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Museum

 National University of Singapore Museum  National University of Singapore Museum

As part of the National University of Singapore, the NUS Museum facilitates the intellectual and cultural life of the University community. Focusing mainly on Southeast Asian art and culture, the Museum contributes to and facilitates the production, display and reception of knowledge through collections development and curatorial practice, developing partnerships within NUS, the cultural and heritage industry, and the global knowledge community.

The roots of NUS Museum can be traced to the establishment in 1955 of the University Art Museum at the then University of Malaya located in Singapore. Under the direction of Michael Sullivan, the museum's first curator from 1954 to 1960, the collection was instrumental in the teaching and study of Art History at the university. Established before Singapore's independence, the University Art Museum may be regarded as a prototypical museum institution, its historical trajectory and collection reflecting the search for a Malayan identity situated within the context of the material cultures of Southeast Asia, China and India.

NUS Museum also manages the [Baba House](#) located at 157 Neil Road. One of the last surviving Straits Chinese houses in Singapore, it was launched in September 2008 after a restoration work done in partnership with the NUS Department of Architecture and the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore. The Baba House was a gift from Ms Agnes Tan to the University to encourage appreciation of Straits Chinese social history and material culture, as well as, for the study of modern architectural styles, urban change and conservation efforts in Singapore. A Gallery on the third floor of the House hosts temporary exhibitions, encouraging academic researchers and art practitioners to present fresh perspectives on themes of cultural encounters, hybridity and their contemporary implications.

For a university museum, ASEMUS is an important platform of engagement sustained by its fundamental purpose of fostering ties between institutions and museum communities across two continents. With dialogue as a critical basis for such interactions, ASEMUS provides an environment that values diverse perspectives and the meeting of such perspectives, facilitating initiatives that critically examine global cultural encounters from the civilisational to the contemporary, expressed as ways of sustaining mutual regard and productive cooperation.

Collections: The Museum has over 7,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The Lee Kong Chian collection showcases Chinese art covering a span of some 7,000 years of culture and civilisation. Through the collection, the student of Chinese art is able to trace its development from the beginning of civilisation in Neolithic times to the early- and mid-twentieth centuries, and over China's vast and diverse geography. The artworks in the collection are mainly classified under ceramics, painting and calligraphy, bronze and sculpture.

The South & Southeast Asian collection encompasses materials from the classical traditions as well as modern trends and consists of ceramics, textiles, sculptures and paintings & drawings. This collection primarily was initiated as a teaching resource in 1955, the South and Southeast Asian Collection comprises paintings, classical and modern sculptures, textiles and ceramics. The collection is well represented by works of émigré painters such as Chen Wen Hsi, Cheong Soo Pieng and Liu Kang as well as early works of later generation of Singapore and Malaysian modern artists. Hindu and Buddhist classical sculptures, Southeast Asian ceramics and textiles and Chinese trade ceramics complete the collection.

The Ng Eng Teng collection spans 45 years of continuous activity by Ng Eng Teng (1934 – 2001), Singapore’s most important modern sculptor. Included in the collection are sculptures, ceramics forms, marquettes, paintings and drawings, donated by the artist to facilitate research and interests into materials, processes, and artistic development.

The Straits Chinese collection is located at Baba House (157 Neil Road), a typical Singaporean shophouse built around 1900s. Restored by a team of architectural and heritage experts, the building provides a typical example of the ornate architectural and decorative features of a house that had belonged to a Straits Chinese family. Straits Chinese refers to descendents of earlier Chinese immigrants arriving in Southeast Asia as early as the late 15th century. Complementing the history of the House, fixtures and artefacts, forming the Straits Chinese collection, are conceptualised along an evolving perspective on material culture associated to the Straits Chinese around the 1920s, characterised by a tension between syncretism and identity.

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