



MEDIA RELEASE

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MUSEUM ROUNDTABLE MARKS ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY WITH AN EXHIBITION OF KEY ARTEFACTS FROM MUSEUMS ISLANDWIDE

Singapore, 2 November 2016 – In celebration of its 20th anniversary, the Museum Roundtable (MR) is presenting a special exhibition that traces the history of the MR and its growth since its establishment in 1996. The exhibition, titled *Museum Roundtable: A 20-Year Journey*, features over 30 key artefacts from various MR museums, and provides greater insights into different aspects of Singapore's heritage and culture.

2 Chaired by the National Heritage Board (NHB), the MR is a collective of public and private museums, and heritage galleries and institutions. When NHB was set up in 1993, it was with the simple yet important belief that heritage is vital in nurturing a deeper appreciation of our roots, and shared history and identity. In the 1990s, greater attention and resources were devoted to developing Singapore's arts and cultural scene, and against this backdrop, along with the opening of new museums such as the Asian Civilisations Museum and Singapore Art Museum, the MR was established in 1996.

Growth of the MR from 1996 to the Present

3 The exhibition illustrates the journey and growth of the MR in two broad phrases. First, it highlights the early years where the focus was on encouraging a museum-going culture in Singapore. With the lack of awareness about museums and their offerings, emphasis was placed on growing the number of MR museums in Singapore, and enhancing their public appeal. The MR started out with just 10 museums in 1996. It has grown in strength over the years, and has today a total of 57 member museums. These museums span across diverse categories of focus and interest: art, culture, community, defence, healthcare, lifestyle and collectibles, and science and innovation.

4 The second phase focuses on developing the capabilities of the MR, to ensure the sustainability and quality of museums and their offerings in the long run. For this, MR members constantly engage in the cross-sharing of knowledge and expertise with other professionals through learning journeys, workshops and sharing sessions organised by the MR. This is supplemented by study trips overseas, raising the international profile of



Singapore museums, while establishing links with other museum associations world-wide. Today, the building of capabilities remains a key focus of the MR, enabling it to keep abreast with museums internationally.

5 Mr Alvin Tan, Assistant Chief Executive (Policy & Community), NHB, said: “The Museum Roundtable has played, and will continue to play, a key role in the development of a vibrant and diverse museum landscape in Singapore. Through the growing network of Museum Roundtable members, NHB is able to ensure that Singapore’s heritage has an extended reach and expanded resonance with different segments of the public. We hope that the exhibition will raise the public’s awareness of the richness and diversity of the museum landscape in Singapore, and encourage the public to visit our Museum Roundtable members to experience for themselves different aspects of Singapore’s heritage.”

6 *Museum Roundtable: A 20-Year Journey* showcases a specially curated selection of key artefacts from 16 participating MR members. This includes items such as those linked with traditional Malay practices involving the burying of placenta after childbirth from the Malay Heritage Centre; handcrafted wooden dolls that were a means of livelihood for homeless girls from the MINT Museum of Toys; tiles from Former Nanyang University Library and Administration Building; and clay figures developed in 1946 by an American psychologist as personality tests from the Woodbridge Museum.

7 *Museum Roundtable: A 20-Year Journey* runs from 2 November 2016 till 26 February 2017, at the National Museum of Singapore, The Concourse. Admission is free.

For more information, please refer to www.museums.com.sg, and the following Annexes:

- Annex A** List of highlight artefacts
- Annex B** List of participating MR museums in the exhibition
- Annex C** List of MR museums and categories

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About 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 for more information.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MUSEUM ROUNDTABLE: A 20-YEAR JOURNEY EXHIBITION

