

**Media Release**

**SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2019 WILL BE HELD FROM  
22 NOVEMBER 2019 TO 22 MARCH 2020**

Catch a Sneak Preview of SB2019 during Singapore Art Week 2019



*Zai Tang - Escape Velocity II, Image courtesy of Tuckys Photography*

**Singapore, 14 December 2018** – The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) today announced the Singapore Biennale will return for its sixth edition from 22 November 2019 to 22 March 2020. Commissioned by the National Arts Council and organised by SAM, the Singapore Biennale is the country's pre-eminent platform for international dialogue in contemporary art.

The Biennale is anticipated by art lovers and visitors as a highlight of Singapore's cultural calendar and is known for its thought-provoking art and meaningful exchange of ideas. The last edition in 2016 welcomed over 600,000 visitors, signalling a heightened interest among both local and international audiences in understanding the Southeast Asian region through contemporary art.

**Singapore Biennale 2019 Teaser**

During the upcoming Singapore Art Week 2019, SAM will offer a sneak preview of the Singapore Biennale 2019 (SB2019) through a Teaser event featuring SB2019 artists. Taking place on Saturday, 26 January 2019, the Teaser event will feature SAM curators and four contemporary artists in artist-curator talks, screenings and experimental performances throughout the afternoon and evening.

Organised by Singapore Art Museum | Commissioned by National Arts Council, Singapore  
Supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

### Artist-Curator Talks

SB2019 artists Dennis Tan (Singapore/Japan) and Vandy Rattana (Cambodia) will be in conversation with SAM curators. Tan will explore the possibility of rebuilding and racing a *Kolek*, a traditional Southeast Asian racing yacht, as well as the cultural, anthropological, and historical implications of reviving this traditional sport; while Vandy will delve into his philosophical approach to art-making and the technicalities of producing films in a rapidly-changing Khmer landscape.

### Screenings

SAM will also screen Vandy's moving image works *MONOLOGUE* and *Funeral*, set in Cambodia and centred around Khmer people, that show a deeply personal side to the themes of loss, trauma, death and the afterlife. *MONOLOGUE* focuses on a small plot of unmarked land where Vandy's sister and grandmother were discarded and buried, alongside five thousand others during the Khmer Rouge regime in 1978. *Funeral* follows up by considering the paradoxes of civilisation through a fictional narrative that references metaphors of life, death and rebirth.

### Experimental Performances

The Teaser event will end with a night of experimental performances blending sound and moving images by SB2019 artists Arnont Nongyao (Thailand) and Zai Tang (Singapore/UK). From using field recordings of creatures from various habitats in Singapore threatened by human-centred development, to reassembled archival footage and audio recordings of weekly markets in the northern part of Thailand, the performances provide a preview of the artists' proposed installations for the upcoming Biennale.

Patrick Flores, the Artistic Director of SB2019 says, "The practice of these artists conveys the energy of Singapore Biennale 2019. It responds to the need to reflect on the condition of our time and invites a broad public to do this in the always shifting, and thus always urgent, contexts of contemporary art. Sound, moving image, performance, research, technology, craft, and local knowledge come together in this festival-seminar event which I hope members of the public will be inspired to participate in."

More details about SB2019, including the title and direction, curatorial model, and venues, will be shared during Singapore Art Week 2019.

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Artist biographies and detailed information about the SB2019 Teaser are provided in Annex A and Annex B respectively. Images can be downloaded at <https://suttonpr.egnyte.com/fl/nITIKP5ZZj>.

#### **For further information, please contact:**

**Nana Lee**

Sutton

DID: +852 2528 0792

Email: [nana@suttonpr.com](mailto:nana@suttonpr.com)

**Amelia Chong**

Singapore Art Museum

DID: +65 6697 9753

Email: [amelia.chong@singaporeartmuseum.sg](mailto:amelia.chong@singaporeartmuseum.sg)

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## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About the Singapore Biennale**

The Singapore Biennale was established in 2006 as the country's pre-eminent platform for international dialogue in contemporary art. It presents and reflects the vigour of artistic practices in Singapore and the region within a global context, and fosters productive collaborations and deep engagement with artists, arts organisations, and the international arts community.

The Singapore Biennale cultivates public engagement with contemporary art through a four-month exhibition, and its accompanying public engagement and education programmes that include artist and curator talks and tours, school visits and workshops, and community days. It complements achievements in other areas of arts and culture, collectively enhancing Singapore's international profile as a vibrant city in which to live, work and play. The 2006 and 2008 editions of the Biennale were organised by the National Arts Council. The NAC commissioned the Singapore Art Museum to organise the 2011, 2013 and 2016 editions. SAM will continue to do so for Singapore Biennale 2019 and 2022.

### **About the Singapore Art Museum**

Singapore Art Museum is a contemporary art museum which focuses on art-making and art-thinking in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia, encompassing a worldwide perspective on contemporary art practice. SAM advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through researched and evolving curatorial practice.

