

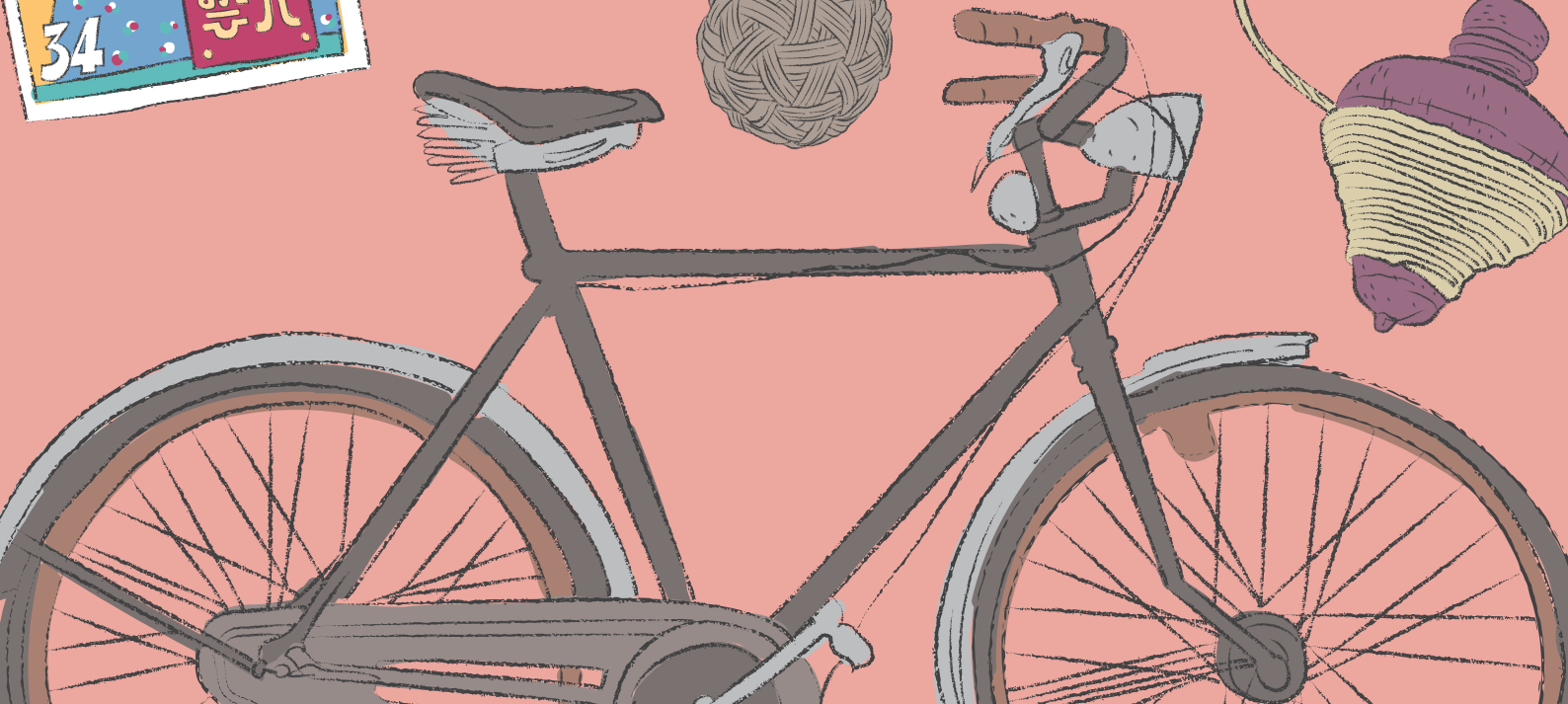
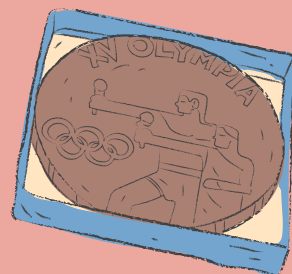
N S M  
National Museum  
of Singapore



Growing Up gallery

# EASY GUIDE

For Senior Groups








# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Welcome to the **Growing Up** gallery!

