

# LEARNING GALLERY

## EDUCATORS' RESOURCE

This resource is designed for educators with the aim of fostering meaningful discussions on contemporary art between them and their students.

## DAVID CHAN

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This educators' resource is designed for use with students before, during and after your visit to the Learning Gallery at the Singapore Art Museum.

It shares key concepts and ideas associated with the exhibition to facilitate your visit and complements lessons conducted in school. This includes suggested guiding questions and activities that students may explore in the gallery, at home or in class, wherever relevant.

You may customise your visit by choosing your own preferred exhibition route.

For additional support, please refer to the additional notes for educators and facilitators when addressing the social and emotional learning aspects of the artworks during your discussion.

# INTRODUCTION

# LEARNING GALLERY

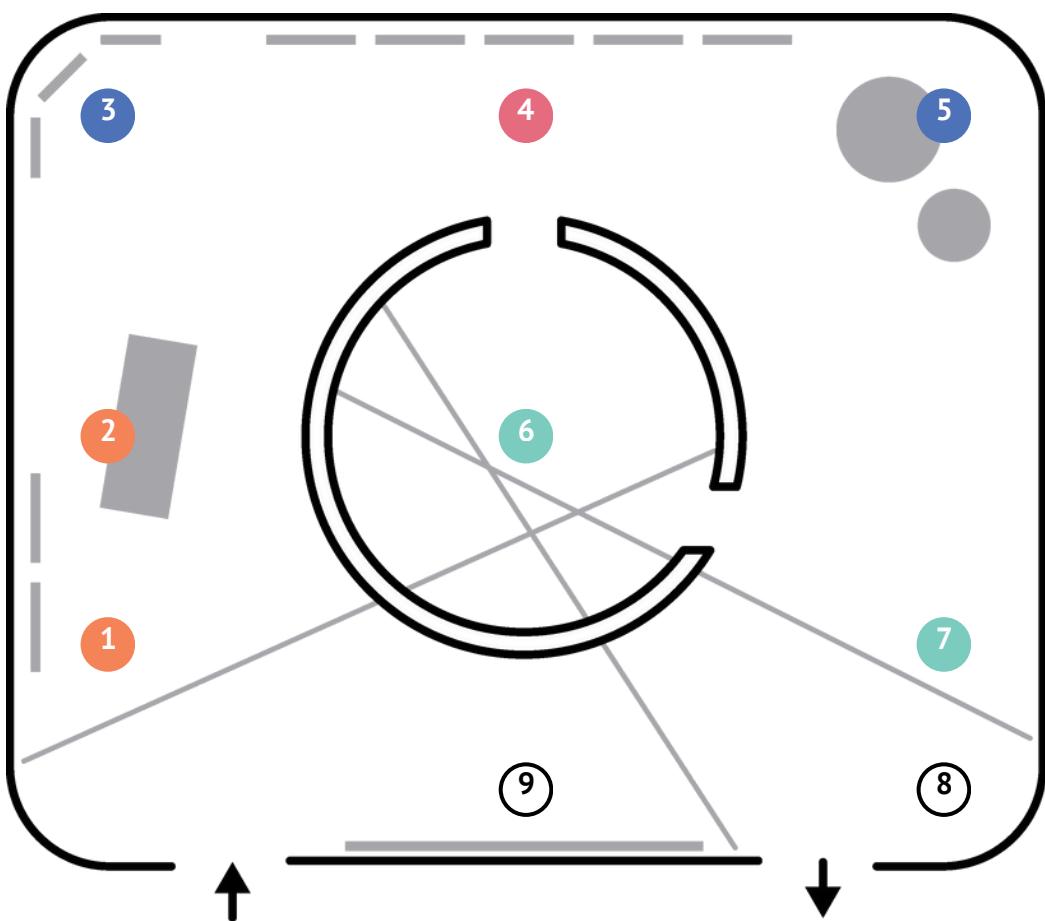
Art and childhood share a natural connection.

Both involve freedom, curiosity and fearless exploration. Many of us first create art as children, a time when we learn about the world and shape our emotions, beliefs and memories. What if we could return to that childlike spirit, open to discovery and unafraid to try something new?

