

MEDIA RELEASE

Exhibition on Beauty At The Asian Civilisations Museum Takes The Visitor From The Sensual To The Sublime

In conjunction with the exhibition, a beauty fair at the museum on 2 September will bring the visitor beauty secrets from Asia and beyond

[27 August 2007, SINGAPORE] Sensuality and ancient religious artefacts may sound like strange bedfellows, but an exhibition at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) brings just those two concepts together. On show till 23 September 2007, the museum's current special exhibition ***Beauty in Asia: 200 BCE to Today*** treads the dichotomy between sensuality and spirituality through sculptures and paintings depicting ideal male and female beauty and Tantric paintings used during meditation which depict the spiritual union between male and female principles.

"This exhibition opens with an exploration of ideal physical beauty, including bronzes and sculptures that depict the voluptuous curves of Indian goddesses. This comes to a climax in the final section of *Beauty in Asia* on spiritual beauty where one transcends the physicality of the human body and meditates on a higher reality. This is spiritual beauty or beauty of the highest order," said Dr Gauri Krishnan, Senior Curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum, and lead curator for *Beauty in Asia*.

The section on *Spiritual Beauty* concludes the exhibition and focuses on the inner beauty of the soul. In contrast with physical beauty, the beauty of the soul does not require the physical form to be beautiful. Inner or spiritual beauty is considered more enduring and more desirable than physical beauty. Hence, physically ugly characters such as *yakshas* or nature spirits and dwarfish clown servants are

regarded as embodiments of wisdom and truth in Asian cultures. For the Chinese, virtue is valued above physical beauty. In Tantric ritual and art, beauty is perceived at many levels, from the level of physical form to the level of formlessness.

Tantric drawings in the exhibition feature geometric diagrams such as the *Shriyantra*, which represents the union of male and female energy — typically opposite forces in Indian philosophy. By focusing on the centre of these shapes, the practitioner is aided in this quest to achieve balance and equilibrium. This desired state of wellness is attained through meditation and yoga, an increasingly popular pastime among many Singaporeans. Another 18th century Rajasthani painting depicts a human body with all the *chakras*, energy which is evoked in meditation, represented by lotus flowers.

In the same section, a masterfully sculpted 15th to 16th century Sukhothai walking Buddha evokes the serenity and asexuality of Buddha, which again takes the focus away from his physical body, to a meditation on his spiritual qualities such as compassion, wisdom and kindness.

Beauty Fair- Celebrating Beauty and Wellness in Asia

In conjunction with the *Beauty in Asia* exhibition, the ACM will be holding a beauty fair this Sunday, 2 September 2007. ***Beauty Fair - Celebrating Beauty and Wellness in Asia*** will allow the visitor to experience firsthand traditional and modern forms of beauty and wellness methods. Visitors will also enjoy free admission to the museum, including the *Beauty in Asia* exhibition. Free talks and interactive sessions will also be available throughout the day.

Visitors can expect talks and demonstrations on holistic beauty practices, diet and nutrition, herbal treatments and Ayurveda. Ayurveda is made up of two Sanskrit words which roughly translate to 'knowledge of life', which is considered to be the traditional health science of India. For those who fancy something a little more active, there will be a salsa class at 4pm and also a yoga session at 6pm. Visitors



can also browse a beauty marketplace including stalls on aromatherapy, nail care, henna therapy and more.

*The exhibition **Beauty in Asia: 200 BCE to Today** will be on show at the Asian Civilisations Museum till 23 September 2007. Discover the beauty secrets of Asia and beyond at **Beauty Fair - Celebrating Beauty and Wellness** at the Asian Civilisations Museum on 2 September 2007, admission to the museum and the Beauty in Asia exhibition is free on this day.*

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:

Jennifer Quong
Assistant Manager
Marketing & Corporate Communications
Tel: +65 6332 7991
Mobile: +65 9231 6130
Fax: +65 6883 0732
Email: jennifer_quong@nhb.gov.sg
www.acm.org.sg

Address

1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555
Museum Front Desk: (65) 6332 7798
Public Programmes Hotline: (65) 6332 3284

Opening Hours

Mondays : 1pm – 7pm
Tuesdays – Sundays : 9am – 7pm (to 9pm on Fridays)

EVENT INFORMATION

Beauty Fair- Celebrating Beauty and Wellness in Asia (2 September 2007)

Date : 2 September 2007 (Sunday)
Time : 2 – 8pm (Galleries open from 9am to 7pm)
Venue : Asian Civilisations Museum
1 Empress Place, Singapore 159557
Enquiries : 6332 3284

Programme

Talks and Demonstrations

Awakening Holistic Beauty

by Lilian Teo, Dr Hauschka

2pm - 2.30pm @ Shaw Foundation Foyer

Yin and Yang of Beauty: How Diet Affects Health and Physical Appearance

by Richard Seah

3pm - 3.45pm @ Shaw Foundation Foyer

Oriental Beauty: Make-up for the Asian Skin

by Chan Tat Ming, Cosmoprof International

4pm - 5pm @ River Room

Mayoory Ayurvedic Spa- Ayurveda in the New Era

by Dr Nazeera Bhanu

3pm - 3.45pm @ River Room

Skin Beauty from inside out- Detoxification and Natural Tips for Better Skin

by Ketki Vinayachandra, Natural Therapies Centre

4.45pm - 5.30pm @ Shaw Foundation Foyer

Interactive Sessions

Beginner's Salsa in 30 minutes

Attitude Dance Studio

4pm - 4.30pm @ Shaw Foundation Foyer

Wushu for Kids and Adults

by SEA Games Taijiquan medallist, May Tan, Xin Ying Wushu Training Centre

5.45pm - 6.30pm @ Shaw Foundation Foyer

Featuring sword play, kid's *kungfu*, *taijiquan*, *wushu jijing*, and many more! Suitable for all ages.

Learn Yoga with Adele

Faeries' Retreat

6pm - 6.45pm @ River Room

Beauty & Wellness Fair – list of stalls

- Henna (for hands) & Threading by Rathi Beauty Parlour & Boutique
- Yoga demonstration & yoga related products by Faeries' Retreat
- Aromatherapy & ear candling by Aromatic House
- Ayurvedic related products by Mayoory Ayurvedic Spa
- Traditional Chinese Medicine by Ma Kuang Healthcare
- Traditional Malay Medicine (Jamu) products by Rita Beaute Spa
- Manicures by Prettie Nails
- Accessories by Beads.Etc
- Relaxation CDs and books on personal and spiritual development by Awareness Place
- Tibetan craft, books on personal and spiritual development, massage oils and crystals spiritual by Basic Essence
- Make-up Demonstration by Cosmoprof
- Free foot reflexology by Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH)

EVENT INFORMATION

Beauty in Asia: 200 BCE to Today (till 23 September 2007)

Date : 3 May – 23 September 2007

Time : See Museum Opening Hours

Venue : Special Exhibitions Gallery, Asian Civilisations Museum
1 Empress Place, Singapore 159557

Admission Charges for

Beauty in Asia: 200 BCE to Today (till 23 September 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 under 6 years old and below and NHB Season Pass Holders.
- Discounted admission on Fridays, 7pm – 9pm.

The Asian Civilisations Museum would like to thank:

Institutional Lenders

Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

National Museum, New Delhi

Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Tyler Print Institute

Private Lenders

Ajay and Suman Aggarwal

Benkaim Family Collection

Jeremy Caddy

Dr and Mrs James Khoo

Peng Loh

T K Quek

Digna Cruzem Ryan

Mr and Mrs Paul Supramaniam

Bobby and Nicky Yeo

Anonymous Lenders