This guide can help you conduct a **45-minute** self-led tour for seniors and/or persons with dementia. You may also use this guide to plan the trip before visiting the museum.

This resource guide contains:

-  An overview of the gallery.
-  Artefact highlights from each section.
-  Supplementary Touch Bag (which can be borrowed from the Visitor Services counter on L1).
-  Guiding questions to encourage conversations with your accompanying senior visitor(s).
-  A postcard to keep as a memento after completing a feedback form.

## Some helpful tips



Introduce yourself and get to know your accompanying senior(s)' name(s).



Ask your senior(s) some introductory questions before setting off. E.g. Have you been to the museum before? What do you think you will see at the museum?



Speak clearly and slowly. Use short sentences and simple words where possible.



Ask one question at a time and give your senior(s) time to respond.



Drop clues and examples to prompt your senior(s) in responding. Encourage them to share their views and ideas as they go on the tour. If you are with more than one senior, don't forget those who are quieter!



It is all right if you or the senior(s) do/does not have an answer to guiding questions – take time to discover and journey through the artefacts together!

## Items in the Touch Bag

Feel free to use any of these items to complement your self-led tour.



Wind-up Toy



Slingshot



*Tikam-tikam* board



Marbles



*Kuti-kuti*



Gasing



Straw fan



Mini chalk board and chalk

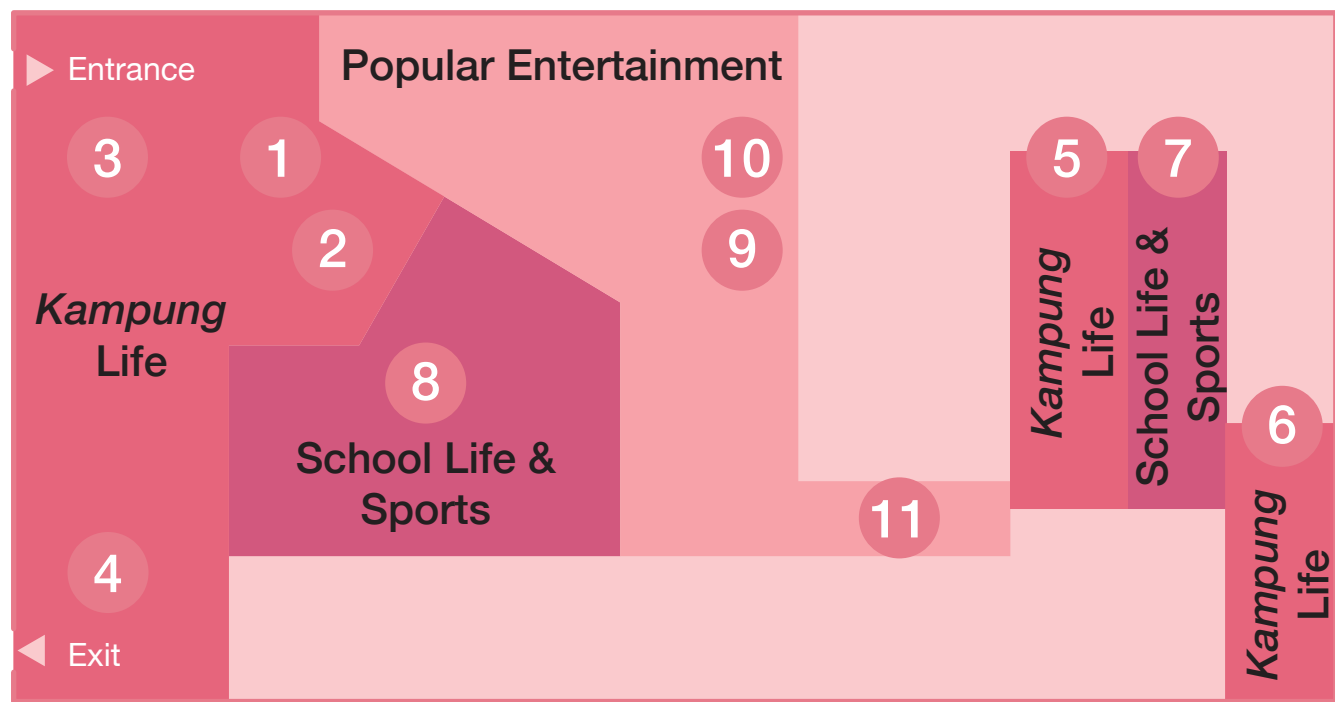


Giant images of the “Worlds”



Old movie ticket stub

You may refer to this map to locate the artefacts and displays in this gallery. Take your time, and enjoy the Growing Up gallery with your accompanying senior(s)!



The entire gallery is about 274 square metres, or the size of a tennis court.

- |  |  |
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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **Growing Up** gallery!

This gallery explores what life was like growing up in Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s. It takes you and your senior through the *kampung* (Malay for village), school and entertainment venues, all of which were places where children spent their childhood, forged friendships and were inspired to pursue their dreams.

Think back to the 1950s and 1960s. Was your accompanying senior born yet? If so, how old were they then?



From top left: *Kampung Life*, *School Life and Sports*, and *Popular Entertainment* sections in the Growing Up gallery.

# I. *KAMPUNG* LIFE



*Spot the coconut trees in the gallery!*

