

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Set sail with the National Museum of Singapore on a time-travelling ‘Odyssey’

Visitors can look forward to a multi-sensorial experience of enchanting sights, sounds, and even magical companions, in this voyage spanning 700 years of Singapore’s history.



Singapore, 31 July 2025 – Following a ten-month closure, the National Museum of Singapore will be unveiling the first of its revamped permanent galleries – the newly-named Shaw Foundation Glass Rotunda. Presented as the National Museum’s SG60 gift to the nation, the space will feature a multi-sensorial experience titled *Singapore Odyssey: A Journey Through Time*, which replaces the former *Story of the Forest* installation.

Chronicling the major milestones in Singapore’s 700 years of history, the experience is presented through special animations and interactives, in a personalised and immersive journey that allows visitors to experience Singapore’s history from a fresh perspective.

“The previous installation, *Story of the Forest*, featured animals inspired by our prized William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings. Well-loved by visitors, it sparked wonder and curiosity about the collection. With *Singapore Odyssey*, we wanted to continue drawing on our collection and rich stories to present Singapore’s history in an engaging and relevant way – this

creates an accessible entry point, while honouring the depth and significance of our history,” said Ms Chung May Khuen, Director of the National Museum of Singapore.

Ms Chung added: “In presenting *Story of the Forest*, we pushed the boundaries of a conventional museum-going experience through technology and multimedia to create a highly immersive space. It was very well received by visitors, who called for similar experiences and even greater interactivity. This was the impetus behind incorporating further multisensorial and interactive elements in *Singapore Odyssey* that we hope will continue to excite and enchant our visitors.”

"The Shaw Foundation is proud to support the National Museum in its continued efforts to share the rich and storied history of our nation," said Mr Mark Shaw of Shaw Foundation. "We hope that the bold and innovative storytelling in *Singapore Odyssey* will captivate and inspire visitors to take pride in our heritage and develop a deeper interest in Singapore's remarkable history."

Experiencing 700 years of Singapore's history in four episodes

Blending history, art, and technology, *Singapore Odyssey* takes shape as an evocative time-travelling voyage through Singapore's history that centres on the sea as an ever-present witness and enabler of our country's evolution.

Designed by local creatives, *Singapore Odyssey* offers visitors a vivid overview of the nation's journey over 700 years. Spotlighting key moments of our history, layered with local stories and myths associated with the origins of Singapore, the installation gives cultural and historical context to Singapore's identity, adding depth and enhancing appreciation for its place in the region and the world. Visitors can look forward to 'setting sail' from an imagined future Singapore to our pre-colonial beginnings (details of each episode are included in the **Annex**):

- **Opening: Glimpse of the Future** - Singapore as a futuristic, green and connected city
- **Episode 1: Setting Sail** - Scenes from independence to present-day Singapore
- **Episode 2: Riding Out the Storm** - Scenes from wartime and postwar Singapore
- **Episode 3: Age of Exploration** - Scenes from colonial Singapore
- **Episode 4: Shores of Singapura** - Scenes from pre-colonial Singapore period

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The journey begins as visitors ‘board’ a time-travelling vessel, taking in the futuristic view of the Singapore skyline from the ‘cabin’, which sets the stage for their trip back in time. Stepping into the gallery, they will be greeted by a stunning light show anchored by a suspended LED globe—the first of its kind in a Singapore museum. Immersing the room in vibrant hues of blue, the scene transitions into a two-minute show that maps the intricate network of maritime routes that have connected Singapore to the rest of the world over the years.

Visitors continue their journey as they descend the spiral ramp, time-travelling in reverse chronology through pivotal chapters of Singapore’s history. They will encounter visual wall projections that come alive through animated scenes and rich soundscapes, offering an immersive glimpse into key moments such as Singapore’s first National Day Parade before wartime evacuations, and ancient coastal communities.



