

Hard at Work

Explore artworks in the Gallery's collection that showcase the people who worked hard to improve life in Singapore.

Construction of Chinese Chamber of Commerce by Loy Chye Chuan

Loy Chye Chuan captures the architecture of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce while it was under construction. The towering structure stands in stark contrast to the small figures of *Samsui* women labouring with their backs bent.



Loy Chye Chuan. *Construction of Chinese Chamber of Commerce*. 1963. Watercolour on paper, 50 x 37 cm. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

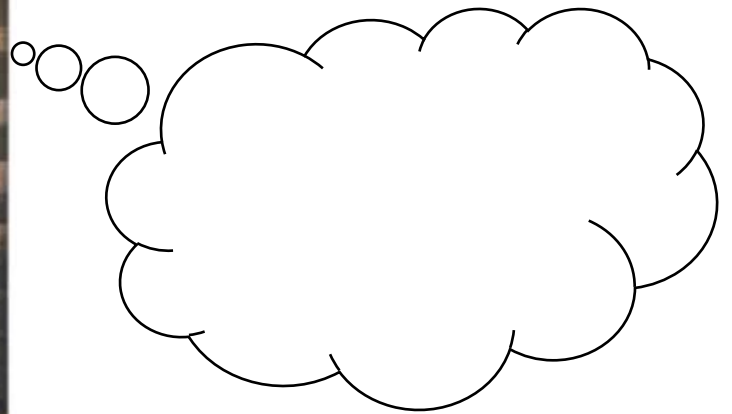
Such scenes of everyday life inspired many artists in Singapore during the 1950s and 1960s. These artists believed that art should reflect the world we live in.

TRY IT OUT!

Is there any construction happening around where you live? Paint the outline of a construction site in your neighbourhood or imagine what you think one might look like. Include any figures who might be hard at work.

Labourer (Lunch Break) by Lai Foong Moi

Look at this portrait of a worker on his lunch break. While he appears to be deep in thought, a *Samsui* woman in the background readies a pair of chopsticks to have her meal. What do you think is on their minds? Write it down below.



Lai Foong Moi. *Labourer (Lunch Break)*. 1965. Oil on canvas, 104 x 67 cm. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Samsui Woman by Lim Cheng Hoe

Lim Cheng Hoe made close observations of his subjects to ensure his works captured every detail. His pencil lines are free and expressive. Lim was good at controlling the medium to make a range of marks, from very light to heavy, dark strokes.



Lim Cheng Hoe. *Samsui Woman*. 1955. Ink on paper, 34.7 x 28 cm.
Gift of Michael Lim Hock Ann. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

Samsui women came from China to Singapore to work in construction.

They wore red head scarves as they worked, which is what made them so recognisable.

TRY IT OUT!

Using pen or pencil, sketch a person who is hard at work around your neighbourhood. It could be someone who sweeps the corridors, or someone that empties the trash. How do you think they might feel? What expressions do they have?

Draw a picture and write a message to thank the people who have worked hard to build the nation we have today.

