

The Artists Village: 20 Years On 21 August – 5 October 2008



Singapore Art Museum is proud to present *The Artists Village: 20 Years On*, an exhibition of over 25 artworks and artists' project by The Artists Village (TAV). The exhibition features installations, video art, paintings, performance art, sculptures and drawings, providing a broad survey of their diverse artistic practices. This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the TAV's establishment and offers historical distance to evaluate and examine the significance of TAV as part of the Singapore Art Museum's series of exhibitions on artists' collectives.

The exhibition opening will be officiated by Guest of Honour, Ms Jane Ittogi, Chair of Singapore Art Museum on 20 August 2008, Wednesday, 7pm, at the Glass Hall, Singapore Art Museum.

The Artists Village (TAV) was formed within a rural-scape (or *kampung*) at 61-b Lorong Gambas, Sembawang in 1988. TAV engendered radical shifts in generating new ways and manners of thinking and making art in the history of contemporary art in Singapore. They are also known for producing works that are intellectually challenging and engaged with current issues in the late 1980s, a period marked by a sense of urgency and impetus for artists to critically re-look and examine existing assumptions, values and concepts of art-making.

Says Director, Singapore Art Museum, Mr Kwok Kian Chow, "TAV has been instrumental in creating new modes of thinking in Singapore contemporary art scene. The exhibition presents a wide range of artworks and artists' project, offering a broad survey of The Artists Village's diverse artistic practices. Through the exhibition, audience can immerse themselves in the social and cultural contexts in which the TAV artists developed their alternative strategies of making art."

The exhibition is conceived as a metaphor for the memories and histories of The Artists Village, thematically categorised into three periods: 1988 to 1994, 1995 to 1998, and 1999 to 2008. The first period (1988 to 1994) offer entry points to understand the artistic activities, objectives, and artistic practices that shape the TAV collectively. The tensions, disjuncture and collision of the individual and collective memories of the TAV are captured through interviews of artists from 1995 to 1998. The final period (1999 -) will focus on a new group of TAV artists who signalled their intention to continue the TAV's mission to promote contemporary art and to bring about a better understanding of contemporary art practices. Some of the TAV projects include: Post Ulu (1999), AIM (2000), and the Public Art Library (2003).

The Artists Village: 20 Years On is held at both SAM and 8Q sam. It opens to public on 21st August and ends on 5th October 2008.

Please refer to the Exhibition Fact Sheet for more information:

Backgrounder of Exhibition

About The Artists Village

Selected Key Artworks

Public Programmes in conjunction with *The Artists Village: 20 Years On*

About Singapore Art Museum and 8Q sam

For media interviews and further information contact:

Sybil Chiew	DID: 6332 3291
Senior MarComs Officer	FAX: 6334 7919
Singapore Art Museum	E-mail: Sybil_Chiew@nhb.gov.sg

Koren Kwan	DID: 6332 3217
Assistant Manager (MarComs)	FAX: 6334 7919
Singapore Art Museum	Email: Koren_Kwan@nhb.gov.sg

Monday to Sunday :10am to 7pm, with extended hours and

FREE Admission on Friday from 6pm to 9pm

Singapore Art Museum is located at 71 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189555

8Q sam is located at 8 Queen Street, Singapore 188535

For general enquiries, please contact Front desk at 6332 3222.

For more information, visit www.singart.com

Exhibition Fact Sheet

Title: *The Artists Village: 20 Years On*

Duration: 21 August to 5 October 2008

Exhibition Venue: Singapore Art Museum

Gallery-Turn-Studio: 8Q sam

Significance of Exhibition:

TAV engendered radical shifts in generating new ways and manners of thinking and making art in the history of contemporary art in Singapore. This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the TAV's establishment and offers historical distance to evaluate and examine the significance of TAV as part of the Singapore Art Museum's series of exhibitions on artists' collectives.

Curatorial Concepts of Exhibition:

The exhibition is conceived as a metaphor for the memories and histories of The Artists Village, thematically categorised into three periods: 1988 to 1994, 1995 to 1998, and 1999 to 2008.

The changing Artworks by TAV artists from 1988 to 1994 offer entry points to understand the artistic activities, objectives, and artistic practices that shape the TAV collectively. The tensions, disjuncture and collision of the individual and collective memories of the TAV are captured through interviews of artists from 1995 to 1998. The final period will focus on a new group of TAV artists who signalled their intention to continue the TAV's mission to promote contemporary art and to bring about a better understanding of contemporary art practices.

Number of Artwork: Over 25 artworks and artists' project by The Artists Village

Range of Artwork: From installations, video art, paintings, performance art, sculptures to drawings.

Exhibition Catalogue: Exhibition catalogue will be published after the exhibition opens, to include documentation of the entire exhibition.