This second edition of the Learning Gallery invites you to look beyond the everyday. Explore possibilities, experiment with different ideas and materials, and venture outside the familiar.

The artworks here span diverse mediums and explore themes of identity, home, nature and the environment, people and places, space and memory. They ask meaningful questions about life and inspire new ways of seeing and understanding contemporary art.

# EXHIBITION LAYOUT



<b>1</b> HAN SAI POR <i>Shelter</i> <i>Land Deterioration</i>	<b>5</b> EZZAM RAHMAN <i>Here's who I am, I am what you see</i>
<b>2</b> HAN SAI POR <i>Black Forest</i>	<b>6</b> CHEN SAI HUA KUAN <i>Space Drawing 5</i>
<b>3</b> DAVID CHAN <i>Animal Roulette</i>	<b>7</b> CHEN SAI HUA KUAN <i>Space Drawing 14</i>
<b>4</b> NGUAN <i>Untitled, from</i> <i>the series 'Singapore'</i>	<b>8</b> PROGRAMMES CORNER <i>Cloud Library</i> <i>RE-Material</i>
	<b>9</b> INTERACTIVE WALL

# ARTIST

# DAVID CHAN

b. 1979, Singapore

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

David Chan is a Singaporean contemporary artist whose practice focuses on capturing human nature and presenting thought-provoking social commentary. His distinctive voice has earned him numerous accolades, including recognitions at both the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> UOB Painting of the Year competitions.

His artworks have been exhibited across China, the United States, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Chan is also a passionate full-time arts educator. He currently lectures at the National Institute of Education and Nanyang Technological University. He also plays an important role in nurturing emerging talent as an Artist Mentor with the National Arts Council and as a Pathfinder with the Ministry of Education Singapore.

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# ARTWORK



Installation view of David Chan's *Animal Roulette* (2005) as part of the Learning Gallery at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark.  
Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

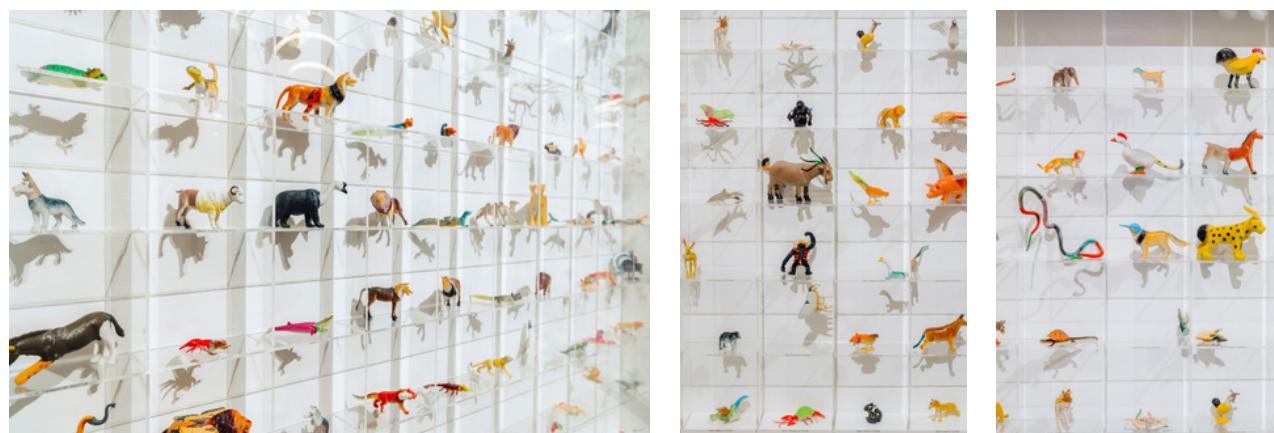
## **Animal Roulette**

2005

Plastic toy animals, glue, acrylic dividers and cover, wooden box, and printed plastic name labels

Gift of Mark Goh & Guillaume Levy-Lambert, the MaGMA Collection

Collection of Singapore Art Museum



Detail view of David Chan's *Animal Roulette* (2005) as part of the Learning Gallery at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark.  
Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

