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INTERVIEW WITH JAPANESE ARTIST TEPPEI KANEUJI



The latest artist to join STPI gallery's Artist in residence program is award-winning Japanese artist, **Teppei Kaneuji**. Teppei is known for his assemblages which involve collecting objects to create an entirely new concept. In *Endless, Nameless (Constructions)*, he was inspired by objects and symbols reflecting the culture of Singapore, a city which he describes as a collage in of itself. "Multi-cultures are blended together like chaos and order in one place. I was very much drawn to that, and I was influenced by the shape, colours and spaces of Haw Par Villa..."*



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The Artling speaks to Teppei about his experience in Singapore and the impact of this residency to his art. **Before coming to Singapore what symbols / images did you associate with the country? And what are the new images that you would associate to Singapore after your 6-week residency at STPI and why?**

I had this impression that Singapore was a New Asia—much like a new wave unlike other Southeast Asian counterparts. I was surprised to find such complex cultures coexisting together in orderly fashion—all in one place.



Games, Dance and the Constructions (Color thick paper) #1



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Games, Dance and the Constructions (Color thick paper) #4

Working with print could seem daunting to some artists who produce more sculptural artwork. You seem to have conquered this obstacle and seamlessly applied dimension to the work you created with STPI. What was that experience like for you, working with the tools that you were given?

Because my style of working has always been to connect different dimensions and situations, it was such a great experience for me to work with different mediums at STPI.

There's an entertaining energy to your construction, and everyday objects seem like they now have new roles to play. What was behind the selection of objects that you brought together?

The objects are selected according to the work and what I set out to achieve. For example, in the case of the White Discharge series (pouring white resin over objects amassed together), I wanted to build a sturdy and tall structure, so I tried to collect different kinds of objects that could play the role of a column and a beam. That was the one criteria in the selection of objects for that work. The original meaning of these selected objects are different the way I see it and the act of putting disparate objects together breathes new life into them. It creates new encounters for all who see the result.



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You collect things which seem to have no correlation to each other, and yet when you put them together, out come a certain cohesion that only you saw during the process of creating the work. Do you aim for the viewer to find and accept that same new meaning around the new object you've created? Or, do you encourage them to create their own when looking/experiencing the work?

*Even though we are looking at the same piece of art or object, how we interpret it differs according to one's experience or cultural background. The things you know and the things you don't also differ and that is beyond our control. Take for example my work **Hakuchizu**, where I poured white powder over various objects on a table. It was understood by some as the ashes of an atomic bomb or pollution from China. Some might say it's a Japanese Zen garden, or a scene of winter, while others say it's a fictional representation of the final days of the earth. Whether we're aware of this or not, the notion of Variety will always co-exist in a space.*

And, finally while on the subject of putting things together, which living artist are you hoping to collaborate with?

Any artist whose language I do not speak.