Curators:

Seng Yu Jin graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Master of Arts in History. He is assistant curator with the National Art Gallery, Singapore. To date he has curated shows at the Singapore Art Museum such as *Affandi - A Painter of Genius* (2007) and *From Words to Pictures: Art During the Emergency* (2007). He is also the co-curator of *The Artist Village Show* (August 2008).

Michelle Ho graduated with a Masters in Curatorship & Modern Art from the University of Sydney, Australia. To date she has curated shows such as *Feng Zhengjie: Primary Colours*, *W.S.Hoong – Art of Seal Carving* and *Seeing. Feeling. Being: Alberto Gaicometti*.

About The Artists Village

The Artists Village (TAV) was formed within a rural-scape (or *kampung*) at 61-b Lorong Gambas, Sembawang in 1988. TAV engendered radical shifts in generating new ways and manners of thinking and making art in the history of contemporary art in Singapore. They are also known for producing works that are intellectually challenging and engaged with current issues in the late 1980s, a period marked by a sense of urgency and impetus for artists to critically re-look and examine existing assumptions, values and concepts of art-making.

Objective

- The Artists Village is dedicated to the promotion and encouragement of experimental and alternative arts in Singapore. It endeavors to establish an open space for artists to develop at their own pace and to provide a conducive environment to experiment and exchange ideas.

Chronology of Events

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1999-
2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Post-Ulu at The Substation (28/12/1999 to 16/01/2000) • Artists Investigating Monuments (AIM) (July 2000) • Documentation exhibition of AIM at The Substation (Nov) |
| 1996 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour de Art Lah (Singapore Festival of Arts) (June) |
| 1993 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Sculpture Seminar at SAM (Jul) • Artists General Assembly at 5th Passage Contemporary Art Space (Dec) |
| 1992 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered under the Societies Act • <i>The Space</i> (Hong Bee Warehouse) (June) • ARTS IN U (NTU) (AUG) • Performance Week at Gallery 21 |
| 1991 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sculpture Seminar |
| 1990 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QU Art Support II (Hong Kong) • Closure of village space • The CARE Show (June) • Gateway to Malaysia (Dec) |
| 1989 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Open Studio (Jan) • Art Mart (April) • 2nd Open Studio (May/June) • The Happenings I (July/Aug) • The Happenings II (Sept) • The Drawing Show (Dec) • The Time Show (Dec) |
| 1988 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of The Artists Village Space in 1988 at Lorong Gambas |

Selected Key Artworks



Yellow Man, Where are you Going?

Lee Wen

1990

Oil on canvas

121 x 70cm

Collection of SAM

Lee Wen first performed “The Journey of the Yellow Man” in London in 1992. Performing his body as a sculptural element, Lee Wen painted himself yellow to symbolize his ethnicity and explored how slippages in identity occur in different socio-historical and cultural locations and contexts. In his artist’s statement, Lee Wen states: ‘We find familiarity and strangeness in every place we go. Our awareness is sharpened in new locations and experiences. Yet it remains difficult to keep a constant vigil on our perceptions so that we do not fall prey to false consciousness and prejudices, nor become victims of propaganda from the market and the media, and other distortions.’ Lee Wen’s “Yellow Man” series of performances and installations continued its journeys to Gulbarga, Karnataka India (1992), Nontburi, Thailand (1993), Setagaya Art Museum (1995), Sichuan, China (2001) and other locations.

Yellow Man, Where are you Going (1990) is one of Lee Wen’s early explorations of the issues concerning identity, cultural stereotypes and the power of knowledge through systems of

classifications such as taxonomy whereby Orientals were classified as 'yellow-skinned'. Motifs of a journey in search of oneself manifests in the solitary yellow human figure on a horse. Other motifs such as the foot trudging on the yellow grass with the eye staring directly at the viewer draws us to the subjectivity of the self and how our interpretations and perceptions of people are shaped by the social and cultural conditions we live in.



Under the Table, All Going One Direction

Tang Da Wu

1992

Mixed media

Variable dimensions

Collection of SAM

Tang Da Wu paints, sculpts, draws and is most recognized as a performance artist. After completing his art education in Birmingham Polytechnic, St Martins and Goldsmith College in the United Kingdom, Da Wu returned to Singapore in 1987 before playing an instrumental role in the establishment of The Artists Village in 1988 at Ulu Sembawang as a space for alternative strategies for making art.

His performances can be read as responses to environmental, social and political concerns that he seeks to communicate to audiences beyond gallery spaces. Man's relation with animals is a theme explored in performances such as *They Poach the Rhino, Chop Off his Horn and Make this Drink* (1989) and *Tiger's Whip* (1991). The latter was performed in Chinatown in response to the hunting of animals for their certain body parts in the manufacture of aphrodisiacs in traditional Chinese medicine. *Under the Table, All Going One Direction* deals with the issue of unrestrained hunting of crocodiles for their skin in the making of leather handbags. The spirit of the crocodiles enters the spiritual world through a stained with their blood due to the insatiable greed of humankind for leather products.



