

STPI Gallery's Annual Special Exhibition *Shaping Visions* unites expressions of lived and natural environments by five celebrated Cultural Medallion recipients

Opens to Public:

Sunday, 27 Sep – Sunday, 15 Nov 2020

STPI Gallery

Free Entry



Shaping
Visions

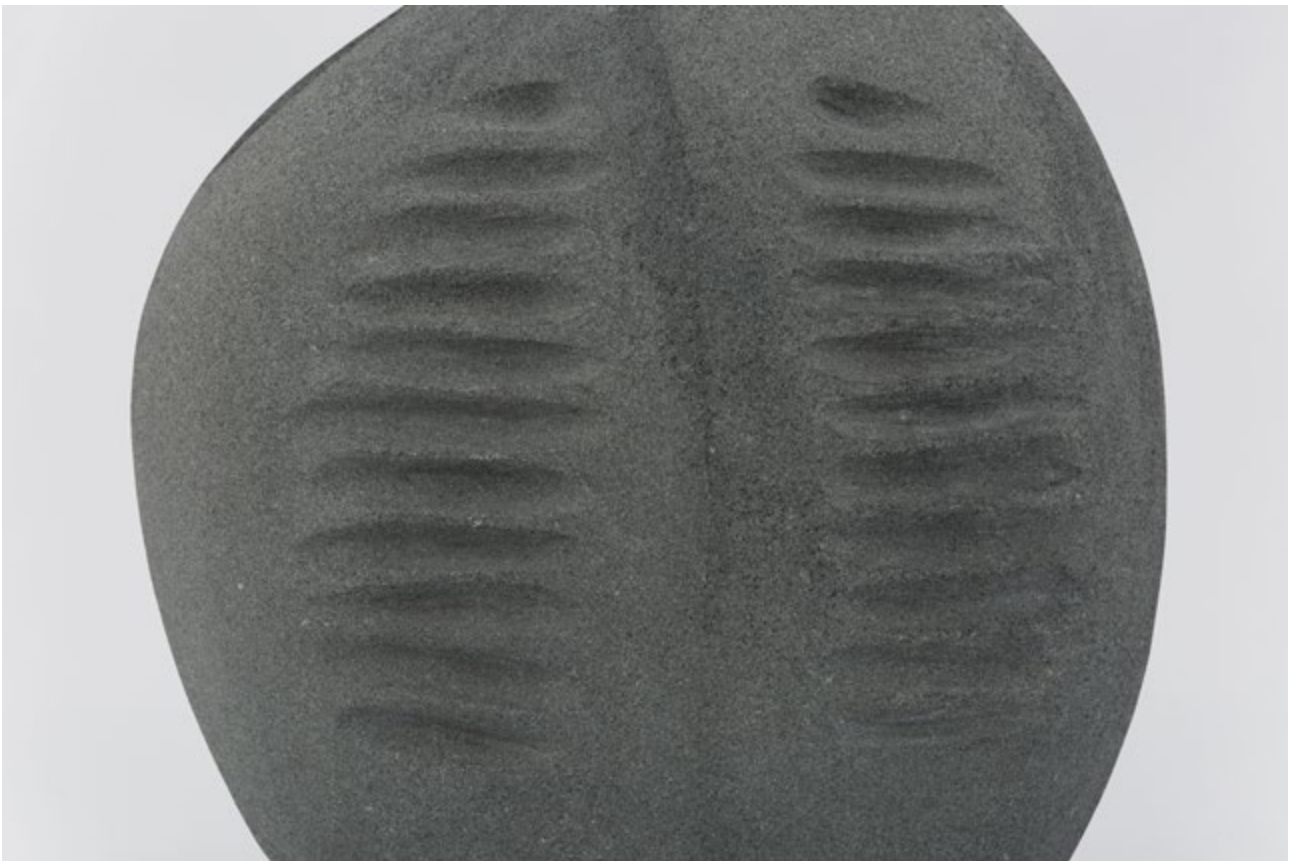
STPI Gallery is delighted to present its Annual Special Exhibition 2020, *Shaping Visions*. This year, STPI proudly looks close to home with its selection of five extraordinary artists in Singapore: the late master of Chinese ink **Chua Ek Kay**; pioneering collage artist **Goh Beng Kwan**; leading sculptor **Han Sai Por**; seminal performance artist **Amanda Heng**; and renowned watercolour painter **Ong Kim Seng**. *Shaping Visions* marks the first time these distinguished practitioners — who have each been awarded The Cultural Medallion, the nation's highest honour for arts and culture practitioners — exhibit together, in an ode to their immense artistic contributions.

A testimony of artistic sensibilities and achievements across time

Shaping Visions unites each artist's distinct depictions of natural and built environments, shedding light on personal reflections of and postures towards an evolving society.

By bringing together existing, signature pieces as well as print-based works produced during their respective residencies at STPI, the comprehensive exhibition

showcases each artist's trail-blazing style and expert command of media and materials. As the artists hail from backgrounds that are largely not printmaking-centric, the exhibition will feature a diverse range of expressions that invite moments of pause, suspension and perception.



