instance, while the early FOFA members were mainly Chinese Singaporean men, AAA comprised both Singaporeans and Singapore-based foreigners, with a sizeable proportion of female collectors. The existence of more Singapore-based foreign collectors since the 2000s is unsurprising, given Singapore’s growing reputation as an international business hub and government efforts

in attracting global talents to the country.¹³ AAA members also included many husband-and-wife collectors. This explained why AAA members’ collecting ambit was much wider. FOFA members concentrated mostly on collecting ink paintings by Chinese male artists. In contrast, AAA members (being more widely travelled or having worked overseas) tended to be more eclectic and collected both modern and contemporary works from around the world, including works by woman artists.

Such diversity in collecting preferences also reflected the maturing art scene since FOFA’s establishment in 1991. Over the ensuing two decades, the government had deepened its commitment to arts education, especially to provide more opportunities for those who wanted to be artists, as well as enhance professional capabilities to better support the burgeoning arts industry.¹⁴ In addition, the opening of the Singapore Art Museum (“SAM”) in 1996 and the National Gallery Singapore (“NGS”) in 2015 had significant impacts in increasing appreciation of local art history. Both museums focused on collecting modern and contemporary art from Singapore and Southeast Asia, and maintained an active calendar of local and international art exhibitions. In particular, SAM’s 1996 publication on Singapore’s art history *Channels and Confluence* and the NGS’ pioneering decision to curate a permanent display of Singaporean art, demonstrated Singapore’s rich art history with important connections to the region. Over the years, there were also various government initiatives to provide a higher international profile for Singaporean art and artists. Since 2001, the National Arts Council started to showcase local artists at the prestigious Venice Biennale. Major state-supported projects such as the Singapore Biennale (from 2006 onwards), Art Stage Singapore (2011–2018), and the art gallery cluster Gillman Barracks (from 2012 onwards) were introduced in the mid-2000s, to connect Singapore with the international art world, and to position Singapore as a hub for contemporary art. All these developments provided the public with ample opportunities to appreciate Singaporean art in the context of regional and international art developments.¹⁵ They also enabled local collectors to see a diverse range of high-quality art, and interact with experienced Asian collectors.

AAA — A NEW GENERATION

For many FOFA collectors, the 2000s was a turning point. Their collecting fervour slowed down, largely due to the rise of China in the early 2000s. With its growing affluence, the number of wealthy collectors in China grew. Stronger demand led to higher prices, and Chinese artists had fewer incentives to exhibit or sell in Singapore anymore. Eventually, local collectors found such paintings beyond their reach. At the same time, the appreciating prices also led some to divest and turn their priorities to other activities.¹⁶

14 To provide more opportunities for those who wanted to pursue careers in arts and design, public funding was extended to diploma programmes by LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in the early 2000s. By 2006, all five local polytechnics had introduced courses related to the arts. In 2008, Singapore’s first pre-tertiary specialised arts school—School of the Arts—was established. This allowed students to pursue the arts at secondary school and junior college levels. And in 2023, the government announced the setting up of the University of the Arts, Singapore’s first university to offer degree programmes in the fine arts.

15 A clear illustration of this was the exhibition *Collectors’ Stage: Asian Contemporary Art from Private Collections*, organised by SAM to coincide with the inaugural Art Stage Singapore fair in 2011. The exhibition brought together contemporary Asian artworks drawn from the collections of prominent lenders such as Agnes Lin (Osage Art Foundation Collection), Dr Oei Hong Djien (OHD Museum Collection), Lekha and Anupam Poddar, Dr Uli Sigg (Sigg Collection) and others.

16 Chan, Kok Hua; Personal interviews; 12 August and 21 September 2021. Dr Ng, Pock Liok (FOFA member); Personal interview; 15 July 2021. Tan, Teo Kwang (art dealer); Personal interview; 27 May 2021.

17 FOFA was dissolved in 2021 due to waning interest. Ma, Agnes (FOFA member); Private communications; 23 Oct 2023.

- 18 A rare example in the 1990s was the setting up of the “Tan Swie Hian Museum” in 1993 by Mr Tan Tien Chi, a collector of Tan Swie Hian’s works.
- 19 Mr Kwie Swie Teng founded his private art museum “Art Retreat” in 2003.
- 20 Dr Woffles Wu started “The Museum of Contemporary Chinese Art” in 2006.
- 21 “The Private Museum” was founded by Daniel Teo and his daughter Rachel Teo in 2010.
- 22 “Primz Gallery” was established in 2014 as a platform for Linda Neo and Albert Lim to showcase their private collection.
- 23 In 2017, Chong Huai Seng and his daughter Ning founded “The Culture Story” as a boutique art advisory and platform to showcase their collection.

With the fading away of the FOFA-generation, a younger cohort of collectors like the AAA came to the fore.¹⁷ The latter stood out in several aspects. Firstly, prior to the 2000s, there were few public initiatives by local collectors.¹⁸ However, in the past 20 years, a number had stepped forward to open spaces to share their collections with the public. These included Kwee Swie Teng¹⁹, Woffles Wu²⁰, Daniel Teo and Rachel Teo²¹, Linda Neo and Albert Lim²², and Chong Huai Seng and Ning Chong.²³ In particular, Daniel Teo and Rachel Teo have sustained their private museum for more than ten years, as a professionally-run space open daily to the public. Secondly, among the FOFA collectors, only a few collected Singaporean works. As reflected in their 1993 exhibition, only 13 out of the 112 works were by Singaporean artists. In contrast, almost all AAA collectors have, at least, some Singaporean works in their collections. Many, in fact, started their collecting journey with works by local artists since they had ready access to such artworks in Singapore. In particular, for collectors who grew up in Singapore, they resonated with the themes in such local works and the life stories of the artists.

Since the 2000s, there have been increasing avenues for making, appreciating, studying and the transacting of art in Singapore. These laid the critical foundation for a new generation of collectors such as AAA to emerge in recent years. Unlike the earlier generation, they are characterised by three important traits. For the first time in the local art scene, these collectors are sufficiently grounded in an appreciation of Singapore’s art history, facilitated by ample publications and exhibitions on the subject. Living in a highly globalised world, they are also exposed and open to collecting art from around the world. Lastly, a significant number have committed their time and resources to share their love of collecting with the public. All these bode well for a more resilient and thriving art scene in Singapore in the future. 👁



1.1
CHUA EK KAY
Back of Telok Ayer Street



1.2
LIM TZE PENG
Afternoon in the Back Alley



1.3
LIM TZE PENG
Bumboats

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 1 / 15]
Augustin Lee and Alice Toh

The motivation for husband-and-wife collectors Augustin Lee and Alice Toh arose from a desire to support Singaporean artists, in particular those practising in the ink medium. This was a departure from the collectors in the 1980s who collected mainly ink paintings by artists from China.

Among the first-generation artists in Singapore, many had been trained in both Chinese and Western art. Hence, artists like Chen Wen Hsi and Cheong Soo Pieng moved fluidly across both media. Although not widely taught in the local art schools in Singapore today, ink remains a vital tradition in the local art scene. In their collecting journey, Augustin and Alice have supported some of Singapore's leading ink artists such as Chua Ek Kay and Lim Tze Peng.

Chua Ek Kay is most well-known for his ink paintings of local street scenes. *Back of Telok Ayer Street* (2007) is a strong example of how Chua adapted the tradition of Chinese ink landscapes (*shanshui hua*) for a uniquely Singaporean context, using minimal lines and strokes.

Lim Tze Peng's *Afternoon in the Back Alley* (Undated, c. 1980s) represents another approach to the painting of ink landscapes in Singapore. Unlike Chua Ek Kay who painted indoors, Lim is one of the few local ink painters in the 1970s to the 1990s, who chose to complete their paintings onsite. This work is an excellent example of Lim's confident handling of the ink medium, and superb observation of the physical environment. Over the years, Lim Tze Peng's paintings reflect an unceasing desire for artistic innovation. From the 1970s to 2000s, he was more naturalistic in his approach and paid careful attention to capturing intricate details. In recent paintings such as *Bumboats* (Undated, c. 2010), Lim demonstrates a much more unrestrained use of brush and ink, capturing the scene with great vitality and energy.



2.1
CHUA EK KAY
Young Lotus



2.2
LIM TZE PENG
Calligraphy



2.3
ERNEST CHAN
Happiness is...Finding the Garden Within No. 1 (Garden Series)

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 2 / 15]
Greg Lui and May Loh

Like a number of AAA collectors, husband-and-wife collectors Greg Lui and May Loh have a preference to support Singaporean artists. In particular, May also enjoys painting as a hobby and appreciates the complexities of art-making, and challenges faced by local artists. Their collection contains excellent examples of works by Singaporean artists such as Chua Ek Kay, Lim Tze Peng, and Ernest Chan.

With a strong foundation in traditional xieyi ink painting laid down by his teacher Fan Chang Tien, Chua Ek Kay was able to achieve a breakthrough for his street scene paintings. Despite criticism from some of his peers for "betraying" the ink tradition, Chua used the principles of traditional Chinese landscape painting (*shan-shui hua*) to depict scenes of urban Singapore. Apart from street scenes, Chua also explored other subjects in ink. *Young Lotus* (2007) demonstrates Chua's use of themes such as lotus ponds to highlight the transience of the changing seasons, and cycles of life and death.

Lim Tze Peng's *Calligraphy* (2011) represents another important aspect of the ink painting tradition in Singapore. Although starting out as a painter of naturalistic landscapes, Lim has also ventured successfully into more abstract works. This work is a strong example of how the artist pushed the tradition of Chinese calligraphy to its limits, in order to explore its full pictorial potential.

May studied painting for some time under Ernest Chan, an active artist and educator who has received accolades locally and internationally. Chan's *Happiness is...Finding the Garden Within No. 1 (Garden Series)* (2016-2022) was last shown in his 2023 exhibition *The Garden*, where he used the theme of gardens to explore his "longing for adventure, happiness and freedom".



3.1
WONG KEEN
To Fry or Not to Fry II



3.2
WONG KEEN
Monkey Around (Tribute to Chen Wen Hsi)



3.3
WONG KEEN
(Forest) Flesh #003

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 3 / 15]
Paul and Lena Ng

Husband-and-wife collectors Paul and Lena Ng identify with Singaporean artists and have a particular preference for collecting their works. As a result, their collection has a strong representation of works by Singapore-born artist Wong Keen, whose New York experience resonated with the couple who had also spent some time living overseas.

