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SCDA ARCHITECTS APPOINTED FOR SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM'S REVAMP

Archaeological investigations prior to revamp will be open for public viewing

SINGAPORE, 5 April 2018 – Internationally renowned SCDA Architects have been appointed to manage the redevelopment of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) buildings, following an announcement of the revamp in April 2017¹ by Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu. An open tender for the project was called in September 2017 and closed in December 2017, with SCDA Architects winning the bid. Past SCDA Architects projects include the National Design Centre, Singapore. Refer to [Annex A](#) for more details.

SAM currently occupies two separate buildings – the former St Joseph's Institution (SJI) along Bras Basah Road - a gazetted National Monument, and the former Catholic High School, located along Queen Street. The redevelopment plans include the creation of a fully contiguous museum, more spaces to accommodate museum-based learning opportunities, as well as the infrastructure to display large-scale or technologically-demanding artworks.

SAM's museum programming continues to take place at SAM at 8Q till end of January 2019, including the 2018 edition of *Imaginarium* in May and *President's Young Talents* in October, as well as at external venues, such as the triennial *Signature Art Prize* at the National Museum of Singapore in May. Thereafter, members of the public can look forward to pop-up contemporary art projects at partner venues, as well as co-curated and touring exhibitions by SAM. More details about the plans will be shared in the coming months.

Archaeological investigations and Singapore Heritage Festival events at SAM

Prior to the commencement of the building works, a series of archaeological activities will take place at the former SJI building during *Singapore Heritage Festival 2018*, as part of the National Monument's bid to deepen the public's understanding of its history, which dates back to 1855.

¹ Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu announced on 1 April 2017 that the Singapore Art Museum buildings will undergo a major revamp to address the growing needs of contemporary art in Singapore. The funding for the revamp is supported by Tote Board.

An archaeological investigation will be conducted by the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Archaeology Unit, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, around the premises of the former SJI building. This will be complemented by an exhibition detailing the process of conducting archaeology – from site evaluations to post-excavation research and analysis, so that visitors can better understand the work and processes behind archaeology. This archaeological investigation is undertaken to determine the archaeological significance of SAM as a historical site, investigate the possible presence of archaeological materials and ascertain if any further steps are necessary before building works commence. The investigation is especially important as the site is located right outside the walls of ancient Temasek. It may also reveal more about the histories and usage of the site, which prior to the construction of the building in 1855, was the site of the earliest Roman Catholic chapel in Singapore.

Other archaeology-related activities which will take place at SAM as part of the *Singapore Heritage Festival 2018* include free daily tours, immersive theatrical tours, as well as talks and meet-and-greet sessions with the archaeology team, all of which are co-organised with the National Heritage Board and ISEAS. Refer to [Annex B and C](#) for more details.

Immersive theatrical tours featuring the stories of the SAM building

In another exploration of the 160-year-old National Monument's history, Singapore Art Museum presents a series of theatrical tours that will allow members of public a final chance to explore the building before the revamp. Actor-tour guides will take on the personas of the people (and ghost) who have inhabited the building, guiding visitors through restricted areas at SAM as they perform stories inspired by true stories.

Besides the Excavations Theatrical Tours, a specially-produced Excavations Kit delves deeper into the building's secrets through activity pages and a booklet of stories by SJI alumni, security guards and museum staff. The Excavations Kit and 'Book of Mythologies' are available for sale at the vending machines located at the SAM Curve (area outside the former Dome restaurant), at \$45 and \$20 respectively.

The programme and Excavations Kits are commissioned by SAM, conceptualised by Koh Hui Ling and Chong Tze Chien, and produced by Ctrl Fre@k, with the support of National Heritage Board. Refer to [Annex D](#) for more details.

SAM corporatised on 13 November 2013, and is widely recognised as an art museum that champions the contemporary art practices of leading and emerging artists from Singapore and the region. SAM's museum programming currently takes place at SAM at 8Q and other partner venues, and from January 2019 onwards, will be held in other museums, institutions and community spaces. For more information on upcoming exhibitions and programmes, please visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

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Attached annexes:

Annex A – About SCDA Architects

Annex B – Calendar of Archaeological activities at SAM

Annex C – About the Archaeological activities at SAM

Annex D – About the Excavations Kit and 'Book of Mythologies' Booklet

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About the Singapore Art Museum

The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) 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 research-led 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.

In 2011, SAM was the venue organiser of the Singapore Biennale, becoming the main organiser in 2013 and 2016. 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

About the 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.

