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POP/CULTURE

QI YUWU finds meaning as a guide at the Singapore Art Museum.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Breathe easy, the MediaCorp star is not quitting showbiz. By day an actor, by night a contemporary Chinese art connoisseur, Yuwu kicked off Celebrity Tours@SAM two Fridays ago, playing guide for one night only to acclaimed Chinese artist Zeng Fanzhi's *Idealism* exhibition. "I'm definitely not an expert," the modest man quickly shrugs off any such suggestion, though names such as Zhang Xiaogang and Xu Beihong roll off his tongue as easily as the history behind new wave Chinese artists fetching record prices at auction houses. He conducted the tour in Mandarin.

"I only got interested in contemporary Chinese art about one-and-a-half years ago when I started visiting galleries like Jasmine Fine Arts and Art Seasons in my free time. I find art powerful, moving and very inspiring," Yuwu explains.



Don't play-play: After being spotted at the opening of Zeng's exhibition in April, Yuwu was invited to conduct a tour. A SAM spokesperson tells us they are constantly looking for innovative ways to bring the arts closer to the people and Yuwu's passion made him the perfect choice to launch the celebrity tour programme.

He's also started a little collection himself: He's bought four artworks so far, paying a five-figure sum for his most expensive piece. Opening a gallery together with his older brother in his hometown of Guangzhou might also be on the cards.

About 80 people turned up for Yuwu's tour despite SAM capping the number at 45. The question nags: Did they show up for him? Unconcerned that his celebrity could've stolen attention from the art, Yuwu says, "I don't think I'm the only reason the crowd came. My fans have other opportunities to see me besides coming to the museum. They came because they might be curious and I hope I was a bridge to introduce more people to contemporary Chinese art."

Zeng Fanzhi's *Idealism* is open through July 16 at the Singapore Art Museum.