Born in Singapore, Wong's initial art training in ink and oil painting came from his years in Chinese High School, where his art teachers included first-generation artists such as Chen Wen Hsi and Liu Kang. In particular, he became close to Chen who was also a family friend. Subsequently, Wong left for New York in the early 1960s where he was exposed to the then-prevalent Abstract Expressionist movement. Over the years, Wong has revisited the themes of body and flesh in many ways. One foray has been the subject of fast food, particularly the ubiquitous presence of hamburgers around the world. *To Fry or Not to Fry II* (2018) is a stunning composition of a naked body encased within a serving of burger and fries, that also serves as critical commentary on contemporary society's obsession with consumerism and popular culture. In *Monkey Around (Tribute to Chen Wen Hsi)* (2019), Wong Keen extends his commentary about human consumption to man's exploitation of the natural world. Form-wise, it is also a playful homage to his mentor Chen Wen Hsi who was noted for his lively ink paintings of gibbons. Lastly, *(Forest) Flesh #003* (2022) comes from Wong's most recent exploration of flesh and body. In this case, his painted form is now hung up like a piece of meat in a butcher shop, confronting the viewer in three-dimensional space.



4.1
HAN SAI POR
Transformation Series 4



4.2
TAN TEO KWANG
Jiawu 105 & Jiawu 106



4.3
JANE LEE
Beneath III

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 4 / 15]
Steven Chua and Sue Anne Toh

Similar to a number of collectors in the AAA group, husband-and-wife collectors Steven Chua and Sue Anne Toh have developed a particular preference for Singaporean art. In particular, their commitment to supporting women artists, as reflected by their collection of works by Jane Lee and Han Sai Por, is laudable.

Han Sai Por is one of Singapore's most important sculptors. In 1995, she received the Cultural Medallion, the highest national award for living artists. She was also the founding president of the Sculpture Society in 2001, the first society of its kind in Singapore, dedicated to nurturing public appreciation of sculpture as an art form. *Transformation Series 4* (2009) is an excellent example of how Han worked with the unyielding medium of stone and steel to create organic forms that are full of life and movement.

Jane Lee has emerged to become an important voice in the contemporary Singapore art scene, especially through her explorations of materiality and the nature of painting. In 2007, she won the Singapore Art Exhibition prize, organised by the Singapore Art Museum (SAM). Since then, her works have been featured in many shows such as the Singapore Biennale in 2008, and a solo exhibition at SAM in 2023. *Beneath III* (2011) is a strong example of how Lee subverts the tradition of easel painting, and questions the boundaries between painting and sculpture.

In addition, Steven and Sue Anne collect works by Singapore's first-generation artists such as Chen Wen Hsi and Cheong Soo Pieng. As part of their collecting journey, Steven and Sue Anne also support artists like Tan Teo Kwang whose formative years in the 1950s were shaped by first-generation artists such as Chen Wen Hsi. Tan later developed his own distinctive style after studying art in London in the 1960s. *Jiawu* (2014) is a strong example of Tan's use of expressive colours and re-interpretation of Chinese ink painting aesthetics.



5.1
LIM TZE PENG
Homecoming



5.2
LIM TZE PENG
Crowded Bugis Street



5.3
HONG LING
The Rich Autumn

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 5 / 15]
Joshua and Sophia Lim

Husband-and-wife collectors Joshua and Sophia Lim had initially started with collecting works by Singaporean artists such as Cheong Soo Pieng, Chua Ek Kay, Lim Tze Peng, and Hong Sek Chern. Over the years, their collection has expanded to include other Asian artists such as Affandi from Indonesia and Hong Ling from China. This emphasis on collecting works by Singaporean and other regional artists is a distinctive trait of the AAA collectors. It marks a departure from the generation of local collectors in the 1980s who were primarily interested in ink paintings by Chinese artists.

Although starting out as an oil painter in the 1960s, Lim Tze Peng has since made his mark as one of Singapore's leading practitioners of Chinese ink painting and calligraphy. From the 1970s, he began capturing rapidly-disappearing scenes such as village life, activities along Singapore River, and the bustling street life in the city. *Homecoming* (1977) shows a harbour scene from the 1970s. During that period, Lim was one of the few local ink artists who completed his paintings onsite. This work is an excellent example of his confident handling of the ink medium, and superb observation of the physical environment. In contrast, *Crowded Bugis Street* (1980-2020) comes from a body of works which were initially completed by Lim in the 1980s in ink outline only. Subsequently, he added vibrant colours in 2020. Hence, this work transcends two time periods, and reflects Lim's evolving approach towards capturing place and memory.

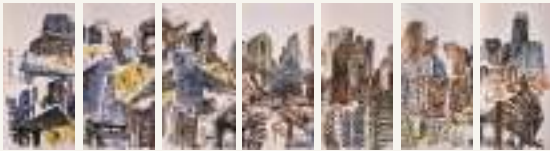
Born and based in China, Hong Ling's artistic practice straddles both Chinese ink and Western oil painting, a trait shared by many of Singapore's first-generation artists such as Chen Wen Hsi and Cheong Soo Pieng. Hong has exhibited frequently in China and internationally including five occasions in Singapore (1998, 2000, 2004, 2006 and 2008). He is especially noted for his evocative landscape paintings, full of boldly applied ink and colours. *The Rich Autumn* (2006) is a particularly strong example.



6.1
CHEN KEZHAN
Rustling of Autumn



6.2
LATIFF MOHIDIN
Gelombang - Landscape



6.3
HONG SEK CHERN
Flowers in the mirror;
Moon in the water

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 6 / 15]
Lim & Yan Collection

Similar to some of their peers in the AAA group, husband-and-wife Lim Hwee Yong and Yan Zhiyan have an eclectic approach in collecting. Over the years, they have come to appreciate the works of both Singaporean and Southeast Asian artists. This transnational trait is evident among the generation of collectors who had witnessed the growth of Singapore as a regional arts hub over the past two decades. This is reflected in the collection of Hwee Yong and Zhiyan which is particularly strong in works by Singaporean artist Chen KeZhan and Malaysian artist Latiff Mohidin.

Chen KeZhan is one of Singapore's most established contemporary ink artists today. Despite his early training in Chinese xieyi painting under his teacher Fan Chang Tien, Chen had forged an artistic practice that broke the boundaries of traditional Shanghai School ink painting. In 2001, his monumental ink painting was featured in Singapore's first participation in the Venice Biennale, one of the most prestigious contemporary art exhibitions in the world. *Rustling of Autumn* (2016) is a strong example of Chen's expressive use of ink and colours, and innovative interpretation of Chinese ink painting aesthetics.

Although not widely taught in Singapore today, ink painting remains a vital artistic practice locally. Since the late 1990s, Hong Sek Chern has emerged to become an important voice in Singapore's ink painting scene. In many of her works, she used ink to capture the exhilaration and alienation of urban life. *Flowers in the mirror; Moon in the water* (2015) is an impressive example of how she transformed the scroll tradition of Chinese landscape painting (shanshui hua) into a contemporary setting filled with towering skyscrapers.

Latiff Mohidin is one of Malaysia's leading modern painters and an important contributor to the development of Southeast Asian abstraction since the 1960s. *Gelombang - Landscape* (1992) is an excellent example of how he uses Southeast Asian themes and concepts to evoke the expressive powers of nature.

LOW SZE WEE

Curator

Low Sze Wee (b. 1970, Singapore) is Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre. With a background in law, he later completed postgraduate studies in History of Art from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 1999, and Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore in 2010.

Sze Wee has curated various local and international exhibitions, including important retrospectives on Singaporean artists and the Singapore pavilion at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003. Three of his exhibitions were awarded the National Heritage Board (NHB) Exhibition Award in 2007, 2008 and 2009. He was also granted the NHB Research Award in 2007 for his scholarly contributions on Singapore and Southeast Asian art history.

In 2013, Sze Wee was the first Singaporean to be named a fellow of the prestigious Clore Leadership Programme. Formerly heading the curatorial departments at the Singapore Art Museum and then National Gallery Singapore, he was a key member of the inaugural team that oversaw the National Gallery's opening in 2015. Sze Wee has also been involved in strategic arts planning and policy in Singapore's Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts.



A PSYCHOLOGY OF COLLECTING

MICHELLE HO

Curator

In the book *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*, Werner Muensterberger describes collecting as a process fuelled by neurotic and obsessional desires; a persistence shaped by a compulsive preoccupation.¹

Yet, the formation of a collection is also about the meaningful assembly of art and objects, and these pieces can reveal more about a collector's persona and sentiments, and the world they want to represent.

Throughout history, the culture of art patronage has been well-documented, particularly during the Renaissance, often seen as its pinnacle. Art history may provide accounts of the conditions in which this has occurred, but its evolution into current day arts philanthropy, and the motivations for the establishment of private collections have not received as much attention. For those who know art collectors, their reasons for collecting can be complex and multifaceted.

What makes a person a collector? Why do they continue collecting? Do they ever stop collecting? Studies in consumerism suggest that acquisitions serve as "bridges" to aspirations and ideals. Grant McCracken's theory stems from the idea that people utilise consumer goods to reclaim what may have been lost, and access what may otherwise be unattainable. Through consumption, individuals regain access to cultural meanings that have been displaced.² Art, however, is not a regular commodity object. The value of art goes beyond its material components, and is imbued with cultural and historical significance. Art also evokes emotional responses, creating connections with viewers on a personal or profound level, and this is something seldom experienced with regular consumer goods.

Today, serious consideration for the social and cultural impact of collecting is beginning to gain some scholarly recognition. These findings emerge from fields ranging from philosophy to psychoanalysis, to museology and arts management, pointing to Kevin Moist's and David Banash's views that collecting by its nature is interdisciplinary.³ They also believe that the behaviour of collectors and how they build their collection or change their scope of collecting can also illuminate shifting perspectives on history, beyond institutionally-prescribed views. Collecting thus becomes a barometer through which one can perceive more extensive societal shifts, acting as a measuring tool that provides glimpses into our perspectives of a changing world. For Jim Amberson, one of the collector's from Art Addicts

¹ W. Muensterberger; *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*; Princeton University Press, Florida; 1994; p8.

² G. McCracken; *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*; Indiana University Press, Indianapolis; 1990; p104.

³ K.M. Moist, D. Banash, eds; "Introduction"; *Contemporary Collecting: Objects, Practices and the Fate of Things*; pp10—11.

4 Amberson, Jim; Interview with Skye Sherwin; *Why I Collect: Jim Amberson*. <https://www.artbasel.com/stories/why-i-collect-jim-amberson?lang=en> (viewed on 28 December 2023)

5 R. Belk; *Collecting In Consumer Society*; Routledge, New York; 1995; p67.

6 R. Belk; *Ibid.*; p87.

7 S.M. Pearce; *Museums, Objects And Collections: A Cultural Study*; Smithsonian Institution Press; 1993; p11.

8 Pearce, S.M; *Ibid.*; p47.

Anonymous, part of the process of growing as a collector “is becoming an ambassador, advocate, and patron.”