You and your senior are standing before life-sized coconut trees that were often found near *kampung* houses in Singapore.

Before the introduction of Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats in the 1960s, most Singaporeans lived in *kampungs*. They often lived under poor conditions, without proper sanitation and a ready supply of water and electricity. *Jambans* (Malay for “toilet”) were shared among a few households and water for everyday use had to be collected from wells and standpipes located a distance away from the village. Floods, outbreaks of fires and diseases were common.

Regardless, a *kampung* was a community space where children lived and played together. Growing up in a *kampung* meant everyone knew each other. Neighbours often helped, and shared many things such as food and entertainment with one another.



## 1 A Postcard of Singapore



A postcard of Singapore (1960s – 1980s)

2008-05066

Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

The image you see on the left is from a postcard that shows the scene of a *kampung* house in Singapore between the 1960s and 1980s.

*Kampung* houses have two distinctive features: A high sloping roof and a raised floor. Their roofs are often made of *attap* (“palm” in Malay) leaves and wood. Over the years, some traditional houses were modified using modern construction techniques and materials. For instance, zinc sheets and brick tiles or wooden shingles were used instead of *attap* leaves to construct the roof.



## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Has your senior lived in a *kampung*? Can your senior describe how similar their *kampung* houses were to the one pictured in the postcard?
- 2 What kind of things did your senior share with their neighbours when they were living in *kampungs*?
  - Did they share their toilets?
  - Did they share their food and TV sets?
- 3 What kind of house does your senior live in today? How is it different from a *kampung*?
  - Was their *kampung* house bigger?
  - Were there toilets in it?
- 4 Why did your senior move out of a *kampung*? How did he or she feel about moving?
- 5 If your senior had a choice, would he or she like to live in a *kampung* again?



## 2 Bicycle



*Take a closer look at the bicycle parked under the coconut trees*



Raleigh "Sports" three-speed bicycle (1963)  
Gift of Lee Hsien Loong  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

Bicycles were a common way of getting around and between *kampungs*. This Raleigh bicycle belonged to Lee Hsien Loong, the current Prime Minister of Singapore. His paternal grandmother, Chua Jim Neo, had bought the bicycle for him as a present for his 11th birthday. It would have cost around \$174 in the 1960s.

