

year in review

celebrating

# PROGRESS

*"...beneath the cosmopolitan appearance is a very rich soul  
which completes its grand appeal."*

*~ The New Paper on the National Museum of Singapore, 8 December 2006*

## celebrating progress

### **Enjoying Worldwide Acclaim**

NHB museums gained international recognition for their scholarship, programming and curatorial rigour. Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London Group described ACM in *Reuters* as "...not a museum of the past, it's a museum of the future." ACM's shows like *Mystery Men: Finds from China's Lost Age* have also been regularly featured in the international media. SAM and the National Museum have likewise had their fair share of spotlight in the international media with prominent coverage in publications such as *Newsweek*, *Reuters*, *South China Morning Post*, *Sunday Morning Post*, *Asian Art* and *Financial Times*. Its events were also listed regularly in the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and *International Herald Tribune*.

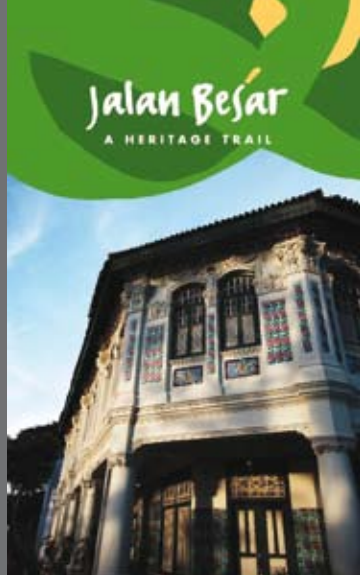
### **A Grand Old Dame Awakens**

On 7 December 2006, the oldest museum with the youngest and most innovative soul reopened after a three year facelift. Officially opened by His Excellency Mr S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore, the National Museum of Singapore prides itself on introducing cutting-edge and varied ways of presenting history which redefine the conventional museum experience.

The Museum celebrated its opening with a month-long festival from 2 to 31 December 2006, featuring outstanding performances by local talents and world-renowned artistes. Prior to the official opening, it hosted a series of Preview Season events from April to November 2006. These included *The Art of Cartier* exhibition, film screenings, workshops and programmes. The re-opening of the Museum was widely covered by both international and local media, including a report on BBC News Worldwide which reached 233 million viewers around the globe.

Since its official opening, the National Museum has played host to many distinguished guests and foreign dignitaries. These included the Prime Minister of Laos, the Prime Minister of Dominica, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.





### **Making History**

NHB made history with the launch of *Singapore: The Encyclopedia* by President S R Nathan on 11 September 2006. Spearheaded by NHB with a distinguished editorial advisory board chaired by Professor Tommy Koh, the 640-page tome is one of the most definitive and wide-ranging books ever published about Singapore. With more than 2,500 entries and 2,400 photos, maps and illustrations - many of which are published for the first time - the first print run was sold out in two weeks.

Another historical milestone was the launch of Singapore's first community heritage trails on 22 July 2006 - the Jalan Besar and Balestier Community Trails. The first major step in NHB's plan to work with the community to document their heritage, the trails were a ground-up, inter-agency effort by public and private sector agencies with participation from residents and even shop owners in the area. Jointly launched with Central Singapore Community Development Council, the trails boasted of specially-designed street furniture and multi-lingual brochures. It was the first in a series of community trail projects with the community.

### **Achieving Design Excellence**

The inaugural President's Design Awards saw ACM clinch one of the 'Design of the Year' awards for six special exhibitions from 2003 to 2006. The award-winning exhibitions were *Spirit of Wood*, *Sari to Sarong*, *From the Land of the Ottoman Sultans*, *Nyonya Kebaya*, *Journey of Faith* and *Power Dressing*.

### **Making a Memorable Impression**

Memories at Old Ford Factory (MOFF) was voted as one of the top three heritage sites in Singapore by *The Best of Singapore*, *Singapore Tatler's* annual guide for 2007. A gazetted national monument, MOFF continues to attract history buffs with its exciting exhibitions, oral history recordings, and war documentaries.

### **Upgrading Philately Galleries**

To further engage children, families and stamp lovers, the Singapore Philatelic Museum (SPM) upgraded four permanent galleries. The galleries were officially opened by Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts on 18 May 2006. Visitors can experience the appeal of stamps under the brand promise that the postage stamp is a "window to the world". Hands-on and minds-on exhibits include the "talking" Penny Black; stamps made of unusual materials; and archival production material of stamps. Visitors can view up-close a comprehensive collection of stamps from the 1800s till today, complemented by artefacts relating to Singapore's postal history.

## Among the Best Blogs

Singapore's first heritage and museums blog, *yesterday.sg*, received international recognition when *Museums and the Web 2007* by *Archives & Museum Informatics* ranked the blog 5<sup>th</sup> out of 111 museum blogs around the world. Tapping on social media's growing popularity, *yesterday.sg*'s engaging content on museum happenings, historic insights and sweet nostalgia resonated well with the public. In FY2006, *yesterday.sg* attracted a total page view figure of 259,705. With 693 weblog entries, it drew some 350 unique visitors a day with 50 reads per post on a steady state, and was ranked 47,319 on *technorati.com* out of 55 million blogs.

## Taking off with Technology

NHB was the only heritage institution to win the prestigious *ZDNet's Asia Smart 50* award out of a field of 150 public and private enterprises from 11 Asian countries, including China and India. In a 2006 ranking by IT magazine *ZDNet Asia*, NHB was ranked among Asia's top 50 users that have implemented IT to "drive business efficiency and innovation, as well as create customer value".

Technology has transformed the way NHB presents, promotes and preserves heritage. Over time, NHB's curators, registrars, conservators and public programme executives will have access to over 100,000 artefacts stored in the Integrated Museums Collections Management System (IMCMS).

Other systems which caught the panel of international judges' eyes include the Integrated Museum Display System (IMDS) which comprises interactive multimedia narration through PDAs (known as Museum eGuide) and subsequent web-access of bookmarked items. This system enhances visitors' interaction with the exhibitions by drawing their attention to iconic artefacts. Singapore Cultural Resources Online (SCROL) - a one-stop portal providing searches across online databases of cultural information - also helped NHB clinch the *Asia Smart 50* award.

Under the auspices of the Culture, Recreation and Sports (CRS) eTown Project, NHB led seven government agencies to develop an integrated e-Calendar System called *eventshub@sg*. Launched in June 2006, the system aggregates events from multiple organisations into a consolidated website, giving citizens a one-stop portal to search and register for events.

Over at the National Museum of Singapore, *The Companion of the Singapore History Gallery* is the first of its kind with its built-in screen displaying stories and other interactive information about the artefacts on display.