While he notes that a proportion of his collection may delve into political themes, it is the ability of these works to provoke deeper reflection that draws him to them. As he says, “Often these are works that make me a bit uncomfortable, partly because I think it’s important to recognise that there are other points of view.”⁴

COLLECTIONS AS EXTENDED SELVES

According to Russell Belk, building a collection is “the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences.”⁵ As a collection expands, collectors experience a sense of achievement, and a sense of self-worth is mirrored in the collection’s quality and quantity. The latter ability to discriminate between worthy objects and less-worthy ones, as a mark of connoisseurship further feeds the drive to collect. Within the collecting community, competition and the pursuit of rare, valuable items can also validate their sense of expertise.⁶

Another aspect of collecting is in the widening of the collector’s sense of self, and Belk is one of the early theorists to consider collections as part of an “extended self”. Just like the non-verbal language of clothing, collections can say things about us that would be socially unacceptable to express aloud, and collectors engage in a “symbolic self-completion” through collection. As Susan M. Pearce surmises on the power of objects in relation to self-identity:

“The potential inwardness of objects is one of their most powerful characteristics, ambiguous and elusive though it may be. Objects hang before the eyes of the imagination, continuously re-presenting ourselves to ourselves, and telling the stories of our lives in ways which would be impossible otherwise.”⁷

Pearce elaborates how the creation of a collection can be seen as a way of how people formulate their relationship with the external physical world of which their collections become key players. The self-reflecting nature of objects is one of their most powerful characteristics, considering how the perception of objects is open to imagination, allowing for a continuously re-presenting of people to themselves, and illustrating stories of their lives and their lived environments.⁸

We can see this in the collection of Amy Quek and Raymond Seet, which started from their interest in Singapore history, and past and present depictions of how society has evolved. As they shared, “We are drawn to stories of the diaspora, and how new cultures and identities can be formed, and expressed in art. Our interest gravitates towards art with a social narrative, and how a community responds to challenges or individuals overcoming adversity in life.”⁹

Highlighting the dimensions of empathy and art appreciation in the collecting process is Shirley M. Mueller. She posits that while collections may serve as mementos of one’s personal journey, they also forge a connection

to something larger than the individual collector when collecting links personal memories to broader historical or cultural narratives.¹⁰ Similarly, Margaret Wasz’s treatise on the psychological aspects of collecting touches on art acquisitions as a bridge to empathy between the self and others. Empathy, the ability to perceive the mood or sentiment of a situation, or in a work of art, suggests an emotional connection between an artist’s vision and the viewer’s heart.¹¹ Because collecting is a journey that takes place through the passage of time, it can be, as another art collector in this exhibition, Low Kah Boon has articulated, “a personal biography, or a portal to a person, not in words but through art and concepts, reflecting something deeper than just a series of chronological life events.”¹²

THE PROSE AND POETRY OF COLLECTIONS

The drive behind collecting can sometimes stem from an internal need for a sense of cohesion—a pursuit seeking a comprehensive collection of items, meticulously arranged in a taxonomic manner. It can also be based on art and objects collected from diverse, unrelated sources, and later connected through systematic or symbolic interpretations. Relating to the latter, Martin Jay suggests that the collector can play the role of an “implicit allegorist” through collections that intentionally effects creative disorder, and using this as a means of uncovering alternative readings of an artwork that have been excluded from conventional presentations of culture and history.¹³ For Lourdes Samson, another Art Addicts Anonymous collector whose works are featured in this exhibition, “Collecting is also an artistic act. It is both an intellectual and creative exercise, expressed in the intentional combination of works by artists of different backgrounds and artistic practices.”¹⁴

The injection of creativity and play in a collection has also been discussed by Bjarne Rogan, who attempts to establish what he calls “the aesthetics of collecting”. For Rogan, a collector’s stated motives for collecting, or what he calls the “prose” of collecting—whether an interest in the past, heritage preservation, or economic investment—don’t fully explain the urge to collect. Instead, there is a poetic essence to collecting that often hides within and occasionally emerges when a collector speaks about their collecting journey. It is within this poetic element that Rogan identifies as “the aesthetics of collecting”, which rarely surfaces when individuals attempt to rationalise their act of collecting. Yet, upon taking the time to listen to the stories of how, where, and why their works were collected, “prose transforms into poetry.”¹⁵

COLLECTING THAT CONTRIBUTES

Beyond the personal domain, collectors can also be driven by external motivations, particularly the desire to share their collection with the broader art community and the general public as a way of giving to society. Seen in today’s cultural landscape is a new wave of arts philanthropists that is distinct from traditional sponsors or partners of museums. These private collectors have their own visions, organising projects independently which complement and nourish the arts ecosystem.

9 Quek, Amy and Seet, Raymond; Private communications; 17 September 2023.

10 S.M. Mueller; “Empathy, Art Appreciation and Collectors: A Connection?”; *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/sg/blog/the-mind-of-a-collector/202311/empathy-art-appreciation-and-collectors-a-connection> (viewed on 7 November 2023)

11 M. Wasz, A. Gali, ed; “Why Do We Collect?”; *On Collecting*; Documents on Contemporary Crafts No.4; Arnoldsche Art publishers; Stuttgart; 2017; p28.

12 Low, Kah Boon; Personal interview; 6 December 2023.

13 M. Jay; “Mementoes Post-Mori: Thoughts on the Collector’s Mania”; *Salmagundi*; No. 180/181 (Fall 2013 – Winter 2014); p55.

14 Samson, Lourdes; Personal interview; 7 December 2023.

15 B. Rogan; “On Collecting as Play, Creativity and Aesthetic Practice”; *Collecting Vol. 11 No.1; Etnofoor*; 1998; p42.

16 E. Wagner and T. Westreich Wagner; *Collecting Art for Love, Money and More*; Phaidon, London; 2013; pp51–52.

17 Neo, Linda; Personal interview; 20 December 2023.

While they may continue to support the cultural scene by lending artworks for exhibitions, their primary contribution of “cultural enablement” can be seen in the support of artistic practices, particularly those of emerging artists. They recognise that their acquisitions provide the essential sustenance for the production of contemporary art—the financial backing that facilitates artists' creative journeys.¹⁶ Such support at times also occurs through their active involvement in artists' careers, and for some collectors who have established their own art spaces—the organisation of exhibitions that enhances the visibility of artists.

The Art Addict Anonymous collectors Linda Neo and Albert Lim are known in this regard, through Primz Gallery, the storage facility cum art gallery which the couple manages. The collector duo is also known for their support for artists, having organised more than 5 group and solo exhibitions such as *To Begin Again: Jane Lee* (2023), *Flesh and Spirit* (2021), *Ink Landscapes by Wang Jiafang* (2021) and *Reimagining Paper* (2019). In their space, they have also hosted art institutions visiting Singapore, as well as opened their space to curators to create exhibitions with their collection.

“The art eco-system includes the public museums, art fairs, art galleries and auction houses but the missing piece in the puzzle is the private collection,” says Neo, whose collection has shifted to the focus on young and emerging local artists. “We follow specific artists' portfolio and engage in art discourse on their current and future projects. It's our journey with the artists, collecting their works as they progress. Currently, supporting young and emerging local artists is at the top of our minds when acquiring new works.”¹⁷

The title *Chronic Compulsions* was conceived as a tongue-in-cheek nod to the collector group Art Addicts Anonymous whose collections serve as the basis for this exhibition. When the group was formed a decade ago, it was their shared zeal and unreserved passion for art that brought them together, hence their opting for this name with a lighthearted sense of self-awareness.

At the start of this project, the curators posed these questions: What makes a person a collector? Why do they continue collecting? Do they ever stop collecting? This essay turns to the field of consumer and collection studies to uncover some of the more primary factors that may be linked to collector instincts, while highlighting the more intangible aspects entwined in the relationship between self and art.

As we got to know the collectors, it became clear that their motivations transcended personal gratification. More than “chronic compulsions”, their passions extend to fostering genuine connections, cultivating art communities and supporting artistic practices. This commitment stems from their belief in the transformative powers of the art experience, and knowing that this is best shared, and not enjoyed as an individual, private pursuit. 🍷

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
Curated by Michelle Ho



7.1
SEMSAR SIAHAAN
Blinded by the UN



7.2
WAWI NAVARROZA
X, After the Storm No.2



7.3
ASIM WAQIF
Municipal Demolition 3

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 7 / 15]
Jim Amberson

Jim Amberson, originally from the USA but based in Asia since 1998, is a Director in a Multinational Insurer. He has been actively collecting Southeast Asian contemporary art for more than 20 years, acquiring works by prominent artists from across the region. Amberson's interest in the region extends to a Masters of Arts Degree from the National University of Singapore in Southeast Asian Studies and publications that include "Deep S.E.A.: Contemporary Art from South East Asia" and "The Little Red Dot: Becoming a Red Hot Home for Art". He is frequently invited to panels to speak on collecting Southeast Asian art, and has loaned his collection to numerous international exhibitions. Jim is a member of the Asia-Pacific Acquisition Committee of the Tate Modern, London, and other institutions. His collecting approaches can be gleaned in these works which employ conceptual methodologies in medium and material.

The late Semsar Siahaan was a prominent Indonesian artist who gained recognition in the 1980s for his works that highlighted the struggles of the marginalised under President Suharto's authoritarian regime. Known for his activism and tenacity in addressing socio-political issues, he stood as a significant figure in Indonesian art. *Blinded by the UN* (2003), which features an abstraction of weapons and hand gestures, reflects the artist's commentary on the intricate nature of political strategies.

Wawi Navarroza's *X, After the Storm No.2* (2010) is part of a larger body of work, exploring the artist's interest in landscape and humanity's connection to the macro environment. Her research has taken her to volcanic terrains, documenting both natural and human-made elements found. Through her photographic interventions, she reframes this dual relationship by incorporating drapery, and prompting new perspectives on the expansiveness and essence of space.

Known for his interdisciplinary practice that encompasses art, architecture and design, Asim Waqif's sculptures enfold photography and repurposed material to address concerns about urban planning and the ecology. Waqif has developed his own technique of melding photographic images on objects, both man-made and organic. *Municipal Demolition #3* (2016) is such an example, made in response to the demolition of a building opposite the Khoj International Artist's Association in Delhi, India.



8.1
SUZANN VICTOR
Lookout



8.2
KHAIRULDDIN WAHAB
The Struggle for Luxuriance



8.3
SIM CHI YIN
Stanley R Mickelsen Safeguard Complex, North Dakota, from Most People Were Silent & Mount Paektu, Looking from China into North Korea, from Most People Were Silent

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 8 / 15]
Low Kah Boon

Low Kah Boon grew up in an environment surrounded by art. This exposure seeded a subconscious sense for aesthetics, and nurtured her personal visual language. Her journey into art collecting may have begun about a decade ago, but her sensitivity towards the stylistic developments in art preceded this. Noted in her collection are works with a sense of Singapore history, as seen in those by Suzann Victor and Khairuddin Wahab which depict Singapore landscape, but carry deeper layers of reflection on colonial history.