Category	Image	Artefact
Art		<p>A pair of maquettes, <i>Wealth</i> and <i>Contentment</i> (1974)</p> <p>On loan from the NUS Museum</p> <p>Commissioned by the Development Bank of Singapore in 1974, the sculptures were first displayed in the atrium of the Plaza Singapura shopping centre. They were designed to represent the newfound wealth of an industrialising Singapore in the 1970s and were subsequently donated to the National University of Singapore in 1997 by the artist Ng Eng Teng.</p> <p><i>Wealth</i> presents a female figure in a rested position, with hands placed gently over the stomach, while <i>Contentment</i> features a female figure lying on her stomach, caressing herself with her hands.</p> <p>On display here are the maquettes, models of the actual sculptures that are currently displayed in front of the University Cultural Centre at NUS.</p>
Art		<p>UH... By the Propeller Group (2007)</p> <p>On loan from Singapore Art Museum</p> <p>This life-size video projection features the word “Uh...” as a graffiti tag on various public walls throughout Ho Chi Minh City. As traffic whizzes by on the streets and pedestrians stroll past the work, the viewer soon realises that the tag isn’t part of the physical landscape at all. This video work is a piece in a larger body of work that explores the quickly changing cultural and physical Vietnamese landscape and the youth that are trying to navigate these changes as they adapt and develop new strategies such as modern American graffiti for individual self-expression.</p>






		<p>Propeller Group was founded in 2006 by Phunam, Matt Lucero and Tuan Andrew Nguyen. This video projection was commissioned by SAM for the <i>Singapore Biennale 2011</i> and later became part of SAM's collection, reflecting the museum's mission of introducing contemporary art from the region to local audiences.</p>
Culture & Community		<p>A uri pot from archaeological digs at Istana Kampong Gelam (2000)</p> <p>On loan from Malay Heritage Centre</p> <p>In Malay culture, the <i>uri</i> (placenta) is traditionally considered the baby's "twin" in the womb and hence requires a proper burial after it is delivered. The <i>mak bidan</i> (midwife) would clean and dress the placenta and umbilical cord in a piece of white cloth, together with several spices and a small sharp object, reciting the proper <i>jampi</i> (incantation or prayer) before burying it near a young tree.</p> <p>Found during an archeological dig of Istana Kampong Gelam in 2000, this <i>uri</i> pot is one of several dug up from the site, and sheds light on the social history of the early residents in that particular area.</p>
Culture & Community		<p>Tea set belonging to the Aeria family with the mark "Made in Occupied Japan" (1952)</p> <p>On loan from Eurasian Heritage Centre</p> <p>With the end of World War Two, the United States led the Allied Powers in the occupation and demilitarisation of Japan in 1945. Items manufactured in Japan and exported for revenue had to be printed with markings such as "Occupied Japan" or "Made in Occupied Japan". With the signing of the Peace Treaty on 8 September 1951 which ended the Allied Occupation and restored full sovereignty to Japan, these marks were no longer used after 1952.</p> <p>This tea set was donated by Kevin N. M.</p>





		<p>Aeria, former Chairman of the Eurasian Heritage Centre. Apart from its historical significance, this well-cherished tea set was chosen to reflect how tea time is an important tradition for the Eurasian community, inherited from their European ancestors.</p>
<p>Culture & Community</p>		<p>Kasut manek (Beaded shoes) (c1950s)</p> <p>On loan from The Intan</p> <p>Beadwork, and beaded shoes in particular, is an integral part of Peranakan material culture. The design on the shoes on the left depicts a deer hiding among the bushes and from the winged design on the sides of the shoes, this pair of shoes was likely worn by Babas (Peranakan men).</p> <p>The other pair of beaded shoes features a delightful image of a girl with her puppy. Such shoes were often worn by Nyonyas (Peranakan women) to accompany their traditional attire, the <i>kebaya</i>.</p>
<p>Culture & Community</p>		<p>Tiles from former Nanyang University Library and Administration Building (1950s)</p> <p>On loan from Chinese Heritage Centre</p> <p>Nanyang University faced declining student enrolment in the 1970s. In late 1979, British academic Frederick Dainton presented his views on the future of university education in Singapore and suggested merging Nanyang University and the University of Singapore. In August 1980, Nanyang University closed its doors and merged with the University of Singapore to create the National University of Singapore. These tiles were taken from the original Administration Building of Nanyang University during renovations in the early 2000s, after it was gazetted a National Monument.</p>



