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1. SLIDESHOW: Click for images of our favourite galleries and workshops in sultry Singapore, all shot for Billionaire.com by our own Vanessa Caitlin. (Pictured above: Frédéric and Carole de Senarclens of Art Plural gallery.)

## *The Lion's Share: Singapore's*

# Top Art Galleries and Workshops

BY NORMAN TAN,  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
VANESSA CAITLIN  
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*Craving a culture fix?  
Billionaire.com offers a  
hand-picked selection  
of the best creative  
spaces to visit in the  
sunny Southeast Asian  
metropolis.*

When you think of Singapore, the first thing that comes to mind is usually Marina Bay Sands, ruthless efficiency, or let's be honest, low taxes. Increasingly though, this little island-city-nation-state is making waves in the art and design world. But where to go? Which gallery to visit?

To help you sort out the wheat from the chaff, we've made the rounds to bring you our top picks from the rapidly growing cohort. From expansive contemporary galleries to local printing workshops, these are the sites to visit the next time you're in the Lion City.

## ART PLURAL

**Specialty:** Modern and contemporary art and design

**Founders:** Frédéric and Carole de Senarclens

**Location:** 38 Armenian Street

**Current exhibition:** Solo exhibition by Chinese artist Qiu Jie

"We only bring to Singapore artists we love and would collect ourselves", shares founder Carole de Senarclens.

After running their own gallery in Geneva, Frédéric and Carole de Senarclens made the move to Singapore in 2008 believing that it would become an important artistic hub for the region. Today, occupying a stunning Art Deco building spanning 12,000ft<sup>2</sup> over four floors, and located right in the heart of the city's cultural district, Art Plural is Singapore's largest, and one of Southeast Asia's most pre-eminent, galleries.

"I travel extensively around the world to visit artists' studios in China, India, Europe or the US and am constantly looking for new talents. We have the privilege to work with some of the most prominent artists today, such as Bernar Venet, Fabienne Verdier, Chun Kwang Young, Doug and Mike Starn, Li Tianbing and Ian Davenport, to name a few," says de Senarclens. "But we are equally excited about launching the third floor of our gallery as a space for emerging artists," she enthuses emphatically. "It will be a contemporary lab of ideas aimed at guiding enthused young art collectors in their collection process."

“After all, art is a reflection of society”, interjects Frédéric de Senarclens. “Artists are the voice of our contemporary world. Art is not only a way to expression, it is a necessity. So it’s important to foster new talent, because a society without culture has no future.”

### **SINGAPORE TYLER PRINT INSTITUTE (STPI)**

**Specialty:** Printed artworks

**Chief printer:** Eitaro Ogawa

**Location:** 41 Robertson Quay

**Current exhibition:** ‘We Are What We Mask’ by Eko Nugroho

A collaboration between Singapore's cultural agencies and Ken Tyler, master printer from New York, Singapore Tyler Print Institute is a workshop and gallery for emerging and established artists from all around the world with the vision to create artworks using its exceptional print and paper-making facilities and expertise.

“Ken was looking for new opportunities to pass on his print legacy and Singapore was looking for new opportunities to make art,” explains chief printer and project leader Eitaro Ogawa. “In general, it was great marriage.”

Not just an exhibition space, STPI allows visitors to watch the artists at work: “We show what we make!” beams Ogawa. “We are totally involved in developing projects and exhibitions with the artist from the very beginning.”

The gallery also runs frequent printing workshops where the public can get their hands dirty and create their own artwork. “It’s great because it allows people to come in and just forget about the outside world. That’s why art is so important; by connecting to our creative side, it reminds us that we are not just functional beings.”

### **GALERIE BELVEDERE**

**Specialty:** Contemporary paintings and sculptures

**Director:** Rasina Rubin

**Location:** 140 Hill Street, Old Hill Street Police Station

**Current exhibition:** Avant-garde Swiss sculptor Kurt Metzler and Singaporean abstract expressionist Wong Keen

Don’t let the diminutive dimensions of Galerie Belvedere deceive you. Founded in 1996 by Jaya Mohideen, deputy chairman of the Public Art Appraisal Committee of Singapore (which assists the National Heritage Board in the evaluation and appraisal of art in public places), it is one of the city’s more established galleries (remember, Singapore only turned 48 this year) and represents some of Singapore’s most foremost artists.

