

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release

### **REIMAGINING TRADITIONAL CRAFTS: THE NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S *CRAFT X DESIGN* SHOWCASE**

*The showcase features product prototypes co-developed by four pairs of local craft practitioners and contemporary designers/studios.*



*Harmony Spheres Lamp, a prototype produced by veteran lantern-maker Mr Jimm Wong and local design studio NextOfKin Creatives (NOK).*

**Singapore, 1 July 2022** – The making of traditional Chinese lanterns is an ancient practice that may be traced back to the Han Dynasty era in China. The art of *rangoli* is a multi-coloured floor decoration that originated in India and dates back thousands of years. Today, the products of these age-old crafts, along with others such as *ketupat* weaving and Peranakan beadwork and embroidery, have been reimagined into contemporary product prototypes as part of the National Heritage Board's (NHB) inaugural ***Craft X Design*** showcase.

2. From 1 to 31 July 2022, members of the public can experience the creative amalgamation of the traditional and the contemporary through a showcase of these product prototypes at the National Museum of Singapore, Longer Concourse. Brought together through an open call last year, four teams – each comprising one local craft veteran and one contemporary designer/design studio – produced prototypes that draw on traditional techniques, cultural influences and modern design trends. The showcase is the culmination of six months of collaboration and will also feature video documentation of the craft-making process. For more information about the *Craft X Design* timeline, please refer to **Annex A**.

3. *Craft X Design* was introduced as part of NHB's efforts under Our SG Heritage Plan to cultivate greater public awareness and appreciation of Singapore's intangible cultural heritage and to create platforms to showcase Singapore's rich and diverse trades and crafts. For more information about the traditional crafts and teams of practitioners and designers, as well as their respective product prototypes featured in the showcase, please refer to **Annexes B and C** respectively.

4. Mr Yeo Kirk Siang, Director, Heritage Research & Assessment, NHB, said, "By actively nurturing partnerships between crafts persons and local designers to produce contemporary products using traditional craft techniques or materials, we aim to revitalise local traditional crafts, by opening up new markets and new customer bases, and thus ensuring their long-term sustainability and commercial viability. The result of the pilot edition of *Craft X Design* conveys the important message that traditional crafts continue to have a place and relevance in our society today through innovation."

5. In conjunction with the showcase, NHB will be organising a public talk with the four pairs of craft practitioners and designers who will share about the collaboration process, and their reflections on the *Craft X Design* scheme. Participants will also be given the opportunity to try their hand at weaving *ketupats* or creating *rangoli* conducted by Mdm Anita Tompang and Ms Vijaya Mohan respectively. For more information on the sharing session, please refer to **Annex D**.

For more information, please refer to:

- **Annex A:** Timeline for *Craft X Design*
- **Annex B:** Information on traditional crafts, practitioners and designers/studios
- **Annex C:** Information about product prototypes
- **Annex D:** Information on sharing session

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**About the National Heritage Board**

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit. NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the National Collection.

Through the National Collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit [www.nhb.gov.sg](http://www.nhb.gov.sg) for more information.

**TIMELINE FOR CRAFT X DESIGN**

S/N	Item	Timeline
i.	<p><b>Open Call Engagement &amp; Sharing Sessions</b></p> <p>NHB shared more details about <i>Craft X Design</i>, and craft practitioners conducted two workshops, presenting an overview of their traditional crafts as well as a brief demonstration of their craft skills and techniques for interested designers.</p>	21 August and 11 September 2021
ii.	<p><b>Submission of Project Proposals</b></p> <p>Designers submitted proposals to NHB for products to be prototyped in collaboration with any of the practitioners.</p>	22 July – 1 October 2021
iii.	<p><b>Evaluation of Project Proposals</b></p>	October - November 2021
iv.	<p><b>Pairing of Practitioner with Designer</b></p> <p>Based on the proposals submitted, NHB, practitioners and selected designers agreed on and finalized the pairings.</p>	December 2021
v.	<p><b>Learning of Craft Method, Collaboration Process and Prototyping of Product</b></p> <p>Designers learned the craft techniques from the craft mentors, and collaborated them to co-create the prototype product(s).</p> <p>The collaborative/creative process was documented through photography and videography, arranged by NHB.</p>	January 2022 – June 2022
vi.	<p><b>Announcement of Completed Prototype</b></p>	July 2022



vii.	<b>Public Showcase</b> The works to be showcased to the public at the National Museum of Singapore together with videos of the craft-making process.	1 - 31 July 2022
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**INFORMATION ON TRADITIONAL CRAFT PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR CRAFTS****Traditional Chinese Lanterns**