Lookout (2022) by Suzann Victor is created from images sourced from pre-1960s ethnographic postcards of Southeast Asia alongside local archival materials, embedded in lenses. This assemblage forms part of the artist's exploration into visuals created via the lens of colonialism. Positioned against the backdrop of Singaporean landmarks such as Empress Place and the Singapore River, the work offers a view into historical vignettes—ranging from girls adorned in headscarves to scenes of gamelan players, playful children, and Lee Kuan Yew at a 1959 launch event. Victor describes the work as a "lens-painting". Viewers, depending on their vantage point, can catch nuanced glimpses of the embedded images, conveying the idea that history is tied to the perspectives or angles of observation one adopts. Khairuddin Wahab's art delves into the colonial portrayal of the tropics as an "environmental Other." *The Struggle for Luxuriance* (2023) features a lush scene of nature where space can be poetic and political at the same time. His practice explores the connections between empire, knowledge, art, and geography.

For Low, understanding the back story of the artists she collects is at times part of her collecting process, as is the support for women artists. Her acquaintance with Sim Chi Yin from school days, coupled with her appreciation for Sim's background in journalism led to the collection of the artist's works. The works are from the project *Most People Were Silent* (2017), one spotlighting the Stanley R Mickelson Safeguard Complex in North Dakota, designed as an anti-ballistic missile defense site, and another offering an aerial view of Mount Paektu in the secretive country of North Korea. They are Sim's attempts to uncover remnants of humanity's interaction with nuclear weapons. Her research delves into the visual and symbolical vestiges of the Cold War era, seeking to encapsulate the narrative of encounters with nuclear bombs.



9.1
WONG PERNG FEY
Untitled #014



9.2
CHEONG SOO PIENG
Highlands Scenery



9.3
TANG DA WU
True Story

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 9 / 15]
Amy Quek and Raymond Seet

Amy Quek and Raymond Seet's collection is guided by an appreciation for Singapore history, and stylistic approaches in how artists have depicted home and society. These range from works in the Nanyang style to conceptual approaches in contemporary painting. As travellers frequenting museums, their exposure to Western art styles led them to reconsider the art developments in Singapore and the region. Over time, their collection has grown to include some artists whose practices have been critical to the development of Singapore's art history. Noted in their collection is also a taste for abstraction across different generations of artists, ranging from ink to acrylic painting as well as unconventional use of material.

We can see this in *Untitled #014* (2014), a work by Wong Perng Fey which engages in gestural strokes to effect bold textures and layers in this meditation on nature and the lived environment. The work also reflects the collectors' interest in an artist's stages of development as their techniques evolve in the different chapters of their practice.

Cheong Soo Pieng is a pioneer of the Nanyang style, which blends European Modernist techniques with the Chinese tradition, incorporating the subject matter of the tropics and other Southeast Asian themes. *Highlands Scenery* (1963) from the 1960s, marks a crucial phase in the artist's practice, showcasing the development of a distinct style in abstraction. The work showcases Cheong's mastery of brushwork and palette, evoking atmosphere and emotion within the landscape.

Known for founding The Artist Village collective in 1988, Tang Da Wu played a pivotal role in nurturing many artists to adopt experimental approaches in art-making at that time. While his early practice highlighted environmental issues as well as social, Tang's works often embraced an authenticity of spirit. *True Story* (1986) features a simple narrative of an ordinary yet endearing encounter, a reflection of the artist's penchant for the everyday.



10.1
NONA GARCIA
Hallow



10.2
GARY-ROSS PASTRANA
*(Eidolon II) Lot-01 (Provisional
Objects Series)*



10.3
KHVAY SAMNANG
Calling for Rain

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 10 / 15]
Monsoon Southeast Asia Art Collection

Michelangelo and Lourdes Samson started collecting art more than two decades ago. Their collection, also known as the *Monsoon Southeast Asia Art Collection* comprises works from the region, guided by thoughtful reflection of its diverse and at times, tumultuous histories. Viewers who have a chance to see their extended collection will be able to glean they have also been organised into themes relevant to the region, regarding self and identity, politics and personal agency, faith and spirituality, as well as contexts between past and present.

A part of this vision comes from their personal experience during the turbulent years of Martial Law in the Philippines, their home country, as well as having lived away from their home. In more recent times, their collection have expanded to explore Southeast Asian new media practices such as photography and video, as well as conceptual approaches to art-making. We can see that in the selection of their works in this exhibition.

Nona Garcia's *Hallow* (2015) is made from X-ray images composed in an unfolding Mandela-like formation. Growing up in a family of medical professionals, she developed a familiarity with laboratory tools, and X-rays offered alternative a fresh perspective on the ordinary, allowing her to perceive the world in a new light and to reimagine the concealed nature of objects. At first look, *Hallow* appears to be an assemblage of spiral motifs, but are in fact, the bones of hyenas, camels, crocodiles, beavers, birds and deer, as well as coral. Through this poetic rendition of nature's rhythm, Garcia highlights the interconnectedness of life and death, evoking a sense of the divine, inherent in this perpetual cycle.

Gary-Ross Pastrana is known for his conceptual approaches to art-making. In ancient Greek literature, an eidolon refers to a ghostly form of a living or deceased person. His work *(Eidolon II) Lot 01 Provisional Object Series* (2019) is a playful interpretation of the Boston Dynamics' robotic dog, presented to look like an artifact of an animal deity. The former is used across a spectrum of industries from research to manufacturing and defence, programmed with high-technological functions and sensors to carry out tasks. His artistic gesture that displaces and replaces meaning prod viewers to reconsider the symbolic value of things.

Khvay Samnang's *Calling for Rain* (2021) delves into the intricate connection between humanity and nature within the context of Cambodia's environmental crisis, and is part of a larger series of works which engages with *Reamker* (the Cambodian version of the epic *Ramayana* folklore). Through a fusion of ritual and dance, Samnang employs mythology as a narrative device to highlight present-day issues, such as rampant deforestation, resulting in displacement and loss of cultural heritage.



11.1
MELISSA TAN
Philomela and Prokne



11.2
GUO-LIANG TAN
Screen Practice II



11.3
NATEE UTARIT
Modernism



11.4
RONALD VENTURA
i-Human

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 11 / 15]
Linda Neo and Albert Lim

The Linda Neo and Albert Lim Collection comprises modern and contemporary Chinese and Southeast Asian artworks. Since 2005, Lim and Neo have been building their interest in Singapore modern and contemporary art. Works from the collection have been shared with institutions such as Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and National University of Singapore (NUS), as well as museums like Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Art Science Museum and Singapore Art Museum (SAM).

Philomela and Prokne (2022) is a continuation of Melissa Tan's interest in star systems and Greek mythology. Based on a story of the two sisters oppressed by king Tereus, the work seeks to reclaim the narrative of female protagonists in mythology, oftentimes punishing them for acts that do not confirm to patriarchal conventions. The sculptures reference this myth of vengeance, bravery and salvation, and feature the constellation maps of the Philomela and Prokne asteroids.

Known for his works that expand the vocabulary of abstraction, Guo-Liang Tan's *Screen Practice II* (2021) is an example of how we can rethink about the conventions of a painting's surface, and what it means for painting to have a presence. In Tan's work, paint flows on stretched fabric to accentuate traces rather than make deliberate marks. These processes also position the function of a painting's surface as less a vehicle for subject matter, and more a conduit for imagination which nonetheless retains painting's presence.

Natee Utarit's approach to painting involves the study of classical Western painting styles to question modernist ideals. His piece *Modernism* (2010) presents an arrangement of toy and ornament, reminiscent of the still-life genre. In the Dutch still-life tradition, the placement of objects can reveal hidden meaning. For Natee, paintings carry encoded meanings. The utilisation of toys isn't innocent but functions as allegorical symbols, and open to interpretation. The artist has used this approach to comment on social and political currents in Thai society.

The paintings of Ronald Ventura weave a pastiche of motifs drawn from popular culture and found images as a reflection of contemporary life and excesses of consumerism. Seen in his work from this period is the artist's provocations towards the human figure as a field for enquiry. In the work *i-Human* (2008), a human body is merged with engines while a robot is given human organs. The juxtaposition of elements prods viewers to reconsider the delicate relationship between the natural and augmented, and the blurring of boundaries between them.

MICHELLE HO

Curator

Michelle Ho (b. 1979, Singapore) is the director of the ADM Gallery at the NTU School of Art, Design and Media. With more than 15 years of curatorial experience in Southeast Asian art, some of her exhibitions include *Vertical Submarine and the Amusement of Knowledge and Illusion* (2022), *Reformations: Painting in post 2000 Singapore Art* (2019) and *Exceptions of Rule: Counterpoints to Truth* (2018). She also curated the 2013 edition of *The Collectors Show, Weight of History*. Formerly a curator at the Singapore Art Museum, she led the acquisition strategies of its contemporary art collection from 2013 to 2015, and co-curated exhibitions with museums like Queensland Art Gallery, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo and Kunsthaus Zurich. She was co-curator of the 2013 Singapore Biennale, and was curator for the Singapore Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019.

ART IS DEATH

ERE I WAZ
WAZ I ERE
COURSE I WAZ

Development & creative
brains!

Define Good?

for repressed good
like me lah!
Michael Lee
2012

WHAT IS ART GOOD FOR?

WHAT IS GOOD ART FOR?

ART IS GOOD FOR WHAT!

SOME RICH ONES

Good for
Relaxation
& Appreciation!

Good 4
lots of things

ART IS ART, ANY FORM OF
MANIPULATION

ART MAKE PEOPLE
Express their Feelings!

ART IS FREE

Art is a creativity, creativity is
a nature and nature is a
world, that's it? to hook up
with girls!

UNTUK MENUNJUK
KAN BAKAT DAN
CREATIVITY KITA!

OLIVIER LO NIERDAI
QUE SON A L'OPINION
TAIRES... PAZ!

SINGAPURA

TANGINA
HADI KE ALAM!!!

FOR MORE ART! LOR



But
Sial
Jagay
Kata Semangat
berzafu
신기후 2012

WE NEED ART TO
DROWNED IN THE

F TRUTH " after Nietzsche... something like that

HO TZU NYEN 2007

A CASE OF COLLECTIVE CARE

MICHAEL LEE

Curator

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact spanned biological, emotional, and social realms for individuals and communities.

Artists, who were suddenly named “non-essential”¹ as compared to their medical and delivery counterparts, navigated survival and adaptation. Although not vaccine creators, artists are sometimes seen as providers of “philosophical and artistic immunity,”² aiding in the aversion of social collapse. By extension, curating—including collective curating—raises key questions in the post-pandemic world: What is the social role of curatorial work today? Whom, and what, do co-curators prioritise? How do curators care for their craft and for one another?