<p>Defence</p>		<p>Ashtray belonging to the late Mrs Elizabeth Mary Uniacke (December 1942)</p> <p>On loan from Changi Museum</p> <p>This ashtray belonged to the late Mrs Elizabeth Mary Uniacke, who served as a physiotherapist in the Singapore General Hospital. Along with other civilian internees, she would have been interned at Changi Prison at first but subsequently moved to Sime Road Camp in May 1944 to free up the space at Changi for POWs. This ashtray was fashioned from a coconut shell, while newspapers served as paper for rolling cigarettes.</p>
<p>Defence</p>		<p>Letter to parents from NS personnel serving National Service (27 December 1976)</p> <p>Paper</p> <p>On loan from the Army Museum</p> <p>This letter written by an NS personnel to his parents discusses his army routine as well as his worry of a “communication barrier”. From this letter, one can infer that soldiers did not always share a common language back then.</p>
<p>Healthcare</p>		<p>Clay figures used in a Personality Test (possibly 1950s)</p> <p>On loan from the Woodbridge Museum</p> <p>The Twitchell-Allen Three-Dimensional Personality Test was developed in 1946 by American psychologist Doris Twitchell-Allen. This set of 28 clay figures was used in clinical practice to portray personality dynamics. The figures include simple rectangular and curved polygons to represent well-established gestalts, and one vague human figure. The patient’s responses to the figures were recorded</p>





		during a period of inquiry. This test utilised unstructured patterns to project concepts and feelings that the subject might possess.
Lifestyle & collectibles		<p>“Door of Hope” dolls (1900s–1940s)</p> <p>On loan from MINT Museum of Toys</p> <p>The MINT Museum of Toys houses a collection of 150 “Door of Hope” Mission Dolls. One on display here features a nanny carrying a baby on her back.</p> <p>Door of Hope is a mission group that worked in China during the 1910s to 1920s. They took in girls who were at risk and gave them the basic necessities and skills to survive. The girls were taught how to sew clothes for the dolls, which they sold for a modest income. The dolls were all hand-painted and hand-carved from pear wood.</p> <p>These unique dolls were selected for display as they were not just for play, but also a means of livelihood for the homeless girls in the Door of Hope mission group.</p>
Lifestyle & collectibles		<p>Singapore Youth Olympic Games Torch (2010)</p> <p>On loan from Singapore Sports Museum</p> <p>Singapore hosted the inaugural Summer Youth Olympic Games in 2010. The Journey of the Youth Olympic Flame serves to connect the youth of the world to the Olympic Movement while inspiring them with the Olympic spirit. The flame travelled a total of seven cities, beginning in Greece as per Olympic tradition and finally ending in Singapore. Sixteen-year-old student Tay Shi Pei was Singapore’s first torchbearer, after receiving the flame from then Education Minister Ng Eng Hen at CHIJ Secondary School (Toa Payoh).</p>



<p>Lifestyle & collectibles</p>	A photograph of the book 'Prehistoric Malaya' by Michael Willmer Forbes Tweedie. The cover is dark blue with a white title label in the center. The author's name is visible at the bottom of the label.	<p><i>Prehistoric Malaya</i> by Michael Willmer Forbes Tweedie (1955)</p> <p>On loan from the National Library, Singapore</p> <p>This book provides a summarised account of the early history of the Malay Archipelago through archaeological findings. It was written by Michael Tweedie, who was then the Director of the Raffles Museum. Tweedie wrote that despite the absence of sites in Malaysia like Angkor Wat and the fossils of <i>Homo erectus</i> (the ancestor of human beings), the discovery of stone tools and pot shards confirm that Malaya was inhabited from as early as 10,000 years ago. The text is illustrated with line drawings by K. M. Foong, a staff of the museum.</p>
<p>National History</p>	A photograph of a sheet of postage stamps. Each stamp features the Singapore state flag, which is a red field with a white crescent and a seven-pointed star.	<p>First National Flag on stamp (3 June 1960)</p> <p>On loan from Singapore Philatelic Museum</p> <p>In 1959, the United Kingdom granted Singapore statehood and full internal self-government. A new state flag was created by a committee led by then Deputy Prime Minister Toh Chin Chye to replace the Union Jack. It was unveiled together with the state crest on 3 December 1959, when the Yang di-Pertuan Negara (Head of State) Yusof Ishak was sworn in.</p> <p>The state flag was featured on postage stamps on 3 June 1960 as a commemorative issue for Singapore's first National Day.</p>