Han Sai Por, *Flora* (detail), 2017, Granite

The presentation brings into dialogue Han's organically shaped stone sculptures and woodblock prints, Chua's gestural rhythms in scenes of nature and the city, Goh's evocative portrayals of abstracted spaces and movements in collage and painting, Heng's intimations of humanity's connectedness within shared spaces and with each other, and Ong's lithograph prints and watercolour paintings that invoke our sentiments towards shifting landscapes. *Shaping Visions* invites audiences to consider these works in a contemporary climate and perceive them in moments of unhurried contemplation. In an ever-changing Singapore, these seminal artists continue to provide space for envisioning new realities and modes of experiencing the world around us.

Throughout its run from 27 September to 15 November, this Annual Special Exhibition at STPI will be supported by a diverse array of public programmes including tours, workshops, and artist talks. The Annual Special Exhibitions

at STPI Gallery gives audiences in Southeast Asia and Singapore the rare opportunity to encounter a remarkable scope of works on paper created by the most significant artists of modern and contemporary art history. Previous Annual Special Exhibitions have included *Takashi Murakami: From Superflat to Bubblewrap* (2019), *David Hockney: A Matter of Perspective* (2017), *Zao Wou-Ki: No Boundaries* (2016), and *The Mystery of Picasso's Creative Process: The Art of Printmaking* (2013).

Please direct press enquiries and requests for press images and interviews to:

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About the Artists



Chua Ek Kay (1947 – 2008, Singapore) received his training in ink painting under the tutelage of Fan Chang Tien from 1975-1985. His practice extended in art lecturing and curatorial engagements; throughout his artistic career, Chua sat on various art committees, and was also a published poet.

In September 2002, STPI invited Cultural Medallion recipient Chua Ek Kay to be the first Singaporean artist to participate in its distinguished Visiting Artists Programme. The artist unquestionably delivered one of the most compelling and exhilarating Chinese ink practices in Singapore. In early 2007, Chua reacquainted with the print and papermaking processes at STPI, culminating in a new series of paper pulp works and prints that erupted with vitality and energy. The works bear a strong testament of Chua's distinctive handling of traditional Chinese ink painting techniques in a contemporary manner.

Chua's most prominent accolades included the Grand Prize for the UOB Bank's 10th Painting of the Year Award; the Juror's Choice for the Philip Morris ASEAN

Art Awards in 1998; and the Cultural Medallion from the National Arts Council in 1999.

He exhibited widely, starting with his first solo exhibition at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Singapore, in 1988, before showing at *Being and Becoming*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute (2003); *Yixi: Recent Paintings of Chua Ek Kay*, Shanghai Art Museum, China (2005); *Chua Ek Kay @ Art Forum*, Art Forum Gallery (2006); *Along the River Banks: Chua Ek Kay*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute (2007); Solo exhibition, *Lotus Pond & Water Village*, Cape of Good Hope Art Gallery (2007).

His works have been posthumously exhibited at *Re-visiting Chua Ek Kay: Tribute to the Ink Master*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute (2010); *Old Campus Revisited: A Chua Ek Kay collection of the Catholic High School*, The Private Museum (2012); and *Chua Ek Kay: After the Rain*, National Gallery Singapore (2015).



Goh Beng Kwan, (b. 1937, Indonesia) was born in 1937 in Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia and resettled in Singapore in 1945. His formative studies under 'pioneer masters' Dr. Chen Wen Hsi and Cheong Soo Pieng in the 1950s instilled in him an abiding appreciation of Asian art traditions.

Under an Allen Tucker Scholarship, then a Ford Foundation Scholarship, Goh pursued his art education at the reputed Art Students' League of New York (1962-63), and Provincetown Workshop, Massachusetts (1964). Goh's art underwent radical shifts. He was initiated into collage by the renowned collagist Leo Manso [1914-1993], and registered a renewed sense of his Chinese and Peranakan ancestries, which he began to reference in his works.

Goh returned to Singapore in 1966, and in the ensuing decades, emerged as an outstanding collagist and a pivotal figure of modern art in Singapore. He introduced an astonishing range of materials into art-making including tea-wrappings, acupuncture diagrams, nails, strings, and sand. His broadening of the boundaries of what was

acceptable artists' resources was enormously influential on successive generations of mixed media artists.

A nostalgia for 'unspoilt nature' in the face of urbanisation began to be discernible in Goh's landscapes of the 1970s and 1980s. Goh's collage 'Dune' won the first prize in the UOB Painting of the Year in 1982, and much acclaim was to follow. For his contribution to the visual arts, Goh was honoured with the Cultural Medallion in 1989. He is today regarded as one of the vanguard artists of a generation that shaped modern art history in Singapore.



A formidable artistic figure with more than 50 years of practice, **Han Sai Por** (b.1943, Singapore) is one of Asia's leading modern sculptors and a recipient of Singapore's Cultural Medallion Award in 1995. Her experiences have shaped her aesthetic language of understated, geometric, and organic forms; marble sculptures appear pliant, making for instantly recognisable works that speak of her years of experience.