Once the largest bicycle manufacturer in the world, British manufacturer Raleigh's bicycles were popular in Singapore till the 1970s.

## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Does your senior know how to ride a bicycle? If they do, who taught them how to do so?
- 2 Share with your senior your own memorable experience of riding a bicycle. Ask if your senior can share a memory of them riding the bicycle.
  - Have they ever fallen off a bicycle?
  - Did they have to save up in order to buy a bicycle?
  - Did they have to share the bicycle with their siblings and family?
- 3 How did your senior get from one place to another when they were a child? What about now?
- 4 Was it a problem whenever it rained while they were riding a bicycle?
- 5 When was the last time they rode a bicycle or sat as a pillion rider?



### 3 Collection of Store-bought Toys



*Look behind you to find a display of toys from the past*



Collection of store-bought toys (1950s – 1970s)  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

The display features a collection of toys sold in the 1950s and 1960s. In those days, toys sold at the stores were expensive, and were purchased only on rare occasions. The toy cars, train sets and pictorial cubes that you see on display were the source of much entertainment for children.



### Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Has your senior seen or played with any of these toys on display before? Ask them to identify the toys, where and who they usually played these toys with.
- 2 Who usually bought the toys for them? Did they only receive toys on special occasions?
- 3 What was their favourite toy as a child and why?
- 4 *Take out the wind-up toy and slingshot from the bag.*  
Ask your senior to pick a toy and describe how it is played.
- 5 Describe the toys you played with when you were a child. Ask your senior if they have come across these toys.

## 4 Tikam-tikam Board



Can you find the tikam-tikam board among the toys on display?



Tikam-tikam board (1950s – 1970s)  
2002-00972  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

This was a popular game among children in the 1950s to 1970s. A *tikam-tikam* (Malay for “random pick”) board could often be found in provision shops or “sarabat” vendors (drink stalls run by Indians and Malays).

For a few cents, children could pick a numbered ticket and pull off the corresponding tab. The prizes for “winning” tabs included soft drinks, plastic toys or packets of condiments or biscuits.

## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Has your senior played *tikam-tikam* before?
  - If they have, can your senior describe how the game is played?
  - If they have not, how do they think the game is played?
  - Who did they usually play the game with? Have they or their friends won any prizes from the game? Ask them to describe the moment.
  - What was their favourite prize from the game?
- 2 Why did they enjoy playing the game?
  - How did it make them feel?
- 3 How much did a game of *tikam-tikam* cost back then? How much of their pocket money was spent on the game?
- 4 When was the last time they played *tikam-tikam*? Can they still find the game today?
- 5 While growing up, what were some of their favourite games or toys from the stores? *Now, retrieve the tikam-tikam board from the bag. You and your senior can have a go at pulling a tab of your choice.*



## 5 Traditional Homemade Toys and Games



You can find more traditional toys on display at the back of the gallery.



Collection of traditional toys (1950s – 1960s)  
On display at the National Museum  
of Singapore

The *kampung* was both a home and a playground for many children growing up in Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s.

A day's activities for children could include tree climbing, fishing in a *longkang* (Malay for “drain”) especially after a heavy downpour, hunting birds or insects, or a game of catch with friends. As toys sold in stores were expensive, children often used their creativity to transform simple materials such as planks, sturdy sticks, crumpled-up newspaper, tin cans, or other discarded materials into hours of fun!



## Let's pause for a chat

*Take out the marbles, kuti-kuti and gasing from the bag*

- 1 Ask your senior if he or she can name these toys and games, as well as those in the display.
  - How are each of these toys and games played?
- 2 Have they ever played with any of these toys and games? If so, which ones?
- 3 Were any of these their favourite game or toy when they were a child? Ask them to tell you more.
  - If not, can they describe their favourite game or toy?
- 4 Did they have to save up to buy these games or were these shared among their friends?
- 5 What were some toys they made on their own or had to improvise from simple materials?