<p>Science & Innovation</p>	 A photograph of a musical tesla coil. It has a tall, slender, copper-colored central rod. At the top, there is a white, circular, flat-topped structure. The base is a complex assembly of metal and electronic components, including a large capacitor bank.	<p>Musical tesla coil (2014)</p> <p>On loan from Science Centre Singapore</p> <p>Inspired by the Science Centre’s signature tesla coil performance, which featured daily in its atrium since 2004, budding local engineer Gao Guangyan designed and built this musical tesla coil for the Science Centre in 2014. This marked the start of an ongoing relationship between Gao and the institution. It also inspired him to continue pursuing building coils and other science-related projects even after he graduated from university.</p> <p>Gao built a larger musical tesla coil for the Science Centre in 2015, which can create sparks more than three metres in length. It also plays tunes such as “We Are Singapore” and the Super Mario video game theme.</p>
<p>National History</p>	 A photograph of a rectangular street sign. The sign is green with a decorative border. It features two lines of text: the top line in Chinese characters and the bottom line in English, which reads "SERANGOON ROAD".	<p>Bilingual street signage (1980s)</p> <p>On loan from the Land Transport Gallery</p> <p>In the 1990s, road names and signage in historic districts such as Chinatown, Little India and Geylang Serai were printed in English and other languages, incorporating unique ethnic motifs such as the pagoda along Kreta Ayer Road or the lotus flower in Serangoon as a way to underline the multiracialism of Singapore. These bilingual street signage were eventually replaced by a standardised green reflective signage commonly seen on the streets after 2003.</p>

LIST OF PARTICIPATING MR MEMBERS IN THE EXHIBITION

- Army Museum of Singapore
- Chinese Heritage Centre
- Eurasian Heritage Centre
- Land Transport Gallery
- Malay Heritage Centre
- MINT Museum of Toys
- National Library Singapore
- NUS Museum
- Police Heritage Centre
- Science Centre Singapore
- Singapore Art Museum
- Singapore Philatelic Museum
- Singapore Sports Museum
- The Changi Museum
- The Intan
- Woodbridge Museum

LIST OF MR MUSEUMS AND CATEGORIES

Category	MR Museums under the category
Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Art Retreat Museum 2. National University of Singapore (NUS) Museum 3. Baba House 4. Singapore Art Museum 5. Tan Swie Hian Museum 6. Singapore Tyler Print Institute 7. National Gallery, Singapore
Culture & Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asian Civilisations Museum 2. Chinatown Heritage Centre 3. Chinese Heritage Centre 4. Eurasian Heritage Centre 5. Fuk Tak Chi Museum 6. Gan Heritage Centre 7. Indian Heritage Centre 8. Malay Heritage Centre 9. Ngee Ann Cultural Centre 10. Peranakan Museum 11. Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall 12. The Intan
Defence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Army Museum of Singapore 2. Battlebox 3. Civil Defence Heritage Gallery 4. Fort Siloso 5. Home Team Gallery 6. Memories at Old Ford Factory 7. Police Heritage Centre 8. Reflections at Bukit Chandu 9. Republic of Singapore Air Force Museum 10. Republic of Singapore Navy Museum 11. Singapore Discovery Centre 12. The Changi Museum
Healthcare	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HealthZone 2. National Healthcare Group (NHG) Polyclinics' Gallery of Memories 3. Tan Tock Seng Hospital's Heritage Museum 4. The Singapore General Hospital (SGH) Museum 5. Woodbridge Museum
Lifestyles and Collectibles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Library Singapore 2. MINT Museum of Toys 3. Red Dot Design Museum



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Singapore Coins and Notes Museum5. Singapore Sports Museum
National History	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Building and Construction Authority (BCA) Gallery2. Housing and Development Board (HDB) Gallery3. Land Transport Gallery4. Ministry of Education Heritage Centre5. National Museum of Singapore (NMS)6. Singapore City Gallery7. Singapore Maritime Gallery8. Singapore Philatelic Museum9. Sustainable Singapore Gallery @ Marina Barrage10. The Grassroots Heritage Centre11. Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) Gallery
Science & Innovation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ArtScience Museum2. Information and Communications Technology Experience Centre (IExperience)3. Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum4. NEWater Visitor Centre5. Science Centre Singapore