Since it opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes, and to deepen every visitor's experience. These include outreach and education, research and publications, as well as cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges. SAM occupies two buildings: the old St Joseph's Institution on Bras Basah Road, built in 1855 and now a National Monument; and SAM at 8Q, a conservation building across the road on Queen Street that was the old Catholic High School. The museum building along Bras Basah Road is currently closed in preparation for a major building revamp, with museum programming continuing at SAM at 8Q and partner venues.

SAM was the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011, 2013 and 2016. SAM will continue to organise the next two editions in 2019 and 2022. SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013, operating under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. To find out more, visit [www.singaporeartmuseum.sg](http://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg)

### **About the National Arts Council**

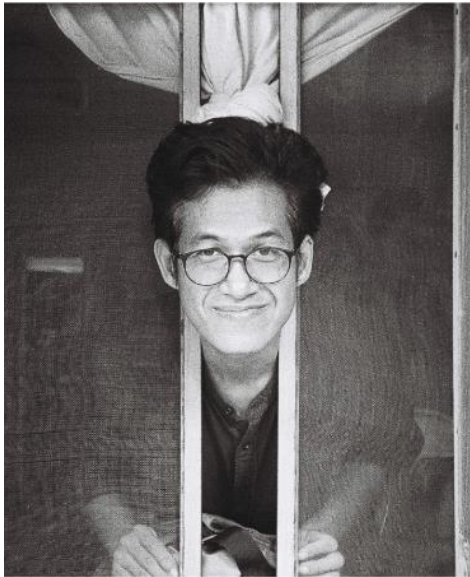
The National Arts Council champions the arts in Singapore. By nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement, our diverse and distinctive arts inspire our people, connect communities and profile Singapore internationally. We preserve our rich, cultural traditions as we cultivate accomplished artists and vibrant companies for the future. Our support for the arts is comprehensive – from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing. The Council welcomes greater private and corporate giving to and through the arts, so that together we can make the arts an integral part of everyone's lives. For more information on the Council's mission and plans, please visit [www.nac.gov.sg](http://www.nac.gov.sg).

### **Annex A: Singapore Biennale 2019 Artist Biographies**

### **Annex B: Singapore Biennale 2019 Teaser Event Details**

### **Annex C: About Singapore Art Week**

## Annex A: Singapore Biennale 2019 - Artist Biographies



*Image courtesy of Nguyen Ngoc Tu Dung*

### **Arnont Nongyao (Thailand)**

Arnont Nongyao has been interested and research into sound with concentration on vibration. Most of his works are experimental. They are a search of a relation between things, including objects, human beings and society. They are also connected with the mode of listening/hearing in a social situation, and with how people interact with and participate in sound. Another crucial characteristic of his works is that it always created from a limitation of technology rather than the advancement of technology, which underlines human creativity.

Some of his selected exhibitions include solo exhibition "Another Sound" co-work with Khvay Loeung, Sa Sa Art projects, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (2018); "Unstable(ry) Life", Manif d'art, Quebec, Canada (2016); and TRANCE at Gallery VER, Bangkok, Thailand (2014). He has participated in international biennales such as 16th Media Art Biennale WRO, Poland (2015), and the 1st Bangkok Art Biennale, Thailand (2018).



*Image courtesy of Bandiddh Prum*

### **Vandy Rattana (Cambodia)**

Born in Cambodia in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge and having grown up in Phnom Penh, Vandy Rattana portrays episodes of historical violence through understated and tranquil images. He began his photography practice in 2005, and his recent works mark a shift in philosophy surrounding the relationship between historiography and image making.

For Vandy, photographs are now fictional constructions, abstract and poetic surfaces, histories of their own. Since the photographic work and documentary *Bomb Ponds* (2009), in which his photos of bomb craters articulate the psychological wounds of Cambodians who survived bombings by the U.S. forces between 1964 and 1973, Vandy has been scanning the idyllic Cambodian countryside with his viewfinders and revealing its traumatic past. He became interested in film-making in 2014 and has been working on a film trilogy since then.



*Image courtesy of Dennis Tan*

**Dennis Tan (Singapore/Japan)**

Dennis Tan (b. 1975, Singapore) graduated with a Diploma in Painting, Bachelor in Environmental Design, and a Master in Architecture.

Approaching his practice of boat building as 'building-without-a-plan', Tan's practice grounds itself in the sensibilities of the common man – approaching the subject with naïve curiosity, he is informed by process and derives new material understanding through the act of object making.

He has exhibited in Singapore, Australia, and Korea. He is the founder of HAROU, the atelier for his ongoing artistic and architectural endeavours.



