

MEDIA RELEASE

The Asian Civilisations Museum Takes The Peranakan Legacy Regional

The Peranakan Legacy exhibition is the museum's first full-scale show to be exported overseas for display at the Ayala Museum in Manila from 15 February to 27 May 2007

[15 Feb 2007, SINGAPORE] ***The Peranakan Legacy***, an exhibition by the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) will be shown at the Ayala Museum in Manila, the Philippines from **15 February to 27 May 2007**. The exhibition will be shown as part of *Chinese Diaspora: Art Streams from the Mainland*, a collection of six exhibitions that celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of overseas Chinese cultures in Southeast Asia. *Chinese Diaspora* at the Ayala Museum was opened yesterday evening, by Guest-of-Honour President S R Nathan and Mrs Nathan.

“Throughout the year, the ACM curates special exhibitions which feature artefacts which we borrow from overseas partners. While we have loaned several of our pieces for display in museum exhibitions overseas, this is the first time that we are exporting a full show from our collection, and we hope it will be the first of more to come,” enthused Dr Kenson Kwok, Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum.

A showcase of the rich material culture of the Peranakans, *The Peranakan Legacy* features 170 objects from the ACM's Peranakan Collection. The collection had formerly been on display at ACM, Armenian Street, which closed at the end of 2005, to be redeveloped into the ACM's new Peranakan Museum. Hence, the loan is especially timely as several star pieces from the collection have been made available for the show at the Ayala Museum. These include highlights such as a gold peacock belt with diamond inlaid buckle and side panels. Others include a

large *kamcheng*, a type of covered container, which is particularly notable for its size and quality; and a rare pair of intricately carved ceremonial oil lamps used on Peranakan Chinese altars.

The ACM's new Peranakan Museum will be the only one in the world to present a pan-Southeast Asian view of Peranakan culture, covering the centres of this culture – Singapore, Malacca, Penang and Indonesia – as well as exploring links with other related centres in the region such as Thailand and Myanmar.

Ahead of the opening of the new Peranakan Museum in 2008, the ACM hopes that travelling exhibitions such as *The Peranakan Legacy* will help to create regional and international interest in Peranakan culture.

“We notice that local interest in Peranakan culture has been growing exponentially over the past 10-15 years. The Peranakan culture is unique to Southeast Asia and is an ideal inspiration for our budding creative industries. Tourists also love it, as it is something they cannot see anywhere else, so we think there is a lot of room for promotion,” said Dr Kenson Kwok, Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum.

The loan of *The Peranakan Legacy* to the Ayala Museum fulfills the ongoing Memorandum of Understanding between the Ayala Foundation, Inc. and the National Heritage Board (NHB) of Singapore. It is the second collaborative project for the two institutions, the first being *Crossings: Philippine Works from the Singapore Art Museum* which was one of the inaugural exhibitions at the Ayala Museum in 2004.

“Collaborations between the National Heritage Board of Singapore—through one of its institutions, the Asian Civilisations Museum, and the Ayala Foundation—through the Ayala Museum, will yield significant and mission enhancing results,” shares Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Co-Vice Chairman of Ayala Foundation. “These



two institutions have agreed to undertake collaborations to the advancement of cultural knowledge and the development of Philippine-Singapore ties.”

About The Peranakan Legacy

This loan exhibition from the ACM focuses on the distinctive art forms of the Peranakans. In the Malay language, the term Peranakan means ‘child of’ or ‘born of’ and refers to persons of mixed ethnicity. It is most commonly applied to the mixed Chinese-indigenous communities that developed in the trading ports of Melaka, Singapore, and Penang. Drawn by the lively commerce that passed through the Malacca Straits, Chinese traders began migrating into the area as far back as the 15th century. Here they intermarried with indigenous women and formed settled communities. The exhibition will showcase the distinctive material culture of the Peranakan Chinese community. This material culture is the product of a syncretism which drew from the traditions of both China and Southeast Asia. Such objects include jewellery, beaded slippers, gold and silver ornaments, ceramics, garments, textiles, and furniture. Curated by David Alan Henkel from the Asian Civilisations Museum, the exhibit will be on view at the Fourth Floor Galleries of Ayala Museum until 27 May 2007.

About the Asian Civilisations Museum

The Asian Civilisations Museum's mission is to explore and present the cultures and civilisations of Asia, so as to promote awareness and appreciation of the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans and their links to Southeast Asia and the World. The Asian Civilisations Museum first began its operations at Armenian Street in 1997, which closed at end-2005, and will re-open in 2008 as a brand new Peranakan attraction. ACM's new flagship at the historic Empress Place Building opened on 2 March 2003.

For more information and pictures, please contact:

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Opening Hours

Mondays : 1pm – 7pm
Tuesdays – Sundays : 9am – 7pm
Fridays : 9am – 9pm

Admission Charges

Mystery Men: Finds from China's Lost Age (16 Jan – 15 Apr 2007)

Adult : \$8
Concession : \$4 (Full-time students and age 60 years and above)
Family Package : \$20 for maximum of 5 persons

- Free for children 6 years old and below and NHB Season Pass Holders.
- Discounted admission on Fridays, 7pm – 9pm.