## 6 Traditional Snacks



*Spot the platter of traditional snacks in the gallery.*



Platter of traditional snacks (1950s – 1960s)  
On display at the National Museum of Singapore

The display features a platter of traditional snacks, sweets and cakes. Many families would make these snacks and share them with their neighbours during festive occasions.

Try identifying these treats with your senior.

*Nian gao* is a cake made from glutinous rice flour, and is commonly eaten during Chinese New Year.

*Pineapple tart* is a bite-sized pastry topped or filled with pineapple jam and often eaten during Chinese New Year.

*Onde-onde* is a sweet glutinous rice ball filled with liquid palm sugar and coated in grated coconut.

*Kueh salat* is a two-layer dessert comprising steamed glutinous rice topped with green custard made with pandan juice and coconut milk.

*Kueh bahulu* is a cake commonly served during Eid al-Fitr (or Hari Raya Puasa) as well as Chinese New Year.

*Laddu* is a sweet Indian treat made of flour, ghee and sugar with other ingredients that vary by recipe, such as chopped nuts or dried raisins.

## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Ask your senior if they have eaten any of these snacks before. Can they identify which snacks belong to which cultures?
  - Can they describe the taste and texture of each of these snacks?
- 2 Which is their favourite snack and why?
- 3 How often do they get to eat these snacks?
- 4 Do they know how these snacks are made? Ask them to describe the steps involved or the recipe.
  - Have they made them when they were younger?
  - *Take out the straw fan from the bag and fan it lightly.*  
Ask your senior if they can identify the scent emitted from the fan.
  - Which of the snacks here will require this ingredient?
- 5 Do they still make these snacks today? Why or why not?

## Answers

- 4 *Kueh salat, Onde-onde*

## II. SCHOOL LIFE AND SPORTS




*Press the button to activate the zoetrope and observe the “animation”.*

During the 1950s and 1960s, schools in Singapore were a hotbed for various activities and events that reflected the political climate of the day. Yet, schools at that time also became a shared space for children of all races to learn about their commonalities and national identity. At school, children forged friendships, shared their experiences and learnt to look out for one another.

Once enough primary schools had been built to provide a place in class for every child of school-going age, more attention was placed on sports to encourage a balanced school life, as well as a fit and healthy population. The sporting arena helped to foster a spirit of camaraderie among the young and shaped their aspirations.



## 7 Competitor's Medallion from Summer Olympics at Helsinki

 Find Tang Pui Wah's medal among the display of medals.



Competitor's medallion from the Summer Olympics at Helsinki (1952)  
Gift of Tang Pui Wah  
2015-00031  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

This medallion belonged to sporting legend Tang Pui Wah, Singapore's first female Olympian who competed in the women's 100m sprint at the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki.

Tang Pui Wah's strong bond with her schoolmates inspired her to keep training. She fondly recalled the times where they helped her with her studies, and warmly welcomed her at the airport after the 1952 Helsinki games.

## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Ask your senior to describe the image on the medal.
- 2 Has your senior heard of Tang Pui Wah? Can they name other Singapore Olympians/athletes and the sports they play?
- 3 Did your senior participate in any sports when they were in school? What about now?
- 4 What was it like participating in the sports activities at school?
- 5 Do they play or watch any sports today? What are their favourite sports activities?

### Possible answers for 2

Tan Howe Liang and weightlifting. Feng Tianwei, Li Jiawei, Wang Yuegu and table-tennis. Joseph Schooling and swimming.

## 8 Blue Sleeveless *Cheongsam*



Find the school uniforms worn by students in the past!



Blue sleeveless *cheongsam* (1968)  
Gift of Chan Siok Fong  
2005-00040  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

Chan Siok Fong was a full-time teacher and the Chief Commissioner of the Singapore Girl Guides from 1967 to 1977. It was common for teachers to wear traditional costumes such as the *cheongsam* to school during the 1950s.