# ARTWORK

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## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

- As one of his earlier artworks, *Animal Roulette* explores the idea of genetic engineering. To express this idea, David Chan uses simple cutting and pasting techniques to take apart toy animals to create endless, new hybrid creatures.
- From over 2,000 rubber animals, the artist created 500 distinct, mythical creatures by randomly combining components, ensuring no two hybrid creatures were alike. *Animal Roulette* showcases a collection of imaginary hybrid creatures inspired by the colours, shapes, forms and stories of animals.
- Like a game of chance, the artwork has created many different and surprising combinations of animals. The artist wanted to find new ways to make art beyond just painting.
- If you look carefully, each creature has its own unique name and identity. This invites people to think about how different identities can live together, even if they are all part of one big collection of living things. This is similar to how in Singapore, people can share common areas in HDB estates, or any high-rise apartments.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- The font used to name each creature is based on the font used in Singapore's National Registration Identity Card, or NRIC.
- Chan does have a favourite creature within this series. It is inspired by the Bahamut creature from the Final Fantasy video game.

# PRE-VISIT QUESTIONS

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## DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH A PARTNER

Animals have been fascinating to mankind for thousands of years. This can be seen from early cave paintings to contemporary sculptures.

- How and why do artists use animals as a subject to represent complex ideas, emotions and stories in their work?
- The diversity of animals contributes to the overall health of the Earth. Each species has a unique role to play. What will the world be like if animals started to change and become more like each other?
- How does belonging to multiple cultures or groups shape a person's identity?
- In what ways can someone hold more than one identity at the same time?
- In many myths and stories, there are creatures that are part human, part animal, like centaurs. What can such creatures show us about the different parts of our own identities and how we understand who we are?
- Think about your earliest memories with your favourite toys! When you were younger, was there a time when you gave your favourite toy a name and personality?

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# VIEW AND DISCUSS

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## OBSERVE THE ARTWORK

- Look closely at the artwork. Which creature were you first drawn to? Why?
- Do you see hybrid creatures with spikes and horns? How about creatures with feathers or fur? What about parts of the animals that belong to fictional characters like dragons?
- What if you were made from two or more animals, which ones would you choose?
- What personality traits from each of the animals on display best represent you?
- Pick one creature from *Animal Roulette*. If this creature could speak, what would its voice sound like? What stories would it share about its childhood?
- Chan was inspired by genetic engineering as a concept and framework for *Animal Roulette*, but did not perform direct genetic modifications to any living organism. Discuss the ethical implications if an artist creates an artwork that uses actual genetic modification of living organisms.
- Artists who use the cut and paste technique usually work in collage. Discuss the similarities and differences between assemblage versus collage.

# REFLECT

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## CONNECT - EXTEND - CHALLENGE

- Have you ever taken an object apart just to see how it worked? What is something you noticed?

Now, think about yourself today, in the Learning Gallery...

When a toy animal is taken apart, its identity can become lost.

- What do you think happens when familiar items begin to lose their meaning?
- Can you think of any examples for everyday life?

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# POST-VISIT QUESTIONS

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- Think about your visit to the Learning Gallery and your interaction with *Animal Roulette*.
- How did the artwork make you think differently about the materials you typically use to be creative? Do you think you will begin to look at everyday objects in new ways?
- Did the artists' process of slicing, rearranging and rebuilding these hybrid animals make you reflect on how we build our own identities?
- What is one thing you now know or feel about creativity, identity, or materials that you didn't think before visiting the museum?

Chan is best known for his paintings. Let's explore some of his other artworks. What are some similarities or differences between the painting and *Animal Roulette*?



Image courtesy of the artist.

## ***This little pig couldn't go home***

2003

Oil on canvas

135 cm x 100 cm

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

# POST-VISIT QUESTIONS

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## LET'S LEARN!