About Singapore Heritage Festival

The *Singapore Heritage Festival (SHF)* is the National Heritage Board's annual signature outreach programme. A festival for the people, by the people, *SHF* is a fun and meaningful celebration of Singapore's shared heritage and culture. *SHF* also brings together different individuals and communities to co-create programmes for the festival, thus strengthening community ownership over our shared heritage.

SHF was launched in 2004, and is currently in its 15th year. Over the years, the festival has offered Singaporeans a platform to explore and discover lesser-known aspects of Singapore's heritage and culture through specially-curated exhibitions, heritage trails, open houses, and more.

About the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

The Archaeology Unit (AU) was formed in 2010 and pursues projects designed to foster collaborative research in the archaeology of civilization in Southeast Asia, and its links with its neighbours in Asia. It is a part of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. In Singapore the AU conducts excavations concentrating on the material culture of the period from 1300 to 1600, but also maintains an interest in the lives of Singapore's inhabitants during the colonial period

of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The AU also collaborates with institutions in the Asia and Pacific regions to conduct research and training, and to disseminate reports on archaeological research. Please visit <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/archaeologyunit.cfm> for more information.

Annex A – About SCDA Architects

Soo K. Chan is the founding principal and design director of SCDA, a design studio seamlessly integrating architecture, interior design, landscape architecture and product design to create holistic spatial experiences. SCDA has offices in Singapore, Shanghai and New York. The firm has designed in over 70 locations across Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania and North America. Soo Chan and SCDA are recipients of three Royal Institute of British Architects International prizes, the President's Design Award, the SIA-Getz Prize for Emerging Architecture, and nine Chicago Athenaeum awards. SCDA and its projects have been published in international journals and periodicals, and were presented at the Venice Biennale. Soo Chan obtained his Master of Architecture degree at Yale. In addition to his design practice, he is a Professor of Architecture at the National University of Singapore and has taught and lectured at several international architecture schools.

SCDA projects are well known for holistic spaces ranging from cultural institutions to high-end luxury condominiums and hotel projects, globally and in Singapore. These include the National Design Centre, SkyTerrace@Dawson, The Marq, TwentyOne Angullia and InterContinental Hotel Singapore Robertson Quay. Notable international projects include Soori High Line, New York; Soori Bali, Indonesia; The Sanya EDITION, Sanya; and Lalu Hotel, Nanjing.

Annex B – Calendar of Archaeological activities at SAM

Event	Dates	Time	Venue	Admission Fee
Excavations Theatrical Tours	6-12-15 April 2018	7:30pm-9pm; 9:30pm-11pm	SAM	\$35
Live Dig: Don't Feed the Archaeologists	6-8, 11-15 & 18-22 April 2018	10am-5pm	SAM	Free
Meet and Greet an Archaeologist	7, 14, 21 April 2018	10am-12pm; 4pm-5:30pm	SAM Front Porch	Free
<i>Archaeology of Downtown Singapore – A Specialist Talk with archaeologist Lim Chen Sian</i>	7 April 2018	2pm-3:30pm	SAM Glass Hall	Free, ticket registration required
<i>What is Singapore's History? A Specialist Talk with Dr John Kwok</i>	14 April 2018	2pm-3:30pm	SAM Glass Hall	Free, ticket registration required
<i>A History of the Singapore Arts Precinct and its Art Museum at the Former St Joseph's Institution – A Specialist Talk with Dr Imran Tajudeen</i>	21 April 2018	2pm-3:30pm	SAM Glass Hall	Free, ticket registration required
Archaeology and Architecture Tour at SAM	6-22 April 2018 (except Saturdays)	11am	SAM	Free

Annex C – About the Archaeological activities at SAM

EXCAVATIONS Theatrical Tours at SAM

Dates: 6 - 8 & 12 - 15 April 2018

Time: 7:30pm - 9pm; 9:30pm - 11pm

Venue: SAM

Price: \$35

Tickets: <http://www.apactix.com/events/detail/excavations-theatrical-tours>

Join an immersive theatrical tour behind the closed doors of the main Singapore Art Museum building and uncover the many lives of the 160-year-old National Monument. The myriad of characters in these live skits by Drama Box, will reveal their tales as they guide you through restricted areas at SAM. A rare opportunity and a final chance for visitors who wish to find out what lurks behind the walls of SAM and experience parts of the museum before it undergoes a major revamp.

The EXCAVATIONS Theatrical Tours are commissioned by the Singapore Art Museum, conceptualised by Artistic Director Koh Hui Ling, playwright Chong Tze Chien, and produced by Ctrl Fre@k. Supported by National Heritage Board, held in conjunction with Singapore Heritage Festival.