“Visitors can expect to see works by first-generation and blue-chip Singapore artists such as Cheong Soo Pieng, Chen Wen Hsi and Lee Man Fong,” says director Rasina Rubin. “But we also specialise in corporate commissions and provide customised artworks to hotels, hospitals, shopping centres, corporate offices and luxury condominiums. We are involved from conceptualisation of the artworks to installation.” Case in point: the set of sculptures entitled 'Urban People' by Kurt Laurenz Metzler located outside ION Orchard.

Rubin also recently brought Barcelona-based Lorenzo Quinn (son of Hollywood actor Anthony Quinn) to Singapore when she installed two of his sculptures (*What Goes Around Comes Around* and *The Force of Nature*) at The Marina Barrage in 2008. “We pride ourselves on being a Singapore gallery with an international dimension,” she shares with a smile. “In fact, we were the first gallery in Singapore to bring in artists from the British Royal Academy.”

The gallery's next exhibition is 'Imperfect Memory' by Singaporean artist Dick Lee, which will open on 24 October and run until 16 November.

## ART FRONT

**Specialty:** Local and Asian artworks

**Director:** Watson Tan

**Location:** Millenia Walk

**Current exhibition:** 'The Many Faces Showcase' (multiple artists)

Having spent 17 years in the fashion industry, founder Watson Tan (who is also a director of local modeling agency Upfront Models), started collecting artworks after being introduced to the art world by local fashion designer Ahsley Isham. Then, realising that many Singaporeans didn't know how to go about collecting and appreciating art, he decided to launch Art Front gallery in 2010.

“After doing a lot of research on galleries all over the world, I discovered that most of them were very intimidating,” says Tan. As a result, instead of large, open white spaces bathed in natural light, Tan has opted for a moodier aesthetic. “I wanted a space where people could enter and just enjoy the artworks, but still possess a class of its own. I want people to get excited about art: to feel something and to connect with the pieces. Because, just like fashion, art moves with the times.”

But what are his thoughts on the art scene in Singapore? “Hopefully the government will concentrate on local galleries instead of focusing their efforts on bringing in and supporting foreign galleries,” says Tan with a concerned furrow. “It's so important for Singapore galleries to develop an identity of their own.”

## YEO WORKSHOP

**Specialty:** Contemporary and conceptual artworks

**Owner:** Audrey Yeo

**Location:** Gillman Barracks, 1 Lock Road #01-01

**Current exhibition:** 'The Distracted Gardener and Plumbing Subverter' by Clydesdale Thomson

With conceptual artist Pierre Huyghe and English painter Damien Hirst — “I love his butterfly paintings; that dark and poetic idea of butterflies being attracted to bright wet paint and then getting stuck there to their death” — listed as some of Audrey Yeo’s favourite artists, it’s clear that her workshop, located in the government-sponsored art district of Gillman Barracks, is a bit left of the middle.

A gallery director in London for three years and having worked in two New York photography galleries before that, Yeo wanted to challenge the traditional gallery model when she started her workshop. “It was crucial for me as a young gallerist to not ignore what was going on in the art world in terms of re-engaging the spectators and community, and re-programming the gallery space,” she explains. “I wanted to do more than exhibit work for sale.” As such, Yeo tends to exhibit work with a strong conceptual movement, but still constructed with a deep respect for craftsmanship.

But what really sets her workshop aside is her arts club. “The Arnoldi Arts Club is actually a main focus for the gallery,” reveals Yeo excitedly. “It’s arts education via some very cutting-edge, sensational international academicians, artists and curators in the gallery space, to give people understanding of the history, markets and production techniques of the contemporary art world. All the tools needed for looking at and understanding contemporary art.”

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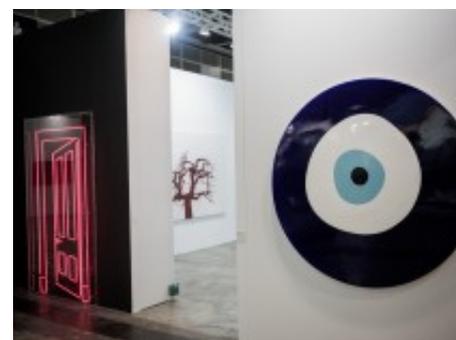
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