- *This little pig couldn't go home* is one of the artist's earliest paintings about genetic engineering.
- This painting was inspired by the science fiction movie entitled *Gattaca* (1997). In the film, genetically modified humans are seen as better than normal humans. Those born naturally are considered less important and face unfair treatment in society.
- Chan's painting tells a story about a small regular piglet who is being left out by its own family. The blue pigs have been genetically modified, and the regular piglet is seen as different simply because it is natural.
- What do you notice about how the pigs are arranged in the painting? How does this help tell the story of rejection or exclusion?
- How does the expression or body language of the pink piglet help you to understand its emotions?

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# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

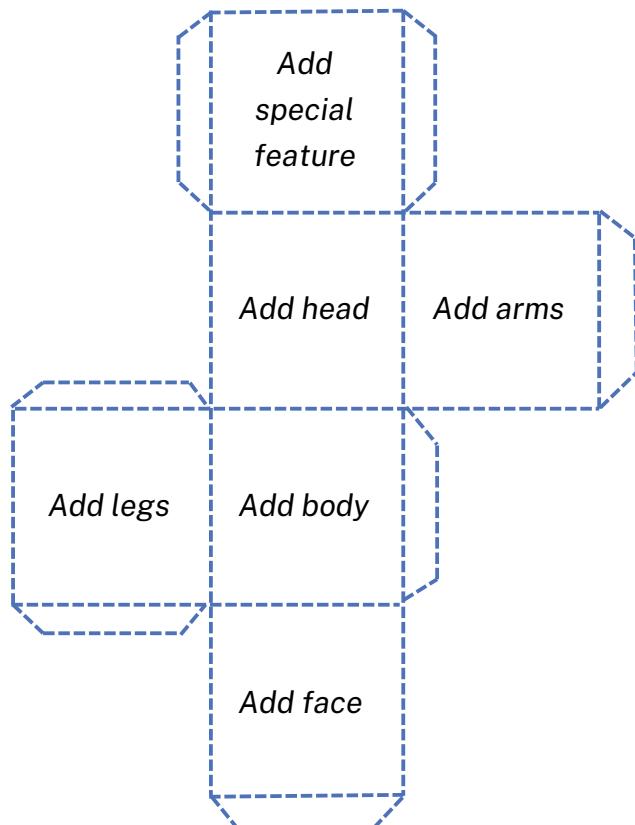


## HYBRID CREATURES LAB

#SCIENCE #ART #DESIGN

Embark on an exciting journey to design your own hybrid creature by following the steps below!

- Cut out the die below to build your own Hybrid Creatures Lab mix-and-match machine!
- Work in a group and take turns rolling the die. Each roll reveals a new animal part. Pick up the first part you find that matches the instructions on the die face you rolled and claim it for your own unique hybrid. You may even use the toy animals in the Learning Gallery.
- Be inspired by this random animal head, body, legs or tail! Think about your favourite animals, fascinating machines, or even quirky everyday objects that could be combined with this toy to create a new hybrid creature.



# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

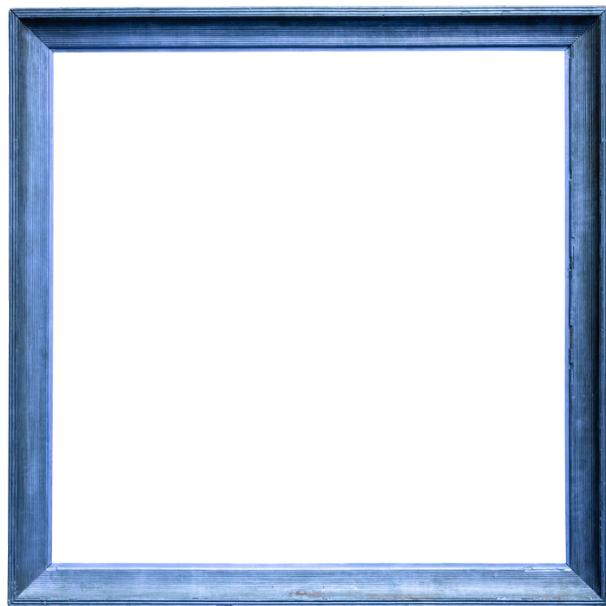


## HYBRID CREATURES LAB

#SCIENCE #ART #DESIGN

In the space below, draw and label your newly imagined creature.