Note to Audience:

Audience are advised to arrive at least 30 minutes before the tour time. Due to the nature of this tour, latecomers will not be admitted.

As this a walking tour, audience are advised to wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

For a more enjoyable experience, audience will be required to deposit their bags at the front of house.

Live Dig: Don't Feed the Archaeologists

Dates: 6 – 8 (Friday to Sunday), 11 – 15 (Wednesday to Sunday) & 18 – 22 April 2018 (Wednesday to Sunday)

Time: 10am – 5pm

Venue: Various spaces within the SAM-SJI Building compound

Admission: Free

Visit excavation pits on the SAM Front Lawn and observe how archaeologists work behind-the-scenes, as they uncover historical artefacts from years ago!

Meet and Greet an Archaeologist

Date: Saturdays, 7, 14, 21 April 2018

Time: 10am – 12pm & 4pm – 5:30pm

Venue: SAM Curve

Admission: Free

Have you met an archaeologist? Come speak with an archaeologist at SAM, discover the world through their eyes and have all your burning questions answered – about artifacts, cultural landscapes, biofacts or ecofacts!

Archaeology of Downtown Singapore – A Specialist Talk with Archaeologist Lim Chen Sian

Date: Saturday, 7 April 2018

Time: 2pm – 3:30pm

Venue: SAM Glass Hall

Admission: Free admission by registration.

Register: www.apactix.com/events/detail/archaeology-of-downtown-singapore

In popular imagination, archaeology is typified by dust-covered individuals excavating for wondrous artefacts from lost civilisations. Do you know exactly what archaeology truly is about and what the archaeology of downtown Singapore reveal? Join Mr Lim Chen Sian, Associate Fellow at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Archaeology Unit, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, in this specialist talk as he speaks on the scope of archaeologists and the processes behind the discipline!

What is Singapore's History? – A Specialist Talk with Dr John Kwok

Date: Saturday, 14 April 2018

Time: 2pm – 3:30pm

Venue: SAM Glass Hall

Admission: Free admission by registration.

Register: www.apactix.com/events/detail/what-is-singapores-history

Join Dr John Kwok, Research Fellow at RSiS, and former Assistant Director at the National Heritage Board (NHB) as he presents a cross-disciplinary talk on archaeology and history. Conventionally, the narrative of Singapore's history usually begins in 1819, the year when the British arrived to set up a settlement in Singapore. However, archaeological research, excavations, and cultural artefacts inform us that Singapore has a past that stretches well into the 14th century, in what is now called the Temasek Period. What does this mean for historians studying Singapore's past? This talk examines the interplay between history and archaeology, and reinterprets our past using archaeological information.

A History of the Singapore Arts Precinct and its Art Museum at the Former St Joseph's Institution – A Specialist Talk with Dr Imran Tajudeen

Date: Saturday, 21 April 2018

Time: 2pm to 3:30pm

Venue: SAM Glass Hall

Admission: Free admission by registration

Register: www.apactix.com/events/detail/a-history-of-the-singapore-arts-precinct-and-its-art-museum

In this specialist talk, Dr Imran Tajudeen, Assistant Professor at the NUS Department of Architecture will speak on Singapore Art Museum's transformation plans in connection with the histories of renovations, to buildings for art galleries. Join in the conversation, as he discusses on the old and new plans for the Bras Basah precinct.

Annex D – About the Excavations Kit and ‘Book of Mythologies’

Excavations Kit

Price: \$45

Venue of sale: Vending machines located at the SAM Curve (area outside the former Dome restaurant)

The Excavations Kit is a parcel of fictional documentary “artefacts”, which reveal the different facets, untold narratives, heritage and characters that have emerged from and around the former St Joseph’s Institution (SJI) building – a National Monument that is over 160 years old. Comprising a Mission File, a set of Discovered Letters and a Book of Mythologies, the kit was commissioned by SAM and produced in collaboration with Drama Box. Several current and former SAM staff, docents and SJI alumni were interviewed in the process. It is a limited print collectible and an educational guide which serves to celebrate the various facets of SAM as well as to challenge the way in which the recipient of these discoveries, explore and question the records of memories.

Book of Mythologies

Price: \$20

Venue of sale: Vending machines located at the SAM Curve (area outside the former Dome restaurant)

The *Book of Mythologies* is a logbook of untold personal stories, gathered from old school boys of St Joseph’s Institution to staff at SAM, that have emerged from and around the SAM buildings that were formerly the SJI and Catholic High School. Through the *Book of Mythologies*, readers may explore and question certain beliefs they have of and about art, places, as well as the stories and memories contained in these spaces.