The making and hanging of Chinese lanterns is a tradition dating back to the Han Dynasty (206BC – 220AD) in China. In Singapore, Chinese lanterns are traditionally hung in places of worship and clan associations; and during festivities or special occasions, such as the Mid-Autumn Festival, deities' birthdays, and weddings.

Traditional Chinese lanterns are made of bamboo frames. The bamboo splints are cut to the required length and thickness and then soaked in water before being heated over a fire, which allows the bamboo strips to be bent for the frame. Oil-coated silk paper is then glued onto the frame, and the paper is painted with traditional characters, motifs and/or family surnames.



*Traditional Chinese lanterns featuring motifs of deities and mythical creatures.*

*Source: Jimm Wong*

**Practitioner: Mr Jimm Wong**

Mr Jimm Wong is one of the last traditional Chinese lantern makers in Singapore and specialises in making Foochow lanterns. As a Chinese heritage enthusiast, he became deeply interested in traditional Chinese lanterns in 2006 and has been practicing the craft since 2007. He has also been continuously innovating, by incorporating modern technologies such as 3D

printing into his lantern-making process, as well as using different materials such as aluminum rods (rather than the traditional bamboo ribs) to make the lantern structure. He has also adapted to include local and contemporary influences in the design of his lanterns, such as experimenting with using batik dye and or painting motifs such as orchids.



**Designers: NextOfKin Creatives – Mr Melvin Ong (Senior Designer, NOK) and Mr Xu Xiao (Industrial Designer, NOK)**

NextOfKin Creatives (NOK) is a branding and industrial design firm with cross-disciplinary creative thinkers and problem solvers. NOK has worked with long-term clients such as Dell, Panasonic, Huawei, Sennheiser, and Techtronic Industries, and have received numerous design awards including Red Dot, iF and Good Design Awards.



Melvin Ong graduated with First-Class Honours from Central St Martin's College of Art & Design in 2010 and returned to Singapore in 2012 to establish a studio – Desinere, which launched their first collection at Design Tide Tokyo 2012. He was part of the team behind the Singapore Icons porcelain produced by Supermama and Kihara, which won the President's Design Award in 2013, and he was named 'Rising Asian Talent' by Maison et Objet Asia in 2014.



Xu Xiao graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts with Honours from the University of London. During his studies, he won a China Red Star Design Award and two of his designs are recent finalists for the Red Dot Design Award. His past projects include an auto-guidance delivery vehicle for Alibaba, a Children VR Headset for Immersion Technologies, and he contributed to projects for the brands Abstracta, Menu, and Ariake, which were exhibited at Milan Design Week 2019.



### ***Ketupat* Weaving**

*Ketupat* is a rice cake wrapped in a pouch, traditionally woven with coconut leaves. *Ketupats* were traditionally prepared and used in religious ceremonies throughout the Malay world as a form of food offering. In Singapore, *ketupat* is usually prepared as a festive food by the Malay-Muslim community during Hari Raya Puasa and Hari Raya Haji.

*Ketupat* weaving is often a family activity and brings generations together in the celebratory spirit of Hari Raya festivities. Besides weaving *ketupat* for rice cakes, *ketupat* pouches are also woven from colourful ribbons to decorate Malay homes during festive periods. *Ketupats* can be woven into a variety of shapes and sizes, including the *ketupat raya*, the most common *ketupat* form seen during the Hari Raya celebrations.



*Ketupats made of coconut leaves and woven in ketupat raya shape by Anita Tompong and family.*

*Source: Anita Tompong*



**Practitioner: Mdm Anita Tompong**

Mdm Anita Tompong started learning the skills of *ketupat* weaving at the age of 9, and now has nearly 50 years of experience with it. She had been featured in *Berita Harian* for her commitment to this tradition, having woven *ketupats* by hand every Hari Raya for over 20 years. Although *ketupat* weaving has become less common, she has persisted in her efforts to keep this craft alive in Singapore, including by teaching and promoting *ketupat* weaving, and by experimenting with and applying a range of different *ketupat* weaving forms and techniques.