Your design must include at least three parts from different organisms that give your hybrid unique features to help it move, survive, or do something that no ordinary animal can!



**My creature's name is**

It lives in \_\_\_\_\_ and eats \_\_\_\_\_

**Superpower 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ (What makes your hybrid unique?)

(It was originally part of a \_\_\_\_\_ !)

**Superpower 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ (What cool ability does it have?)

(It was originally part of a \_\_\_\_\_ !)

**Superpower 3:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Describe a hidden skill!)

(It was originally part of a \_\_\_\_\_ !)

# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



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## ANIMAL ADVENTURES

#ENGLISH #SCIENCE

### Where does your hybrid creature live?

Now that you've created your hybrid creature, imagine your hybrid creatures' abilities and describe the perfect or perfectly terrible environment for it in no more than three sentences.

Does it have wings to soar high in the sky, would it be hidden underneath piles of soil, cooling off in the hot tropics or would it be flowing with the waves in the deep blue sea?

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### Describe Its Home

Now that you've picked your creatures surroundings, it's time to paint its home with words!

In no more than three sentences, describe the habitat of your hybrid creature. Use descriptive language to help convey what your creature would see and feel.

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## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**



# ANIMAL ADVENTURES

#ENGLISH #SCIENCE

## A Day in the Life

What does a typical day in the life of your creature look like?

What challenges does your creature face and what little joys does it enjoy through the day?

Write a short story about a day in their life from your creature's perspective.

# FIND OUT MORE!

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## ARTIST

Chan, David. *Artist Website*. Silent Studio. <https://silentstudio.com/>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *2022 UOB Painting of the Year – David Chan (Artist Film)*. YouTube video, 2022.  
<https://youtu.be/SighJQyGIYA?feature=shared>.
- *Utama's Kitty*. Singapore Art Museum.  
[https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/Learn/Education-and-Access-Programmes/SAM-Touch-Collection/\\_Local/Utamas-Kitty](https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/Learn/Education-and-Access-Programmes/SAM-Touch-Collection/_Local/Utamas-Kitty).
- *Utama's Kitty (Video)*. YouTube video.  
<https://youtu.be/2UHp7x-XA9Y?feature=shared>.

# ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR EDUCATOR / FACILITATOR

**If a student is feeling uncomfortable when talking about their emotions, you may consider the following suggested approaches:**

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGE AND VALIDATE THEIR EMOTIONS

*Let the participant know that you are concerned about their wellbeing.*

- Verbal: “I hear you’re feeling overwhelmed. It’s okay to feel this way.”
- Non-verbal: Make eye contact, nod empathetically, and show that you’re listening attentively.

## 2. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

*Allow the participant to talk about their experiences (and beliefs) if they want to, but do not force them.*

- Verbal: “What was that like for you?” or “Can you tell me more about...?”

## 3. PARAPHRASE TO CLARIFY

*Restate what you believe they are saying in your own words to ensure you are understanding their experience correctly.*

- Verbal: “It seems like you were frightened and worried.”

## 4. OFFER A BREAK

- Verbal: “Would you like to take a short break?”
- Non-verbal: Gesture towards a door or a quiet area.

## 5. CHECK-IN PRIVATELY

- Verbal: “If you'd like to talk about this further, we can have a private conversation later.”
- Non-verbal: Discreetly approach the participant after the session.

## 6. GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

- Verbal: “Can I offer you some grounding techniques? Perhaps focusing on your breath or the sensations in your body might help.”
- Non-verbal: Demonstrate deep breathing exercises or guide the participant through the technique.

## 7. ADJUST THE PACE

- Verbal: “Let's slow down for a moment. We can revisit this topic later if you're feeling more comfortable.”

## 8. SHIFT THE FOCUS

- Verbal: “Perhaps we could shift our focus to a different topic for now and come back to this later.”

## 9. GET HELP IF NEEDED.

*If the participant is in distress, do not hesitate to get help from a fellow teacher or school counsellor.*

- Verbal: “I'm concerned about your well-being. Would you like me to get help from another teacher or a counsellor?”

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