While it was compulsory for students to wear their uniforms to school, not all could afford to buy a set of uniform. In such instances, students would wear their “best set” of clothes to school instead.



## Let's pause for a chat

Take out the mini chalk board and chalk.

- 1 Did your senior have the opportunity to go to school?
  - What was the name of the school and is it still around today?
  - Invite them to write a word or draw something that comes to mind when they think of school. Ask them to elaborate on what they wrote or drew.
- 2 Ask them to describe what a typical day at school was like for them.
- 3 Did they wear school uniforms to school? Ask your senior to describe the school uniform they wore.
- 4 Who were the friends they made at school? What did they do when they gathered with their friends?
  - Are they still in contact with these friends?
- 5 What did they enjoy the most about school? Conversely, what did they dread the most about school?

### III. POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Despite the political and social upheaval in post-war Singapore, the entertainment scene in the 1950s and 1960s allowed people to come together to create shared experiences. Radio and television were common platforms for different communities to come together.

Popular entertainment hangouts, more simply known as the “Worlds” – the New World, Great World and Happy World – appealed to both the young and old with their diverse mix of performances and attractions. Films of different genres and languages, as well as popular music, were enjoyed by many people in Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s.

This period was also the golden age of Malay film production in Singapore, where the films were shot and produced locally. People watched them in both indoor and outdoor cinemas. Together with other Chinese, Hindi and Western films, they were a popular choice for entertainment in Singapore at the time.

The diversity and opportunities afforded by Singapore’s vibrant entertainment scene helped shaped the dreams and aspirations of children, and enabled them to pursue their passion.



## 9 Images of the Amusement Parks



Take a picture with the backdrop of Happy World park.



Happy World amusement park (c1959)  
1995-00462  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

Has your senior heard of the other popular amusement parks or “Worlds” in Singapore?

The next page shows pictures of the other “Worlds”.



Great World amusement park  
(1940s – 1960s)  
1998-00328  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore



New World amusement park at  
Kitchener Road (1938 – 1939)  
2007-50928-076  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

*Pick up the giant images of the “Worlds”.*

The popular trio, the Great World, the New World and the Happy World, were amusement parks located near Zion Road, Jalan Besar and Geylang Road, respectively.

They hosted diverse performances, including traditional operas such as Chinese *wayang* (Malay for theatrical performance involving puppets or human dancers) and Malay *bangsawan* (a form of Malay theatre), as well as movie screenings, concerts, cabaret performances, joy rides and boxing matches. Children in those days often followed their parents or older siblings to the “Worlds” for games and movies.