**Designer: Mr Andrew Loh**

With more than 20 years of experience, Andrew Loh's design sensibilities have been finely honed over his career spanning both User Experience and Product Design. He has worked both locally and abroad with some of the world's leading brands to create a wide variety of design solutions, across multiple industries including consumer electronics, household appliances, sports equipment, design education, and digital products. In his work, he has progressively developed a focus on user experiences – solving problems and developing experiences and services that connect with people in meaningful and engaging ways.



## Peranakan Beadwork and Embroidery

Peranakan beadwork and embroidery are intricate crafts, with a rich repertoire of motifs and techniques that weave together diverse Chinese, Malay, Indian, and European influences, reflecting the hybridity of Peranakan culture. Two iconic examples of Peranakan beadwork and embroidery are the beaded slippers (*kasut manek*) and the Peranakan *kebaya* dress.

Peranakan beadwork uses glass and metal seed beads which are individually stitched in place onto the cloth. Beaded slippers are crafted by stitching the beaded cloth onto a shoe frame, and typically feature floral, geometric and/or bird motifs. The Peranakan *kebaya* features two triangular front panels (*lapik*) that fall gently over the hips. A combination of lacework as well as satin, zigzag and buttonhole stitches is then employed to outline floral or geometric motifs on the *kebaya*.



*Traditional Peranakan embroidery featuring natural flora and fauna motifs.*

*Source: National Heritage Board*



*Traditional Peranakan kebaya by Raymond Wong with lacework used to outline floral motifs.*

*Source: Raymond Wong*

**Practitioner: Mr Raymond Wong**

Mr Raymond Wong has been practicing Peranakan beadwork and embroidery for more than 16 years and is one of the last few Peranakan *kebaya* makers in Singapore. He is the co-owner of boutique shop Rumah Kim Choo, where he also conducts classes to teach and promote Peranakan beadwork. In addition, he has been a part-time Fashion Design and Textiles lecturer at LASALLE since 2013. His works have been extensively featured in various museum exhibitions and fashion shows, both in Singapore and internationally, including in Malaysia, China, Korea, Japan, Russia, Czech Republic and Uzbekistan.

**Designers: Aller Row – Ms Joanna Lim and Ms Joanne Quak (Co-Founders and Creative Directors, Aller Row)**

Formerly known as B1NARY, Aller Row is a Singapore-based fashion label founded by fashion and textile designers Joanna Lim and Joanne Quak. Heavily inspired by local culture and heritage, the label features fashionwear with timeless silhouettes, in-house designed prints, and delicate textiles used with an unexpected twist, combining attitude with a laidback feel.

Aller Row has been featured with H&M and in the ASEAN Fashion Designer Showcase, and Joanna and Joanne's works have also been featured individually and as a team across various online and print platforms, including Harper's Bazaar, Nylon, I-weekly, U-weekly, Vogue Italia, Nook Magazine Reve Creative Group, Yahoo Financials, and CNA.



## Rangoli

*Rangoli*, which means 'an array of colours' in Sanskrit, is a traditional Indian art form dating back five millennia to pre-Aryan India. *Rangoli* is a multi-coloured floor decoration, using rice flour or other natural substances such as grains, seeds, vermillion and/or turmeric powder, to create motifs that symbolise joy, prosperity and/or thanksgiving to the deities.

*Rangolis* are traditionally drawn freehand on the ground at the entrance of households and are commonly seen during Indian festivals such as Deepavali. *Rangoli* designs may range from geometric shapes, to auspicious animals and floral designs, to symbols of Hindu deities. Popular motifs include circular designs, which signify the continuity of time; and the lotus flower with Goddess Lakshmi in the middle, which represents prosperity and fertility in Hinduism.