Chronic Compulsions: Selected Works from Art Addicts Anonymous is an exhibition that showcases over 50 artworks from 15 Singapore-based collections. Co-curated by three individuals including myself, it offers an apt case study of post-pandemic co-curation. This essay reflects on collective care in the context of four aspects of the curatorial process: audience reception, artwork selection, artwork placement, and collegial care.

Overall, in the high-stakes context of a co-curated collection exhibition in a museum, prioritising meaningful connections is key. This is underpinned by mutual trust, respect, and support among curators, collectors, and museum staff. In the co-curation process of *Chronic Compulsions*, collective care reveals itself in the compassion the working team extends to one another.

ACTIVE AUDIENCE

A longstanding debate revolves around art's relationship with its audience. Some maintain art's autonomy, and advocate for a disregard of the audience. Drawing inspiration from Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790), they claim art transcends the need for validation or comprehension. Others—inspired by Roland Barthes' “Death of the Author” (1967)—emphasise audience interpretation and art's vitality in engaging with viewers. In the post-pandemic context, are things still so black-and-white? Could both perspectives be valid?

Curator Ralph Rugoff's stance on group exhibitions bridges the gap between showcasing exceptional art and actively engaging the audience.

1 Tai, Janice; “8 in 10 Singaporeans willing to pay more for essential services: Survey”; *The Sunday Times*; 14 June 2020.

2 Lee, Daehyung; “ART, The Super Vaccine”; *ArtReview*; 25 September 2020. <https://artreview.com/art-after-pandemic/>

3 Rogoff, Ralph; "You Talking To Me: On Curating Group Shows that Give You a Chance to Join the Group"; Marincola, Paula, ed; *What Makes a Great Exhibition?*; Philadelphia: The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage; p44.

4 Groys, Boris; "Politics of Installation"; *e-flux Journal*, 2; 2009. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/politics-of-installation/>

5 Reckitt, Helena; "Support Acts: Curating, Caring and Social Reproduction"; *Journal of Curatorial Studies*; 5: 1; pp6–30; 2016.

Rugoff challenges the notion that displaying outstanding art alone creates a memorable viewing experience. He urges for a shift from such passive viewership to active engagement, emphasising deliberate juxtapositions and context-building. In doing so, exhibitions respect the audience's intellect, offering them "something else to do besides simply look and applaud."³

Chronic Compulsions seeks to engage audiences through thoughtful juxtaposition. Besides mixing artworks of different periods, subjects, and styles, this exhibition deliberately blurs distinctions between high and low art forms. For instance, the inclusion of Jeremy Hiah's nine-part diorama *The Story of the Singapore Stone* (2014) is a deliberate curatorial choice. Made from Lego bricks, it has a childlike sensibility and narrates the story of a large stone at the Singapore River. Including Hiah's work is a way to engage children who visit the exhibition with their parents, recognising them not only as vital audience members but also as important stakeholders in tomorrow's art community. Such purposeful juxtapositions provide an inclusive experience for the audience while encouraging them to reflect on their aesthetic preferences. This aligns with Rugoff's concept of art exhibitions as spaces for communal participation and exchange.

WORK AS CLUES

The word curator originates from the Latin word *curare*, which means "care." The traditional role of a curator hence involves tending to artworks. Boris Groys (2009) pushed the medical metaphor further, even suggesting that artworks are "sick, helpless," and need curators to cure them by providing public visibility and vitality.⁴ The rise of the independent curator in the 1960s, epitomised by Harald Szeemann and Walter Hopps, prompted concern that curators were "dominating art and artists, and did not care about them *enough*".⁵

In *Chronic Compulsions*, domination by any single individual or group is not possible. For a start, the repository of artworks from which the selection was made originates from existing art collections. This means that the works in this exhibition have been pre-selected. Secondly, the curatorial team of three comprises professionals with full-time jobs. Our role is short-term and project-based, rather than full-time and sustained. Despite this, we tried our best to harness our individual strengths and shared camaraderie to bring this exhibition to fruition.

The artwork selection process involved five key steps: First, The Private Museum invited each collector to submit a preliminary list of five artworks from their respective collection. Second, the curators made an initial selection of approximately 40 artworks based on the artwork shortlist. Third, each curator was assigned four to six collections to work closely with. Fourth, meetings between paired curators and collectors were conducted to physically examine the proposed works and, in several cases, additional ones. Fifth, curators regrouped to discuss and update the artwork list. A selection of three artworks per collection was made, and a digital hang was drafted by grouping artworks with similar themes.

Given time limitations and the expansive scope of this exhibition, the co-curators implicitly agreed from the start that our aim was not to present a comprehensive survey of the 15 collections' finest pieces. Instead

of selecting only the best works from each collection, we chose to seek meaningful connections between pieces. A guiding criterion when considering an artwork was its ability to offer insights into the collections, the collectors, or both. Sometimes, having too many powerful pieces creates clashes and diminishes the overall impact. I believe that highlighting a few key works with other pieces complementing them can lead to a show with better flow. Curation is not just about showcasing the best-known works; it is also about creating spaces for quieter, less-explored pieces.

The artworks in *Chronic Compulsions* do not only provide clues to the collectors' motivations and methods, but also mirror the experiences and choices of the respective curators. Thus, it is more accurate to view the final artwork selection as a two-tiered collaboration: between 15 pairs of collectors and curators, and amongst the three co-curators.

The working process within each collector-curator pairing varies drastically. For example, although I saw other works during my visit to Liu Ying Mei's residence, I respected her preference to limit my options within her list. This made the artwork selection process highly efficient. Patricia Choo and Manfred Schmoelz were initially surprised that I did not select more seminal pieces from their vast collection. However, after I explained that a few subtler pieces from their collection are needed to balance up the exhibition's dynamics, they understood and agreed with my selection. Joanne Ngeow continued to share artwork options after my initial selection, which helped me better understand her key collecting impulse of supporting young voices. John Chia and Cheryl Loh engaged me in discussions on their speakerphone while driving to address pressing matters! Rather than a rigid *modus operandi*, my work process shifted according to each collector's communication style and preference.

Each curator brought their unique expertise and working style: Low Sze Wee specialises in Chinese ink paintings and modern artworks, Michelle Ho is an expert on works by contemporary artists, and I, Michael Lee, being both an artist and an independent curator, am fascinated with works that take on more unconventional formats like installation, performance, and video. Sze Wee efficiently met quantity criteria and included multiple quality works by the same artist, forming a solid foundation for our selections. I went mostly by instinct, delaying both the contextualisation and the shortlisting of artworks. This made the process more time-consuming and resulted in an eclectic selection. Michelle adeptly filled gaps and responded to themes in Sze Wee's and my selections, striving for dialogue among artworks. Her proposal to place Asim Wakif's mixed-media sculpture *Municipal Demolition #3* amongst ink works curated by Sze Wee was intended to stir intrigue.

WITHIN, BETWEEN, AND BEYOND ROOMS

The Private Museum has 12 main spaces where artworks can be displayed. They include multiple galleries and alcoves, Emily Arcade, the Arrival Hall, Caroline Verandah, and the Attic. Ten of these are publicly accessible. Between the two restricted areas, the Function Room is open to guests during events while the Attic is accessible only during private tours. There are also ancillary spaces like the stairwells where works can be installed if appropriate.

The variety and quantity of spatial types in The Private Museum poses curatorial challenges and opportunities. Might each collection get a room? Should every space or wall be filled? How could we balance between parity and particularity?

In the end, our curatorial solution comprised three considerations. One, we ensured that three selected works in each collection were placed in gallery-like spaces that are publicly accessible. Two, we assessed specific ancillary spaces for suitable additional works, though not from every collection or for every space. Three, rather than adhering to a booth system where works from the same collection occupy the same space, we opted to intermingle works from different collections, suggesting potential connections among them. With these three considerations, themes were born within each room. Each space now carries a theme illustrated or interrogated by the artworks within it. However, one exception is the Arrival Hall on level one which showcases works of varying forms and subjects, offering a sampler to the themed rooms on level two. The artwork placement reflects care about the meanings and experiences that each work carries or ignites in relation to one another and space.

In Sophia Alcove, the curatorial pairing of Martin Constable's and Yanyun Chen's artworks was based on their sustained relationship that, over time, evolved from pedagogical to professional. When the UK-born Constable was based in Singapore, he taught various students who eventually carved out their own paths. Among them was Chen. Post-graduation in 2016, Chen co-wrote with her former teacher an art educator's textbook entitled *50 Drawing Exercises*, published by the Ministry of Education.⁶ This book serves to build the drawing curriculum for pre-university art education in Singapore. Despite the absence of thematic and contextual connections between their works, their pairing was a curatorial consensus to prompt thoughts about artistic lineage, education, and collaboration.

In the Attic, we have chosen to place F.X. Harsono's work *Menulis Ulang pada Makam (Rewriting on the Tomb)* (2013), a selection of crayon rubbings on fabrics made at mass graves in Indonesia, and *Berziarah ke Sejarah (Pilgrimage to History)* (2013), Harsono's video work documenting these grave visits. The Attic has a cocoon-like form which interestingly makes it look and feel like an underground tomb, making it a rather apt space for Harsono's works. Throughout the museum, parts of Jeremy Hiah's *The Story of the Singapore Stone* (2014) are to be scattered. As the work combines myth with colonial history, we feel that it is apt to have its components in more than one room. This allows the work to explore how both fiction and history have ramifications in present and future worlds.

COLLEGIAL CARE

In the art world, it is normative to hide the backstage efforts of mounting exhibitions. The spotlight is to fall on the main actors—the artworks and the artists—and supporting elements like publications and programmes. However, this often obscures the extensive emotional labour invested in cultivating relationships, particularly among curators, collectors, artists, and museum staff.⁷ To bridge this gap, this section reflects on how the co-curators worked together and cared for one another in the process of putting together this exhibition.

Collaboration amongst the co-curators of *Chronic Compulsions* has been smooth. This harmonious workflow largely stems from a foundation of mutual trust, respect, and support. Trust in—and respect of—one another's abilities and intentions to accomplish tasks effectively form the backbone of our co-curatorial work. My accounts above of the processes of artwork selection and artwork placement may seem systematic, but in reality, we have been working in a very organic manner: Someone throws out an idea, another agrees or makes a counter-proposal, and the team rolls with it! Although we have been taking one step at a time as a team, there have been critical moments when someone has voluntarily made decisions on behalf of the team rather than wait for directions. Michelle's drafting of exhibition writeup and Sze Wee's early submission of artwork selection and essay draft were helpful in kick-starting the process. I see this as a combination of foresight, generosity, and respectful fearlessness.

On other occasions, we complemented and built on one another's views and provided help when someone faced a challenge. Collegial care among the co-curators also included going beyond the necessary to check in with one another. One late Saturday afternoon, right after I shared snapshots of a completed hang with the team in a WhatsApp group chat, I received a personal text from a fellow curator with one of the photos I sent earlier, captioned as such: "Wow. Really got the feels [...] Good job, Michael!" While a simple emoji in the group chat would have sufficed, this gesture of a thumbs-up in private more than soothed my exhaustion.