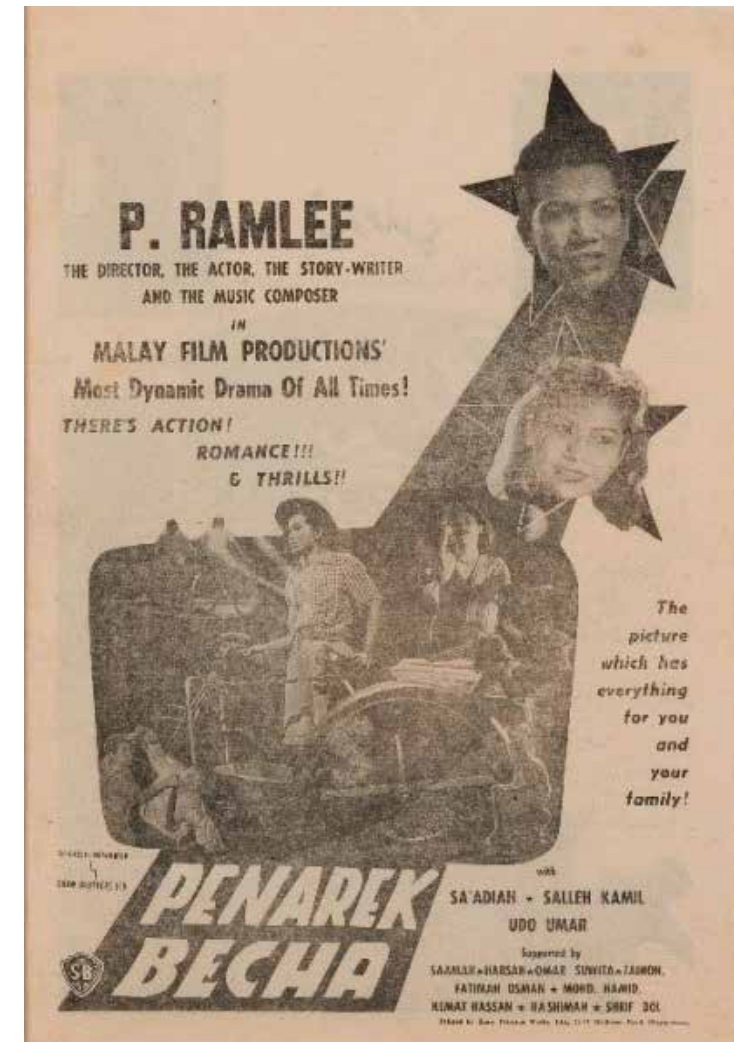
## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Has your senior been to any of these “Worlds” or amusement parks?
  - When did they visit these places?
  - Who were they with?
- 2 If they have, which was their favourite “World” and why?
- 3 What did they usually do there? Ask your senior to describe the games they played and movies they watched at these places.
- 4 Do they recall any interesting stories or events that happened at these “Worlds”? Ask them to tell you more.
- 5 Share your personal experiences of visiting an amusement park when you were younger. Ask your senior to point out the differences and similarities in their memories of these parks compared to your experience.

## 10 Film Posters



Try finding these posters in the gallery!



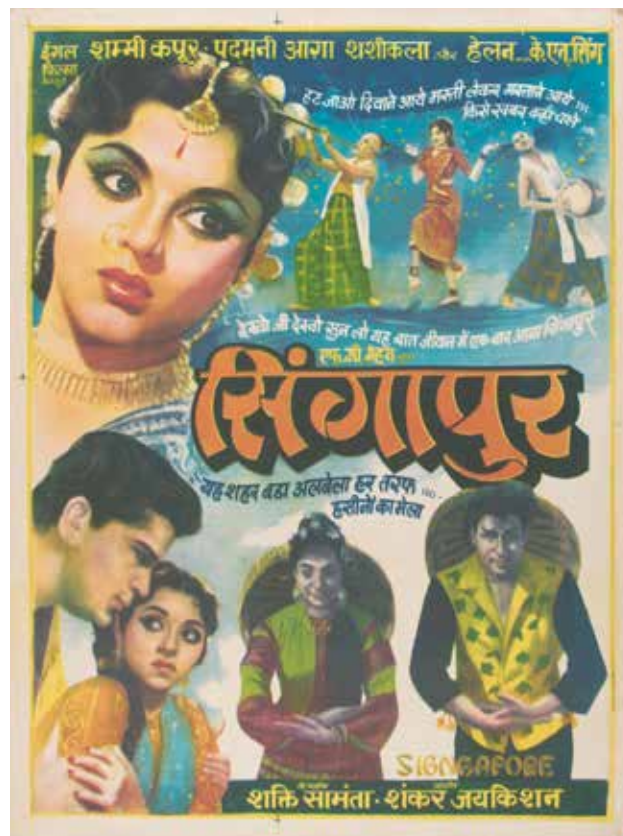
Poster for Malay film *Penarek Becha* (1955)  
1999-00890  
Copyright of Shaw Organisation  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

*Penarek Becha* was the first film directed by P. Ramlee, one of the most celebrated Malay entertainers in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to being a director, Ramlee was also an actor, composer and singer. Ramlee was known for his contemporary comedies that reflected the social concerns of the local Malay community.





