



Jeremy Sharrma (above) and his works, Parkes, Tahata and Ubuntu, at his solo exhibition; and Alfred Tarazi's A Nation's Inflation (left) at the Lebanese Pavilion at the Singapore Art Fair.

PHOTOS: NEO KIMBIN, ST FILE

VISUAL ARTS

Deepika Shetty

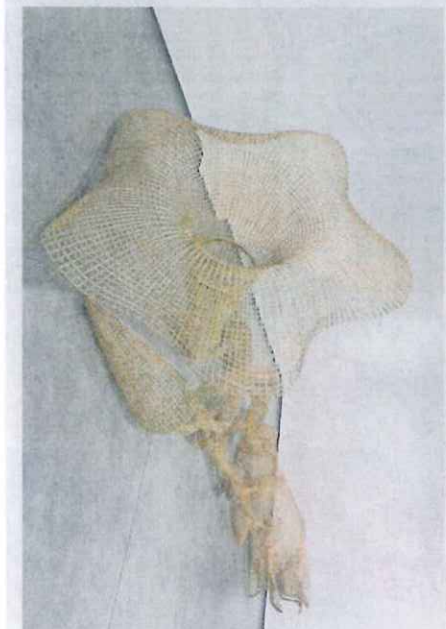
CURATED SHOWCASES IN COMMERCIAL ART FAIRS

Premier contemporary art fair Art Stage Singapore took the lead and showed there are ways of balancing the curatorial with the commercial through its eight curated country and regional platforms this year.



The latest addition to the art fair calendar, the Singapore Art Fair, also won praise for including curated platforms in a commercial fair setting.

The fair features art from Rwanda, Asia and the



Middle East had non-commercial displays such as pavilions on Lebanese art and the works of the late Malaysian artist Ibrahim Hussein.

Such curated platforms offer more large-scale works as well as stronger pieces that offer critical insights into how art-making is evolving in some parts of the world.

MODE CHANGE BY JEREMY SHARMA

Michael Janssen Singapore, May 10 to June 13

Layered, hide-and-seek surfaces popped up in many of Singapore painter Jeremy Sharma's new artworks made of high-density foam.

Expanding on some of the pieces he had shown at the Singapore Biennale, he continued with his creative experiments with foam and delivered stunning visual results in his solo exhibition.

These were juxtaposed with some of his earlier works in grey. Closer inspection of what appeared to be a uniform series of grey paintings revealed subtle differences in the paint's application.

Viewed together, the works showed Sharma's development in the use of unconventional materials and subjects.

RIRIKRIT TIRAVANJIA'S TIME TRAVELERS

CHRONICLE (DOUBT) 2014 - 802,701 AD

Singapore Tyler Print Institute, June

The last thing an artist usually wants is viewers' fingerprints all over a work of art, but Thai art star Rirkrit Tiravanija encouraged everyone to get touchy-feely with his creations.

His new paper works, made during a residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute, included thermo-chromatic works that responded to body heat, the traces of which slowly dissipated over time.

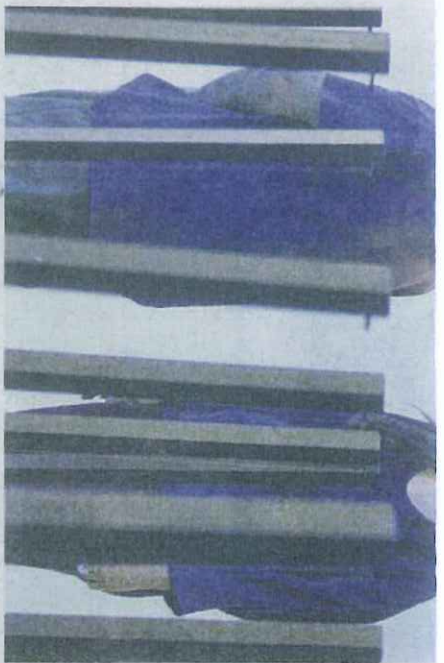
It was a profound exploration of time travel, rendered in a fun and interactive way. His inspiration: the 1895 dystopian novella *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells.

Words. Literature. Art. One could not have asked for a finer exploration of their inter-connectedness than this solo.

HOW MUCH LOWER CAN ART PRICES GO?

With a glut in visual art fairs and more art spaces available for hire in Singapore, a lot of kitsch is up for sale.

From barely dried canvases to canvases



PHOTOS: ST FILE, SOPHEAP PICH

that are not even properly stretched before being painted on, there is a whole lot of cringe-worthy art with even more unimaginative subjects. It comes as no surprise then that some of these so-called artworks can be acquired for a price as low as \$200.

With no signs of a slowdown in the number of visual arts events next year, what organisers should be watching for is quality.

Huang Lijie

NO COUNTRY: CONTEMPORARY ART FOR SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Centre for Contemporary Art, May 10 to July 20

It was compact in scale – just 19 works – but the show stood out for its fresh, incisive curation. The travelling show from New York's Guggenheim Museum was curated by Singaporean June Yap.

Exhibitions on art from South and South-east Asia are often framed around common themes of the life and history of countries in the region.

This show, however, focused on how, rather than what, cultures and influences are passed on in the region and in turn shape identities and relations.

By stepping away from the familiar approach of examining contemporary art of the region, the show opens up discussion on how art from South and South-east Asia came to be and continues to be.

SOUND: LATITUDES AND ATTITUDES

Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, Feb 7 to March 17

Sound, in the practice of contemporary art, had its first

Morning Glory (above) by Sopheap Pich at No Country: Contemporary Art For South And South-east Asia. Sound: Latitudes And Attitudes was curated by Bani Haykal and Joleen Loh (both left).

stirrings here in the 1980s, but it took more than two decades before sound art had its first survey show. The exhibition brought together almost 30 works by 17 artists, musicians and composers who practise here.

To emphasise the sensorial nature of the medium, wall text was eliminated to allow the audience to concentrate on listening to art.

The absence of curatorial text – the catalogue skims the surface – however, was a double-edged sword. It left the uninitiated without a guide to decipher what they heard and prevented those familiar with the practice from engaging more critically with the works.

Yet, as a first attempt on sonic art in Singapore, the show, curated by Joleen Loh and Bani Haykal, is a promising start for making sense of the varied practice here.

MEDIUM AT LARGE

Singapore Art Museum, April 25 to April next year

Under its new director Susie Lingham, who joined the museum last August, this show looks at the mediums of art to begin answering the eternal question of what makes art.

The 32 works span mediums and genres including drawing, photography, video, sound and performance, and they are seldom of a single medium. It is the polygamous union among mediums in contemporary art that lends the show nuance and wins over the disbelieving without losing the enlightened.

SINGAPURA: 700 YEARS

National Museum of Singapore, Oct 28 to Aug 10 next year

This show is touted as an immersive, interactive exhibition and a test bed for the redesign of the museum galleries.

Visitors, however, may find it wanting. It is mainly stuffed with reproductions of photographs and photographs of artefacts, as well as text-heavy information panels that read like a leaden textbook rendered in 3-D.

The display panels were also ridden with typographical errors, naming inaccuracies and style inconsistencies, although these were eventually rectified a month after the show opened.