If you're still wondering, there was no drama among the curators, only professional exchanges and words of care. Whether this is due to our accommodating personalities, our professional experience, or the valuable lessons from the pandemic that we have imbibed remains unclear. What is clear, however, is that we understand the significance of fulfilling individual responsibilities, supporting one another, and most importantly, consistently showing up.

Last but not least, the participating collectors contributed greatly to the curatorial process. More like colleagues than clients, the collectors—especially those in the working

committee—supported and gave constructive feedback on our curatorial decisions and manuscripts.

The post-pandemic era has ushered in a pivotal moment to redefine the roles of art exhibitions and curatorial processes. *Chronic Compulsions* exemplifies a case study of post-pandemic co-curation, underscoring the critical considerations in curating a meaningful and engaging exhibition with collective care. For example, the artwork selection involved reflecting on factors such as the impulses behind collections, the forms, subjects, and sensibilities of works, the range of traditional, modern, and contemporary art pieces, and the bridging of high and low art. Beyond filling the rooms in The Private Museum with three suitable art pieces from each collection, care was also taken to consider additional artworks to activate ancillary spaces or to scatter the aesthetic experience of a single work across rooms. By putting such thought into the curatorial process, we aimed to create an inclusive and thought-provoking experience for audiences, hence echoing the essence of art exhibitions as communal spaces for participation and exchange.

Needless to say, such participation and exchange are also evident in the collaboration among curators, museum staff, and collectors. The interplay between the individual and collective resembles an improvised dance, intertwining self-care and care for others. Ultimately, collective care is about compassion—for objects, issues, and humans; co-curating, then, is not only about caring for artworks and one's craft, but also what a colleague is going through. In the curation of *Chronic Compulsions*, this careful balance between individual and collective needs underpins the harmonious teamwork and valuing of coworkers' well-being. Even as the exhibition eventually closes, my hope is that such priorities endure amid our changing times. ♻️

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
Curated by Michael Lee



12.1
NGUYEN TRUNG
Lady



12.2
I GUSTI AYU KADEK MURNIASIH
Aku Ingin Terbang



12.3
JUMAADI
Baby Tree

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 12 / 15]
Liu Ying Mei

Liu Ying Mei, a global art collector, has short-listed Southeast Asian artworks for this show. The three chosen works centre on the themes of gender, nature, and courage.

Nguyen Trung, a Vietnamese artist, diverges from post-1975 social realism by depicting everyday subjects, particularly women. Despite post-war pressures to portray heroic figures like Ho Chi Minh for national revival, Trung resisted. His portrait *Lady* (1996) features a serene, emotionally-detached figure, rejecting patriotic sentiments in favour of Buddhist ideals of spiritual detachment and tranquillity. This reflects the artist's courage to forge his independent artistic path.

The late Indonesian artist I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih, also known as Murni, created semi-figurative paintings reflecting her life of poverty, trauma, and social ostracism. *Aku Ingin Terbang* (*I Want to Fly*) (1998) portrays a central figure resembling an arm and a bodiless clothed figure in flight. The repeated blue blotches suggestive of the batik technique mega mendung has been associated with her pre-artist life as a seamstress.

Jumaadi, an Indonesian artist, works across mediums—painting, drawing, installation, and performance—exploring social, political, and environmental themes such as deforestation, overpopulation, death, sustainability, and colonialism. Influenced by Indonesian traditions like wayang kulit and Balinese art, he merges these with personal experiences to create a distinct visual language. He views the human body as a means to comprehend life and explore the possibilities of reality. In *Baby Tree* (2022), the bags of foetuses dangling off tree branches raise "questions of fiction in a nonfiction world," while the use of buffalo hide as the canvas references the cultural symbolism of the cow as a sacred animal.



13.1
KAWITA VATANAJYANKUR
The Pendulum



13.2
ONG SI HUI
Cleft & Teetering: Itch



13.3
CONDRO PRIYOAJI
Absolution #3

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 13 / 15]
Patricia Choo and Manfred Schmoelz

The couple Patricia Choo and Manfred Schmoelz collect international art. The works selected for this exhibition are by artists in Southeast Asia, and engage with notions of labour and perception.

The performative videos of Thai artist Kawita Vatanajyankur examine labour, gender, and consumerism, challenging societal norms by transforming the body into tools and objects. In *The Pendulum* (2023), the artist embodies five human-machine devices sifting rice seeds with bamboo baskets, aiming for factory precision but discovering unplanned synchronisations. This creates new patterns as the bodies interact in a zig-zag arrangement, producing irregular clock-like sounds. The work explores the body's multifaceted roles, referencing factory workers and their relations to one another in the system.

Singapore sculptor Ong Si Hui imbues her stone works like *Cleft* (2019) and *Teetering: Itch* (2018) with labour-intensive efforts, showcasing intricate geometric sculptures achieved through painstaking hours of carving and refining. While rigorous and hard, Ong's angular and curvilinear forms reflect delicacy and tenderness, offering clues to her stream of consciousness.

Indonesian artist Condro Priyoaji explores the passage of time by manipulating colour to depict shadows on painting. His *Absolution* series seems to portray shadows of unseen objects. Through blurs and images that appear to vanish, these works invite emotional connections and offer a deeper, non-figurative understanding.



14.1
LEE WEN
Is Art Necessary? What Is Art Good For?



14.2
JEREMY HIAH
The Story of the Singapore Stone



14.3
SUSIE LINGHAM
Unobservatory I, II & III, Undivider & t/here truth lies



14.4
F. X. HARSONO
Menulis Ulang pada Makam (Rewriting on the Tomb) & Berziarah ke Sejarah (Pilgrimage to History)

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 14 / 15]
John and Cheryl Chia

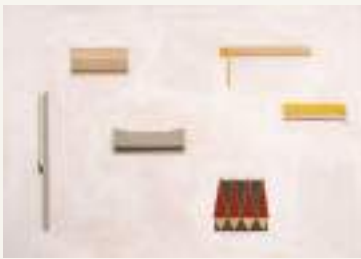
John Chia and his wife Cheryl Loh primarily collect Asian art, especially conceptually-driven works that stir critical inquiry.

The late Lee Wen was a Singapore-based performance artist among pioneers who shaped the development of performance art in Asia. He worked on notions of identity, ethnicity, freedom, and the individual's relationship to communities and the environment. *Is Art Necessary? What is Art Good For?* (2002) was a performance he made while wearing two stretched canvases as wings, prompting audiences to ponder on the significance of art.

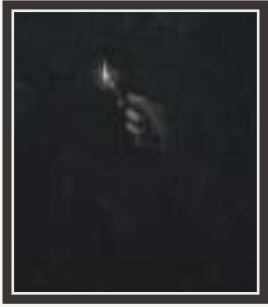
Jeremy Hiah makes social commentary through painting, sculpture, and performance. His artwork *The Story of the Singapore Stone* (2014) comprises nine Lego dioramas depicting scenes from a legend about a rocky outcrop near Keppel Harbour. This tale involves British naval officers allegedly destroying the mythical rock formation out of "arrogance."

Susie Lingham, an interdisciplinary thinker, writer, educator, and curator, delves into the nature of the mind through her work. In this exhibition, she presents five wall-mounted sculptures, each depicting a human hand interacting with an object. These sculptures symbolise her exploration of the unconscious mind's potency.

F.X. Harsono is a prominent artist who develops experimental art to examine social issues. In 1975, he co-founded Indonesia's Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru (New Art Movement), which rebelled against the Suharto regime. Post-1998, he explored his Chinese-Indonesian roots, uncovering buried histories and identities globally significant in today's identity formation. *Menulis Ulang pada Makam (Rewriting on the Tomb)* (2013) delves into genocide and mass graves in Blitar, his birth city. Harsono used his father's photo studio records to document the tragic Chinese genocide from 1947 to 1949 across Java, revealing names of the persecuted on mass tombstone fabric coverings through crayon rubbings to create a poignant intersection of mourning and historical inquiry. The companion video *Berziarah ke Sejarah (Pilgrimage to History)* (2013) documented his grave-searching journey.



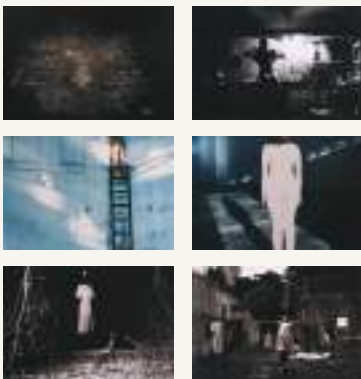
15.1
KAYLEIGH GOH
Lost in Amidst of Time II



15.2
MARTIN CONSTABLE
Explosion of Heat, in my Dark Siberia



15.3
YANYUN CHEN
Flowers I



15.4
LOW PEY SIEN
The Future of (a Work that is Buried in a Hard Disk)

ART ADDICTS ANONYMOUS
* Collection Profiles *
[No. 15 / 15]
Joanne Ngeow

Joanne Ngeow's global art collection engages diverse themes. Among the works selected for this exhibition, the themes of transience, emotions, and the support of young artists recur.

Malaysia-born, Singapore-based artist Kayleigh Goh delves into the psychological and poetic meanings of spaces using materials like cement and wood, which are commonly linked to construction. In her piece *Lost in Amidst of Time II* (2023), she presents incomplete facades of old buildings. This portrayal not only highlights the fragility of memory but hints at a desire for a more gradual pace of urban renewal.

Martin Constable's art revolves around the intersection of painting, photography, and video. *Explosion of Heat, In My Dark Siberia* (2015) appears to be a painting depicting a lone hand holding a lit match, but is actually a digital photograph layered with oil paint. When he was working as an art educator in Singapore, the British-born Constable taught numerous students who became important artists in their own right. They include Yanyun Chen, whose work is also in this exhibition. Her artworks explore the intersection of aesthetic, cultural, and technological influences on the human body, unravelling fictional and philosophical concepts surrounding embodiment, heritage, and legacies. Grounded in the physicality of human and botanical forms, her piece *Flowers I* (2015) delves into impermanence and representation, posing the question: "I wonder what flowers would look like if drawn in charcoal?"

Low Pey Sien is a Malaysian architecture-trained artist who explores the interplay between space, place, and human interaction mainly through photography, film, and graphic media. *The Future of (a Work that is Buried in a Hard Disk)* (2020) comprises nude photographic self-portraits created during the 2020 lockdown while she resided in a repurposed warehouse. This introspective series examines the dichotomy of shame and desire surrounding nudity, challenging traditional associations and proposing a narrative of universal humanity, beauty, and self-empowerment instead.