The journey culminates at the base of the Glass Rotunda, where a cinematic digital waterfall curtain parts to reveal pivotal moments from Singapore’s history as visitors approach towards it. The dynamic floor also responds to visitors’ movements, with each step creating ripples on the

surface that interact with surrounding ripples generated by others. This interactive and fully immersive experience is enhanced by a curated sound design, creating a powerful crescendo to the voyage.

Sustainability as a thematic undercurrent



Singapore Odyssey continues the conversation on environmental awareness previously sparked by *Story of the Forest*, showing how Singapore's identity has been shaped by its natural environment and the sea – from the lives of coastal communities from early Singapore, to the nation's post-independence greening efforts and visions of future climate resilience.

Ms Priscilla Chua, Principal Curator of the National Museum of Singapore, shared: "The launch of *Singapore Odyssey* in the momentous year of SG60 is an opportune time to revisit our nation's remarkable journey, while reflecting on our relationship with the environment. We encourage visitors to draw connections between the evolution of Singapore's natural environment through the ages, with urgent global challenges like climate change and rising sea levels that are pertinent issues that will shape Singapore's present and future."

Time-travelling with your companion

One of the pivotal elements that mirrors this focus is the presence of magical companions that serve as visitors' guides throughout the showcase. By picking up a personalised RFID-enabled wristband at the start of the showcase, visitors can 'adopt' one of nine companions, each inspired by Singapore's native fauna.

Whether it is a forest-dwelling pangolin, a coastal crab, or a sky-gliding hornbill, these

companions respond uniquely to their visitor's movements and environment by lighting the path forward, triggering hidden animations, and deepening emotional connection at every turn.



As visitors approach the concluding section, they are invited to release their RFID-enabled companions at a digital 'well'. This symbolic gesture reinforces the adage that what is borrowed from nature should be returned with care – a call to action to build a sustainable future for both people and the real-life counterparts of these companions. This experience is featured alongside immersive media where myths of legendary creatures such as the giant tide-moving crab and the magical tree of life Pauh Janggi are reinterpreted. These offer poetic entry points into today's urgent ecological conversations that frame climate change, rising sea levels, and biodiversity loss not as isolated modern concerns, but as part of Singapore's long and evolving story.

Opening to the public on 8 August

The Shaw Foundation Glass Rotunda will officially open its doors to the public on 8 August. Admission to *Singapore Odyssey* is free for Singaporeans and permanent residents.

Singapore Odyssey will run alongside other complementary showcases happening in the lead-up to National Day – including the commemorative exhibition *Once Upon A Tide* that explores Singapore's maritime evolution from settlement to global city, and a curated series of programmes for the National Day Celebrations at the National Museum of Singapore on 9 August 2025. These include community-built LEGO installations, digital and hands-on art

activities, live performances, and a spectacular evening projection show, Canvas of Light: Our Nation's Journey, on the façade of the museum.

For more information, please visit go.gov.sg/singapore-odyssea or the National Museum's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

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- **Annex A: Singapore Odyssea: A Journey Through Time**

For media enquiries, kindly contact nmsteam@tateanzur.com.

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About the National Museum of Singapore

With a history dating back to 1887, the National Museum of Singapore is the nation's oldest museum with a progressive mind. Its galleries adopt multi-perspective ways of presenting history and culture featuring important artefacts that tell the stories of Singapore and the world to redefine the conventional museum experience. The museum is home to thought-provoking exhibitions and hosts exciting events all year round including the Singapore Night Festival. For more details, please visit www.nhb.gov.sg/nationalmuseum/.

About the Shaw Foundation Glass Rotunda

Conceived as a modern interpretation of the National Museum's original rotunda, the Glass Rotunda is the main feature of the museum's modern building extension. Following a revamp in 2025, the space was renamed the Shaw Foundation Glass Rotunda in recognition of the Shaw Foundation's generous support and its longstanding contributions to Singapore's arts, heritage,

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and education landscape. The Glass Rotunda is home to *Singapore Odyssey*, an immersive, multi-sensorial experience that takes visitors back in time to explore key moments in Singapore's history, while highlighting the importance of the sea in shaping our country's past, present and future.