*Members of the Indian community coming together to create rangoli.*

*Source: National Heritage Board*

## Practitioner: Ms Vijaya Mohan

Ms Vijaya Mohan has been practicing *rangoli* since the age of 5 and now has over 55 years of experience in the craft. She has created more than 8000 *rangolis* in Singapore, and she currently holds the Guinness World Record for the largest *rangoli* pattern ever created. She has actively experimented with using new materials and contemporary designs for her *rangoli* works,



such as the 2016 *Rangoli Radiance* exhibition at Gardens by the Bay, where she incorporated glitter and over 15,000 glass marbles. Besides promoting *rangoli* through arts classes and workshops in local schools, she is also a trained art therapist, and works regularly with welfare organisations to conduct *rangoli* programmes for underserved communities, including seniors, children with special needs, and those facing mental health challenges.


**Designer: Jarrod Lim Design – Jarrod Lim (Founder, Jarrod Lim Design)**

Jarrod Lim spent his early years working behind the scenes for Patricia Urquiola in Milan on products for B&B Italia, Moroso, Alessi and many other iconic design brands, as well as a stint in London working for the famed British brand, SCP, on their distinctive collection.



With all that prior experience, Jarrod has begun to garner a variety of projects from major international brands such as Habitat, Herman Miller, Zanotta and Royal Selangor. His furniture designs feature in many 5-star hotels from Singapore to Shanghai and Mauritius to the Maldives. He continued to work with Patricia Urquiola on the interior design of the award-winning Oasia Hotel in Singapore.

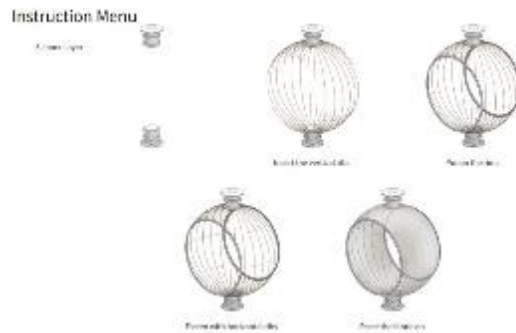
Now, he looks to develop his own unique story with distinctive designs that truly stand out from the crowd. Thoughtful concepts, derived from a fundamental understanding of materials, production processes as well as client needs and wants. All of them result from his diverse upbringing and his unique spectrum of experiences.

Traditional Craft and Team	Product prototype and description
<p><b>Traditional Chinese lanterns</b></p> <p>Practitioner: Jimm Wong Designers: Melvin Ong, Xu Xiao (NextOfKin Creatives)</p>	 <p><b>Harmony Spheres Lamp</b></p> <p>Reinterpreting the traditional Chinese lantern as an elegant dining lamp, <i>Harmony Spheres</i> symbolises the harmony of the traditional and the contemporary, by preserving the lighting function and the bamboo strips of a traditional Chinese lantern, while adding a contemporary spin through its unique multi-spherical structure.</p> <p>The lamp is further inspired by the Chinese ivory puzzle ball, with its intricately carved layers which can rotate individually. Drawing on Wong’s experimentation with bamboo’s material properties, and the NOK team’s expertise in 3D design, the completed structure moulds rigid bamboo ribs to form a sleek round curvature. The lamp’s open-ended spheres further produce a layered and textured lighting effect, and the translucent exterior design accentuates the graceful arc of the bamboo ribs, held together by 3D-printed rims.</p>



*A Chinese ivory puzzle ball with multiple intricately carved layers.*

*Source: Wikimedia Commons*



*A technical guide which shows the steps to assemble the Harmony Spheres lamp.*

*Source: NextOfKin Creatives*

**Ketupat Weaving**

Practitioner: Mdm Anita

Tompang

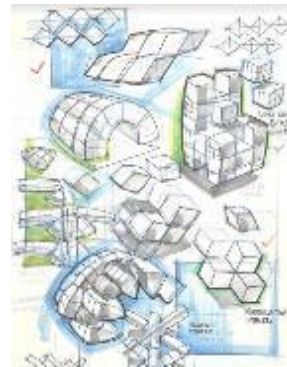
Designer: Mr Andrew Loh



**Raya Furniture**

*Raya* is a celebration of the *ketupat raya*, a distinctive symbol signifying the shared traditions and rituals of the Malay-Muslim community. Through *Raya*, Anita and Loh transpose the *ketupat raya* onto contemporary furniture, by creating foam modules in the shape of the *ketupat raya* to pay tribute to the sophistication and versatility of the weaving techniques.