MICHAEL LEE

Curator

Michael Lee (b. 1972, Singapore) is a Singaporean artist and independent curator. Researching urban memory with a marked interest in loss, its contexts, and implications, Lee's observations often merge personal and national narratives and are variously translated into objects, diagrams, situations, curations, and texts. His works have been presented in solo exhibitions at Yavuz Fine Art, Singapore, 2014; Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany, 2013; Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong, 2010.

His work has also been included in international group exhibitions such as Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, China, 2014, and Asia Triennial Manchester, United Kingdom, 2011, among others. Lee is the founding director of Studio Bibliothèque, a platform which facilitates experiments in art making, curating, and publishing. He was a co-curator of 'An Atlas of Mirrors', in the 2016 edition of the Singapore Biennale. His editorial projects include the series 'Corridors: Notes on the Contemporary' (Singapore: Studio Bibliothèque, 2013) and 'Who Cares: 16 Essays on Curating in Asia', co-edited with Alvaro Rodriguez Fominaya, (Hong Kong: Para/Site Art Space, 2010.)

He won the APBF Signature Art Prize People's Choice Award in 2011 and the National Arts Council's Young Artist Award (Visual Arts) in 2005.

1.1 Chua Ek Kay
Back of Telok Ayer Street
2007
Ink and colour on paper
62 x 48 cm

1.1



1.2 Lim Tze Peng
Afternoon in the Back Alley
Undated, c. 1980s
Ink and colour on paper
67.5 x 67.5 cm

1.3 Lim Tze Peng
Bumboats
Undated, c. 2010
Ink on paper
98.5 x 101.6 cm

Collection of Augustin Lee and Alice Toh

1.2



1.3



2.1



2.2



2.1 Chua Ek Kay
Young Lotus
2007
Ink and colour on paper
123 x 123 cm

2.2 Lim Tze Peng
Calligraphy
2011
Ink and colour on paper
101 x 101 cm

2.3 Ernest Chan
Happiness is... Finding the Garden Within No. 1 (Garden Series)
2016—2022
Oil on canvas
80 x 80 cm

Collection of Greg Lui and May Loh

2.3



3.1 Wong Keen
To Fry or Not to Fry II
2018
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 114.5 cm

3.2 Wong Keen
Monkey Around
(Tribute to Chen Wen Hsi)
2019
Acrylic on canvas
174.4 x 114.3cm

3.3 Wong Keen
(Forest) Flesh #003
2022
Mixed media on rice paper
185 x 87 cm

Collection of Paul and Lena Ng

3.2



3.3



3.1



4.1



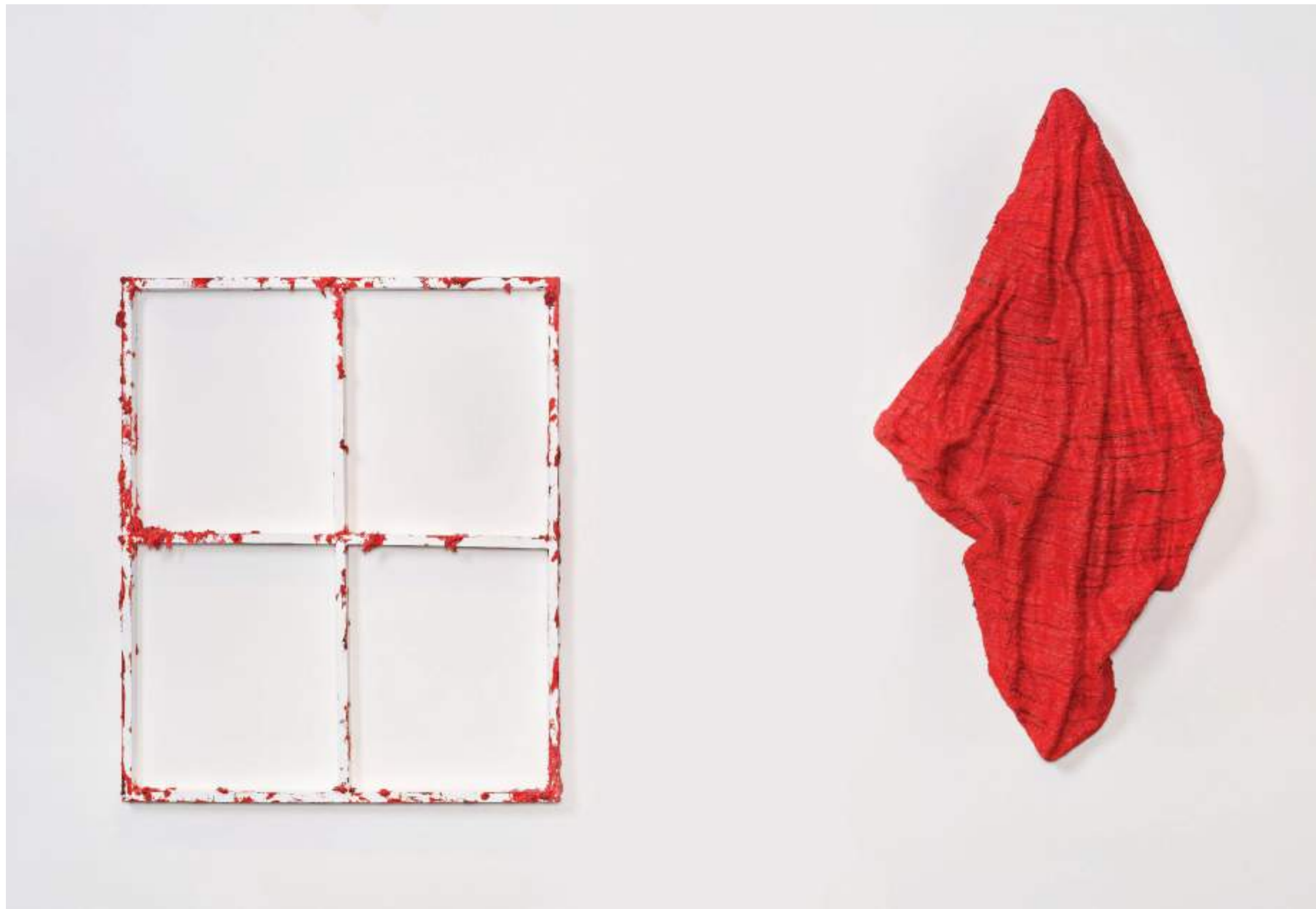
4.1 Han Sai Por
Transformation Series 4
 2009
 Highly polished green granite with
 enforced stainless steel
 110 x 38 x 16 cm

4.2 Tan Teo Kwang
Jiawu 105 (left) | Jiawu 106 (right)
 2014
 Acrylic on canvas
 109 x 101.4 cm (each), diptych

Collection of Steven Chua and
 Sue Anne Toh

4.2





4.3 Jane Lee
Beneath III
2011
Mixed media on canvas
Frame: 120 x 100.5 x 4.5 cm
Canvas: 153 x 82 x 13.5 cm

Collection of Steven Chua and
Sue Anne Toh

5.1 Lim Tze Peng
Crowded Bugis Street
1980–2020
Ink and colour on paper
68 x 68.5 cm

5.2 Lim Tze Peng
Homecoming
1977
Ink and colour on paper
69 x 69 cm

Collection of Joshua and Sophia Lim

5.1



5.2



5.3 Hong Ling
The Rich Autumn
2006
Oil on canvas
120 x 224.6 cm

5.3

Collection of Joshua and Sophia Lim



6.1



6.1 Chen Kezhan
Rustling of Autumn
2016
Ink and colour on paper
178 x 147.5 cm

6.2 Latiff Mohidin
Gelombang – Landscape
1992
Oil on canvas
178 x 147 cm

Lim & Yan Collection

6.2



6.3 Hong Sek Chern
Flowers in the mirror; Moon in the water
2015
Ink and colour on paper
137 x 69 cm (each)

Lim & Yan Collection

6.3



7.1 Semsar Siahaan
Blinded by the UN
2003
Charcoal on found cardboard
129 x 84 cm

7.2 Wawi Navarroza
X, After the Storm No.2
2010
Archival pigment ink print
98 x 151.8 cm

7.3 Asim Waqif
Municipal Demolition 3
2016
UV print on aluminium
composite panel
131 x 58 x 65 cm

Collection of Jim Amberson

7.1



7.2



7.3



8.1



8.1 Suzann Victor
Lookout
2022
Acrylic on canvas, acrylic strip
and lenses
169 x 89 x 1.7 cm

8.2



8.2 Khairulddin Wahab
The Struggle for Luxuriance
2023
Acrylic on linen
139.5 x 100 cm

8.3



8.3 Sim Chi Yin
*Stanley R Mickelsen Safeguard
Complex, North Dakota, from Most
People Were Silent (Top) & Mount
Paektu, Looking from China into
North Korea, from Most People Were
Silent (Bottom)*
2017
Pigment print on cotton rag pearl
83 x 121 cm (each)



Collection of Low Kah Boon

9.1 Wong Perng Fey
Untitled #014
2014
Oil and enamel on canvas
130 x 96 cm

9.1



9.2 Cheong Soo Pieng
Highlands Scenery
1963
Oil on canvas
71 x 98.8 cm

9.3 Tang Da Wu
True Story
1986
Oil on canvas
121.9 x 91 cm

Collection of Amy Quek and
Raymond Seet

9.2



9.3



10.1



- 10.1 Nona Garcia
Hallow
2015
3-channel video
2 min 30 sec
- 10.2 Gary-Ross Pastrana
(Eidolon II) Lot-01 (Provisional Objects Series)
2019
Carved wooden figure on
MDF plinth
Object: 134.62 x 88.9 x 20 cm
Pedestal: 109.22 x 114.31 x 53.34 cm
- 10.3 Khvay Samnang
Calling for Rain
2021
Digital C-print
80 x 119.6 cm

Monsoon Southeast Asia Art Collection



10.2

10.3



11.1 Melissa Tan
Philomela and Prokne
2022
Mirror finish stainless steel epoxy
resin and pigment
Philomela: 120 x 147 x 22 cm
Prokne: 139 x 125 x 20 cm
Combined: 226 x 177 x 22 cm

11.1



11.2 Guo-Liang Tan
Screen Practice II
2021
Acrylic on aeronautical fabric,
balau wood
230 x 174 x 57.8 cm

11.3 Natee Utarit
Modernism
2010
Oil on canvas
120 x 100 cm

11.4 Ronald Ventura
i-Human
2008
Oil on canvas
152.5 x 122.5 cm

Collection of Linda Neo and Albert Lim

11.2



11.3



11.4



12.1 Nguyen Trung
Lady
1996
Oil on canvas
41 x 27 cm

12.1



12.2 I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih
Aku Ingin Terbang
1998
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 50.8 cm