A Boring Picture #7
Wong Shih Yaw
1990
176 x 229cm
Collection of SAM

One of the earliest artists to join The Artists Village after graduating from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1989, Wong Shih Yaw searched for an alternative aesthetic to explore alternative strategies for art making and signal fresh ways of viewing art. From 1991 to 1995, Shih Yaw stopped his creative work due to the contradictions between his artistic practice that often engaged with sexually explicit themes and his acceptance of Christianity. His desire to paint was only rekindled in 1995, often focusing on his personal relationship with God.

A Boring Picture #7 is an early work by Shih Yaw that provokes viewers to recognize the fears and anxieties of anguished children neglected by their parents. The image of a child's head is hung, screaming for attention in the deafening seemingly cacophony of images such as severed trees, foreboding wells and coins. Shih Yaw's commentary on the materialistic world is suggested as hands reach out to grab the coins. The severed trees make references to the decreasing value placed on children who are neglected due to the busy work schedules of their parents. The images created by Shih Yaw are provocative and compels the viewer to come to his or her own judgment and to make a stand. Unlike the child whose eyes are replaced by crosses, one cannot be blind to underlying social issues in Singapore's rapidly changing social fabric.

Public Programmes in conjunction with *The Artists Village: 20 Years On*

1. Gallery-Turn-Studio

Come interact and find out how artists work with artists from The Artists Village, who will transform a museum gallery into a working studio space to create artworks! Do not miss this opportunity to mingle with these artists as they create site-specific artworks turning a gallery space that is traditionally reserved for the display and presentation of art into a creative space where art comes alive!

16 & 17 August 2008 (Sat & Sun) • 8 Queen Street • Free • Refer to www.singart.com for more details

2. Open

Time does not limit art! Open seeks to open the possibilities of art-making in this 12 hour over night event at the Singapore Art Museum. Come for a multi-sensory experience as artists across disciplines such as sonic art, installation art, performance art and video art will open your mind to the infinite creativity and possibilities of art.

20 – 21 Sep (Sat & Sun) • 9.00am – 9.00am • SAM • Free

3. Art Bus

Travel in comfort in an Art Bus that will bring you to Artists' Collectives all around Singapore. The Art Bus offers a fun and engaging opportunity to interact and talk to artists first hand in their studios and spaces. This is an opportunity not to be missed for anyone interested in art!

27 Sep (Sat) • 1.00pm – 6.00pm • Meeting point: SAM Lobby • Fee: \$15 (2 way transport) • Registration Required

4. The Artists Village Forum

This forum marks the culmination of The Artists Village Show. This forum consists of two sessions. The first session examines the future of artists' collectives in Singapore in the face of other platforms such as international biennales and trinnales that offer alternative networking opportunities for artists. The second session offers a critical reflection of the art historical significance of The Artists Village in the history of art in Singapore and beyond in relation to the engendering and shaping of contemporary artistic practices.

4 Oct (Sat) • 2.00pm – 4.00pm • SAM Auditorium • Free • Registration Required

5. TAV on Youtube

Learn more about The Artists Village through the individual voices of the very artists who were involved in the making of one of the most important Singapore artists' collectives.

Log on to www.singart.com from 9 August 2008 to view this video.

6. Curatour

Seng Yu Jin graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Master of Arts in History and is co-curator of *The Artist Village* exhibition.

22 Aug & 19 Sep (Fri) • 7.30pm • Meeting point: SAM Lobby • Free • Registration

About Singapore Art Museum and 8Q sam

Opened in January 1996, the mission of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is to preserve and present the art histories and contemporary art practices of Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. To date, SAM has amassed the world's largest public collection of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian artworks with a growing component in international contemporary art. The museum has presented shows covering both local and international art practices, traditional and cutting edge art expressions. Through strategic alliances with international arts and cultural institutions, SAM has been facilitating visual arts education, exchange, research and development within the region and internationally. Through forging collaborative partnerships and staging innovative programmes to engage different audiences, SAM aims to contribute to an enlarged role in the regional visual arts community and Asian art museology, as well as facilitating developments in art as well as the art sector in Singapore.

8Q sam is a contemporary art space with fresh, multi-disciplinary, interactive and community oriented programming; a place where the public can directly experience the work and ideas of living artists, and in relation to its aesthetic and social context.

8Q sam will support experimental art forms and is envisioned to become a crossroad of new ideas and expressions. 8Q sam aspires to engage a broad and diverse audience, create a sense of community and be a place for contemplation, stimulation, and discussion about contemporary art and culture, and serves as a forum especially for the students. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience the diversity of contemporary art practices ranging from painting and sculpture, to installation, film & video, photography, new media, performance art and sound art.