Film pictorial (issue 34) published by Kong Ngee Film Company, featuring Zhou Xuan on its cover (1951)  
Gift of Ho Vui Chan  
2014-01032  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore



Poster for Hindi film *Singapore* (1960)  
2009-02920  
Collection of the National Museum of Singapore

Kong Ngee Film Company was a local company set up by brothers Ho Khee-yong and Ho Khee-siang, and renowned for producing Cantonese films in the 1950s and 1960s. Zhou Xuan was a popular Chinese singer and actress in the 1940s and 1950s. She was known as the “Golden Voice” after emerging as the runner-up in a talent contest in Shanghai and later went on to star in several popular films.

Directed by Shakti Samanta, Bollywood film *Singapore* was shot on location in Singapore and portrayed the country as an exotic place. The plot revolves around murders and hidden treasures in a rubber plantation in Singapore.

## Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Has your senior watched any of these films and movies? What were these films about?
  - Who did they watch the films with?
  - Where did they watch these films?
- 2 How much did they have to pay for a movie ticket back in the 1950s and 1960s?
  - How often did they get to watch movies in the past?
- 3 Does your senior know how much a movie ticket costs today? (About \$13.50)
- 4 What was the first movie that they watched? Ask them to describe how they ended up watching their first movie.
  - Was it a special occasion/treat?
  - What was the movie about?
  - Where did they watch their first movie?
- 5 Show your senior the old movie ticket. Do they have a favourite movie? Ask them to tell you more.



## 11 The Crescendos



*Can you spot this picture of  
The Crescendos in the gallery?*



The Crescendos at Television Singapura (1963)  
Photo from the Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection,  
Courtesy of the National Archives of Singapore

For some young Singaporeans growing up in the 1960s, the world of entertainment provided a platform for them to come together to pursue their dreams of being a pop star. The Crescendos was one such example.

The Crescendos started out as a singing trio made up of John Chee, Leslie Chia and Raymond Ho while they were at St Patrick's School. Their female lead vocalist Susan Lim joined the group when they participated in the popular local competition Radio Singapore Talentime in 1962. The subsequent addition of Israel Lim on bass guitar and Peter Soh on drums allowed the group to perform as an electric band. The group eventually became the first Singapore pop group to be signed on by an international record label.



### Let's pause for a chat

- 1 Did your senior listen to music from local bands and musicians when they were younger?
  - Can they list some of the popular bands and musicians they know? (E.g. The Quests, The Crescendos, P. Ramlee, Naomi and the Boys, Wong Chin Yian)
  - If your senior mentions a foreign band or singer, invite them to share some of their favourite songs from these bands and singers.
- 2 Have they heard of Talentime or other similar talent competitions? Ask them to tell you more.
- 3 Which were their favourite local bands and musicians?
  - What were their favourite songs from these bands and musicians?
  - Why did they like these bands and singers?
- 4 Have they ever watched their favourite bands and musicians perform live? Ask them to describe the experience and their feelings at the time.
- 5 Did they ever dream about being a singer or musician? Why or why not?

We have reached the end of the self-led tour of the Growing Up gallery. We hope you were able to take a walk down memory lane and relive some of your growing up days.

If you borrowed a Touch Bag for the tour, please return the bag at the Visitor Services Counter on L1.

We would love to hear from you! Please share your feedback by visiting <https://go.gov.sg/easyguidefeedback> or by scanning this QR code.



On completion, present the submission page to a staff at the Visitor Services counter to redeem a postcard.

Alternatively, you may request for a hard copy of the feedback form from the staff at the Visitor Services counter and present the completed form to redeem a postcard.

*All information is correct at time of publication. The National Museum of Singapore reserves the right to make changes and modifications to the galleries without prior notice.*

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