12.3 Jumaadi
Baby Tree
2022
Acrylic on buffalo hide
85 x 103.5 cm

Collection of Liu Ying Mei

12.2



12.3



13.1



13.1 Kawita Vatanajyankur
The Pendulum
 2023
 5-channel 4K video
 2 min 50 sec

13.2 Ong Si Hui
Cleft (top)
 2019
 Bianco carrara marble
 24.5 x 7 x 5 cm (each)
Teetering: Itch (bottom)
 2018
 Granite
 50 x 10 x 7.3 cm

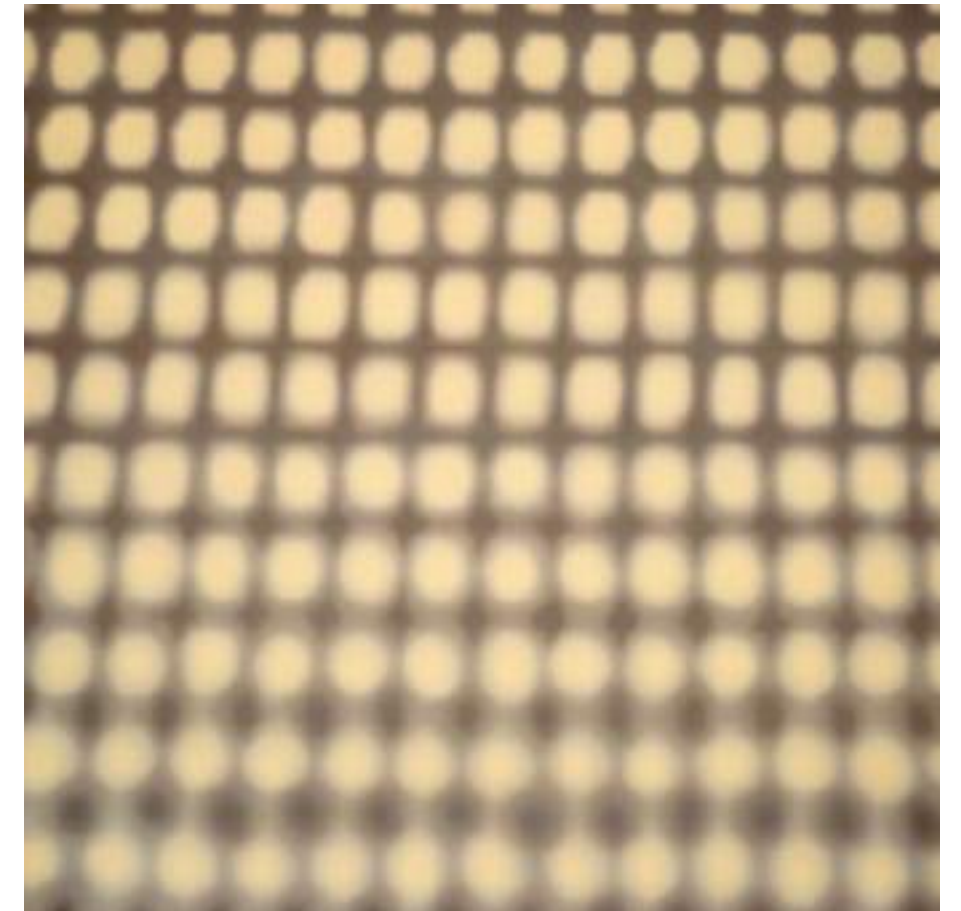
13.3 Condro Priyoaji
Absolution #3
 2023
 Acrylic on canvas
 145.3 x 145.3 cm

Collection of Patricia Choo and
 Manfred Schmoelz

13.2



13.3



14.1 Lee Wen
Is Art Necessary?
What Is Art Good For?
 2002
 Mixed media on board
 (performance relic) and 2-part
 video documentation.
 Performance relic: 112 x 91.5 cm (each)
 Video documentation: 15 min 58 sec (total)

14.2 Jeremy Hiah
The Story of the Singapore Stone
 2014
 Lego bricks
 1 Big box: 56 x 52 x 52 cm
 8 Small boxes: 26 x 26 x 26 cm (each)

Collection of John and Cheryl Chia

14.2



14.1



14.3 Susie Lingham
(Left to right)
Unobservatory I
2022
Plaster with ostrich egg
20 x 25 x 18 cm
Unobservatory II
2022
Plaster with emu egg
20 x 11 x 27 cm
Unobservatory III
2022
Plaster with goose egg
17 x 10 x 26 cm
Undivider
2022
Plaster with klein bottle
10 x 15 x 30 cm
t(he)re truth lies
2022
Plaster with plumb bob
148 x 9 x 24 cm

14.3



14.4 F. X. Harsono
Menulis Ulang pada Makam
(Rewriting on the Tomb) [right]
2013
Copy of pastel rubbed on fabric
Dimensions variable
Berziarah ke Sejarah
(Pilgrimage to History) [left]
2013
Single-channel video
13 min 40 sec

Collection of John and Cheryl Chia



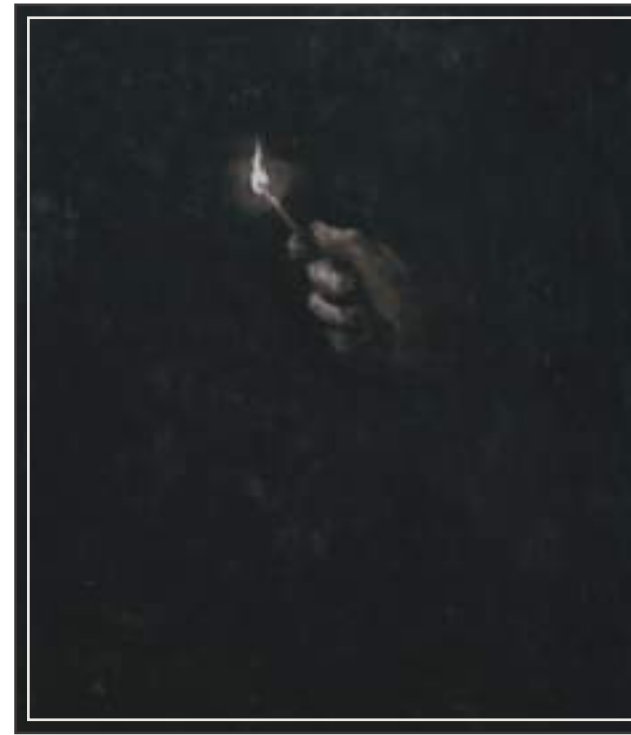
14.4



15.1



15.2



- 15.1 Kayleigh Goh
Lost in Admist of Time II
2023
Cement, gesso, acrylic paint
on wood
90.5 x 130 cm
- 15.2 Martin Constable
*Explosion of Heat, in my
Dark Siberia*
2015
Oil paint on MDF board, blackboard
paint on wall
86 x 76.5 cm
- 15.3 Yanyun Chen
Flowers I
2015
Charcoal on paper
44.5 x 44.5 cm

Collection of Joanne Ngeow

15.3





15.4 Low Pey Sien
*The Future of (a Work that is
 Buried in a Hard Disk)*
 2020
 Digital print
 77.3 x 51 cm (each)

Collection of Joanne Ngeow



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Private Museum extends its deepest gratitude to all participating collections from Arts Addicts Anonymous, curators Low Sze Wee, Michelle Ho, Michael Lee, and the featured artists for their invaluable trust and dedicated efforts in the creation of this exhibition.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the National Arts Council for their generous grant support, which has played a crucial role in making this exhibition possible.

A special thank you goes to our esteemed exhibition partners—WOHA, Systemz, Currency Design, Allegro Print, Helutrans Artmove, BARC Labs, AVS Printing—for their outstanding contributions that have greatly enriched the overall experience.

Our heartfelt thanks extend to Mrs Rosa Daniel, who graciously officiated the opening reception as the Guest of Honour, adding a touch of distinction to the event.

Once again, we extend our warm appreciation to everyone involved for their time, dedication, and collaboration, making this exhibition a resounding success.

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Low Sze Wee
Michelle Ho
Michael Lee

ARTISTS

Ernest Chan, Chen Kezhan, Yanyun Chen,
Cheong Soo Pieng, Chua Ek Kay, Condro Priyoaji,
Martin Constable, Nona Garcia, Kayleigh Goh,
Han Sai Por, F. X. Harsono, Jeremy Hiah, Hong Ling,
Hong Sek Chern, Jumaadi, Khvay Samnang,
Latiff Mohidin, Jane Lee, Lee Wen, Lim Tze Peng,
Susie Lingham, Low Pey Sien, I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih,
Wawi Navarroza, Nguyen Trung, Ong Si Hui,
Gary-Ross Pastrana, Semsar Siahaan, Sim Chi Yin,
Guo-Liang Tan, Melissa Tan, Tan Teo Kwang,
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PROJECT TEAM

Exhibition: Mandel Yap, Tessa Sam
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ABOUT THE PRIVATE MUSEUM

The Private Museum is a non-profit private museum in Singapore founded by Singaporean philanthropist, art collector and real estate developer, Daniel Teo, together with his daughter Rachel Teo in 2010.

Fuelled by passionate patronage for the arts, the museum aims to be an alternative platform to bridge the gap between the private and the public. With a vision to promote art appreciation, the independent arts space engages local, regional and international audiences from all walks of life.

The Private Museum is a registered Charity and Institution of a Public Character (IPC) since 2010 and 2015 respectively.

OUR VISION

To be a leading, dynamic private museum in Southeast Asia and a national model in Singapore that engages, inspires and builds communities through art.

OUR MISSION

To serve as an independent platform in bridging gaps between public and private spheres through the exchange of ideas across cultures, educational initiatives, and artistic and curatorial collaborations with collectors and practitioners of the arts.

Private MUSEUM

SINGAPORE

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“Art collecting is compulsive. It is objectified desire—the unconscious will, expressing itself, seeking embodiment in the world. Art collecting is the act of manifesting disquiet. It is a disagreement with the status quo; an argument with the world. Art is full of secrets. It is deeply personal, going down many layers into the substratum, into the deepest fibre of the collector’s being. Everyone has their own reasons for art collecting. Everyone is on their own journey.”

John Chia, Collector, Art Addicts Anonymous

The Private Museum Singapore is delighted to present *Chronic Compulsions: Selected Works from Art Addicts Anonymous*, an exhibition showcasing the groundbreaking collaboration between a local private museum, private collectors and seasoned curators.

This unique exhibition marks the 10th anniversary of the formation of Art Addicts Anonymous—a collectors’ circle that has evolved from a casual gathering of art lovers into a strong community of collectors who want to share their passion for art with society at large.

***Chronic Compulsions* unveils a remarkable selection of over 50 modern and contemporary works from 15 participating collections from Singapore, each piece bearing a personal connection to its collector.**

As we celebrate a decade of passion and purpose, this exhibition is testament to the timeless nature of art and its transformative power. It represents the synergies between The Private Museum, Art Addicts Anonymous, and the arts community, injecting value and vibrancy into the Singapore art scene. 