Her education in Fine Arts and Landscape Architecture strengthened her keen understanding of nature and the environment that influenced her work. Most of her works are inspired by the flora and fauna in tropical forests of Southeast Asia. They often comment on the changing landscape in the region and the deforestation that adversely impacts on the environment and ecosystem.

Collaborating with the workshop team at STPI, Han reinvigorated her creative approach with new material possibilities in the in-house paper mill. Exchanging her signature mediums of stone and marble with paper pulps that are soft in nature, Han stretched paper's potential to possess volume and textures. Her tactile

three-dimensional pieces are reminiscent of tropical flora and fauna, highlighting her sculptural sensibilities.

Han has won international acclaim and participated in numerous international exhibitions and projects around the world. Her works can be found in the collections of many international institutions, public spaces and private collections from Singapore, Malaysia, India, China, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and United Kingdom and the United States, such as the National Gallery Singapore, Singapore Art Museum, National Museum in Beijing, the Australian Parliament, the Chancery of the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations in New York, the Singapore Embassy in Washington DC, Istana Singapore, and Changi Airport Terminal 3 in Singapore.



Amanda Heng (b. 1961, Singapore) has been a full-time art practitioner since the late 1980s. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach to her art practice, she deals with clashing of eastern and western values, traditions and gender roles in the context of a multi-cultural and fast-changing society of Singapore. Recently she expended her study in identity politics addressing issues of history, memory, communication and human relationships in urban condition and the changes and its impact on the body and life. She often works in collaboration with people of different cultural backgrounds from art as well as non-art fields, and led her to closer examination of the roles of the audience and collaboration practices.

Amanda has been invited to many residency programmes and has produced performances, collaborative interventions and installations and exhibited in major galleries, festivals and artist-run projects in Singapore and international scene including, *Sunshower* in Japan and Taiwan, *Awakenings* in South Korea, Japan and Singapore, *Concept Context Contestation* in Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar, *Ties of Histories* in The Philippines and the *Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, the Havana Biennial, the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, *Werkleitz Biennale* in Germany,

the inaugural Singapore Biennale, the *Tachikawa International Art Festival*, and *Performance Art Festivals* in Spain, Indonesia, Thailand, Poland, Canada, Sweden, USA and Japan.

Amanda was involved in the founding of two artist initiatives in Singapore, The Artists' Village in 1988, and Wita (Women In the Arts) in 1999. She is also actively involved in conceptualising, curating, organising and participating in exhibitions, public art commissions, public discourse, and forums such as *Women And Their Arts*, *The 1st Asian film Appreciation workshop*, *Women About Women*, *Memories of Sense*, *TheFridayEvent*, *Exchange 05*, *Open Ends*, and *Conditions of Production*. Her other art activities include co-directing theatre production "Bernard's Story", and performed in the theatre production "A Woman On the Tree in the Hill" by Wild Rice Theatre Company.

Amanda has lectured in Nanyang Technology University and the National Institute of Education and LASELLE College of the Arts. Her works have been collected by the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, The Singapore Art Museum and other private collectors. She received the prestigious Cultural Medallion Award in 2010. In 2020 She won the 12th Benesse Art Award from Japan.



Acclaimed watercolourist **Ong Kim Seng** (b. 1945, Singapore) is described as the ultimate 'maestro of light.' His signature style is marked by a consummate handling of light and shadows in his pieces, sensitive composition, and meticulous detail. As an avid traveller to natural landscapes around the world, Ong is known for his sensitive grasp of the intricacies of each culture and present them vividly in his watercolour paintings.

Ong has participated in group and solo exhibitions in Singapore, the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, Belgium, Germany, France, the Middle East, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the ASEAN countries. His illustrious career is marked by local and international accolades, including: the prestigious national Cultural Medallion (1991), the Public Service Star for the Arts (Bintang Bhakti Masyarakat) conferred by the President of the Republic of Singapore (2004), the Excellence for Singapore Award (2000) by the Singapore Totalisator Board, the Singapore International Award (2001) by the Singapore International Foundation, the Supporter of the Arts Award (2001) by the National Arts Council, Singapore, the acclaimed Dolphin Fellowship (2000)

and an astonishing nine other awards conferred by the American Watercolour Society (between 1983 – 2019).

Currently the honorary President of the Singapore Watercolour Society, following a long term as its President (1991-2001), Ong continues to actively promote watercolour with organisations and bodies around the world. The artist is also one of the founding members of the International Masters of Watercolor Association based in Shanghai.

About STPI

STPI Gallery fosters the exchange of ideas in contemporary art with its diverse exhibitions and public programme. The gallery hosts specially curated exhibitions of works produced in the STPI Creative Workshop and regularly participates in international art fairs. This enables it to nurture and sustain local and international interest in both its residency artists as well as the mediums of print and paper.

STPI is a creative workshop and contemporary art gallery based in Singapore. Established in 2002, STPI is committed to promoting artistic experimentation in the mediums of print and paper, making it one of the most cutting-edge destinations for contemporary art in Asia. STPI sits alongside National Gallery Singapore and the Singapore Art Museum as part of the national Visual Arts Cluster of leading institutions in the region.