Instead of coconut leaves and rice cakes, strips of thick felt were woven around foams of different densities, inspired by the function of *ketupats* as containers. Each module was woven or riveted together with other modules, which were stacked in different combinations to create the bench and stool on display. The modular nature of the furniture responds to the growing trend of creative designed spaces, and encourages users to experiment with (re)assembling the modules for a variety of functional everyday uses.



*Design sketches by Andrew Loh, showing possibilities for ketupat-inspired modular furniture.*

*Source: Andrew Loh*





*Illustration of product concept by Andrew Loh, outlining different ways to assemble the modules.*

*Source: Andrew Loh*

### **Peranakan Beadwork and Embroidery**

Practitioner: Raymond Wong

Designers: Joanna Lim,  
Joanne Quak (Aller Row)



#### **Rejuvenation Gown**

*Rejuvenation* presents a contemporary take on the traditional Peranakan *kebaya*. It adapts and incorporates elements of the Peranakan *kebaya* onto a cape-sleeved couture gown, which fuses Lim and Quak's joint vision of creating fashionwear tailored for modern women, and showcasing Wong's interest in Peranakan culture and expertise in traditional embroidery techniques.

The gown features a resplendent array of colours and motifs that draw on Peranakan culture, including colours such as turquoise or fuchsia commonly found in the Peranakan *kebaya*, as well as motifs depicting local or auspicious flora and fauna, such as the lotus flower. Wong's lacework is applied on and

around the printed motifs, such as the butterflies on the sleeves, adding a softer touch to the elaborate digital print design.



*Sketches by Aller Row (top), further refined into the lotus motif (below) printed onto the gown.*

*Source: Aller Row*

### **Rangoli**

Practitioner: Ms Vijaya

Mohan

Designer: Jarrod Lim (Jarrod  
Lim Design)



**Refined *Rangoli* Metalware**

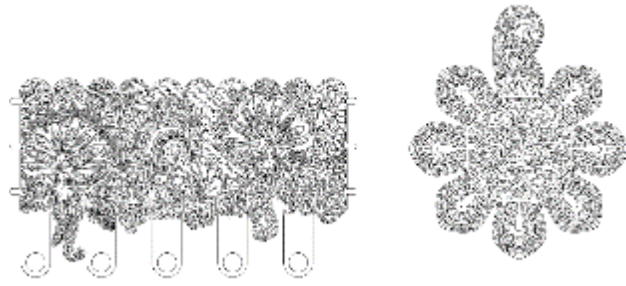
*Rangoli* has typically been a two-dimensional artform, whose motifs and patterns are drawn on the ground and/or applied to other flat surfaces and mediums. *Refined Rangoli* widens the possibilities of *rangoli* art by translating its patterns onto three-dimensional metalware, including a lampshade and a bowl, that combines decorative form with new practical applications.

*Refined Rangoli* combines Lim's product design experience with the strong visual identity of Mohan's *rangoli* works, resulting in industrially produced metalware which preserves *rangoli*'s artistic flavours and cultural expressions. Tapping on laser cutting technology, intricate *rangoli* motifs, including the peacock, were carved onto slices of stainless steel. The thin and flexible metal slices were then folded by hand into the form of the lampshade and the bowl.



*3D design renderings by Jarrod Lim, modelling different forms for rangoli-patterned metalware.*

*Source: Jarrod Lim*



*Final rangoli patterns which were laser cut onto the lampshade  
(left) and bowl (right).*

*Source: Jarrod Lim*

## ANNEX D

### **PUBLIC TALK: REVITALISING TRADITIONAL CRAFTS FOR CONTEMPORARY TIMES**

The four pairs of craft practitioners and designers will be sharing more about the collaboration process, their experiences and challenges, and their reflections on their journey of adapting traditional crafts into contemporary products during this session.

Participants will also be given the opportunity to try their hand at weaving *ketupats* or creating *rangoli*, in hands-on sessions conducted by Mdm Anita Tompong and Ms Vijaya Mohan respectively.

Date: 9 July 2022  
Venue: National Museum of Singapore  
Activity Room Space, Level 3  
93 Stamford Road, S178897  
Time: 1.30pm – 4pm  
Admission: Free with registration at <https://go.gov.sg/cxdsharing2022>  
(limited seats available)