*Image courtesy of NTU CCA*

**Zai Tang (Singapore/United Kingdom)**

Zai Tang (b. 1984, SG / UK) experiments with the abstraction and visualisation of field recordings from natural environments under threat, as a means of responding to the spectre of mass extinction. Transformed from their original state these sounds are combined with other elements – drawing, animation, projection and / or performance – to create immersive and reflexive experiences that give primacy to listening and explore notions of awareness and connection between the human and the nonhuman.

Collaboratively Zai works as a composer, sound designer and musician across different context; from contemporary dance and film to architecture and visual art installations. Recent exhibitions and collaborations include: Escape Velocity I, 2nd Yinchuan Biennale, China (2018); Spectres, SIFA, Singapore (2017), Resident Frequencies, National Gallery Singapore (2017); Bits & Pieces, Danspace Project, New York (2018) with Emmanuèle Phuon; The Ground: From the Land to the Sea, NTU CCA Singapore (2018) for Tarek Atoui; Railtrack Songmaps Roosting Post 1, Singapore (2018) with Migrant Ecologies.

## Annex B: Singapore Biennale 2019 Teaser Event Details

**Sat, 26 Jan 2019**

**Singapore Biennale 2019 Teaser**

SAM at 8Q Plaza | 4PM - 9PM

Get a sneak peek into the upcoming Singapore Biennale with a teaser line-up of panel discussions, art film screenings and experimental performances by contemporary artists.



*Image courtesy of Dennis Tan*

**In Conversation: Singapore Biennale Artist, Dennis Tan with SAM Curator, John Tung**

SAM at 8Q Plaza | 4PM | Free with ticketed registration

The *Kolek* is a traditional Southeast Asian racing yacht that was once a common sight off the coast of Singapore. Exploring the possibility of rebuilding a *Kolek* and sailing it to the Riau Islands for racing is *Singapore Biennale 2019* artist, Dennis Tan. Join him and SAM Curator, John Tung in this conversation, as they dive into the reasons and impetus behind his proposal, while also examining the cultural, anthropological, and historical implications of reviving this traditional sport.

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*MONOLOGUE* - Image courtesy of Vandy Rattana

**Screenings: *MONOLOGUE* and *Funeral* by Vandy Rattana**

SAM at 8Q, Level 2 Moving Image Gallery | 5PM | Free with ticketed registration

*Singapore Biennale 2019* artist Vandy Rattana's presents *MONOLOGUE* and *Funeral*, set in Cambodia and centred around Khmer people, that show a deeply personal side to the themes of loss, trauma, death and the afterlife.

Uncover the story behind *MONOLOGUE*, through Rattana's documentation of a small plot of unmarked land where his sister and grandmother were discarded and buried alongside five thousand others during the Khmer Rouge regime in 1978.

As a follow-up to the themes explored in *MONOLOGUE*, the screening of *Funeral* looks at the paradoxes of civilisation through a fictional narrative that will leave you thinking about the metaphors of life, death and rebirth.

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*Funeral - Image courtesy of Vandy Rattana*

**In Conversation: Singapore Biennale Artist, Vandy Rattana with SAM Curator, Andrea Fam**  
SAM at 8Q, Level 2 Moving Image Gallery | 6PM | Free with ticketed registration

After the screening, join Rattana, and SAM Curator, Andrea Fam, in this insightful conversation where conceptual topics such as the artist's philosophical approach to art-making and technical considerations around working within the moving image in a rapidly-changing Khmer landscape will be discussed.

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*Zai Tang - Escape Velocity II, Image courtesy of Tuckys Photography*

**Experimental Performances by Zai Tang & Arnont Nongyao**  
SAM at 8Q Plaza | 7.30PM - 9PM | Free

Immerse yourself in a night of experimental performances blending sound and moving images by artists Zai Tang and Arnont Nongyao. From using field recordings of the 'voices' of creatures from various habitats in Singapore threatened by human-centered development, to reassembled archival footage and audio recording of weekly markets in the northern part of Thailand, these sneak peeks to both artists' proposed installation for the upcoming *Singapore Biennale* are not to be missed! Both artists will wrap up the performance with an improv jamming session.

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## **Annex C: About Singapore Art Week**

A joint initiative by the National Arts Council, the Singapore Tourism Board and the Singapore Economic Development Board, Singapore Art Week reinforces Singapore's position as Asia's leading visual arts destination. In its seventh edition in 2019, held from January 19-27, the nine-day celebration of the visual arts takes place in venues across Singapore, from galleries and museums to art precincts and non-profit spaces.

Reaching out to both Singapore residents and international visitors to promote art appreciation, Singapore Art Week offers a myriad of quality art experiences which span the visual arts, from traditional to modern to contemporary practices. Audiences can look forward to art fairs, gallery openings, exhibitions, lifestyle events, public art walks, and enriching discussions on art and culture. Singapore Art Week also aims to galvanise the arts sector to launch innovative art and lifestyle concepts and events in conjunction with art events during this period.

<https://www.artweek.sg/>

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