

MEDIA RELEASE

GALLERY CHILDREN'S BIENNALE CONTINUES TO EMPOWER CHILDREN TO LEARN THROUGH PLAY WITH LAUNCH OF PHYSICAL EXHIBITION

- *The much-awaited physical launch of the first ever “phygital” Gallery Children’s Biennale showcases nine installations guided by the inquiry, “Why Art Matters”*
- *Children can look forward to tactile experiences as they explore the immersive installations and maker spaces, play arcade machines, and attend storytelling sessions and workshops at National Gallery Singapore*



Singapore, 28 October 2021 – Following the successful launch of the digital format of Gallery Children’s Biennale in May 2021, National Gallery Singapore invites children to embark on an inspiring multi-sensory experience as they explore the on-site installations, from 6 November 2021.

Visitors can look forward to nine on-site art installations that complement the digital artworks first presented on the Biennale’s microsite, sharing similar themes and imagery. Guided by the inquiry, “*Why Art Matters*”, the artists seek to convey the importance of art during the unsettling times of the pandemic, through their artworks. The artworks all explore themes of *Home, Diversity, Environment* and *Time*, bringing to the fore relevant issues of today in an easy-to-understand manner for children.

For a complete hybrid festival experience and to double the fun, visitors are encouraged to participate in both realms – online and on-site. Both experiences of the artwork invite children to participate and co-create with international artists, with the on-site installations presenting immersive tactile experiences that are distinct from one’s experience with the online artworks. Children are encouraged to touch, move, and interact with the installations, fostering skills such as curiosity and critical thinking as they learn through play.

Anyone and everyone will be able to enjoy the Biennale in an exploratory manner while embarking on their unique Biennale art journey. The nine installations will be located at various public spaces around the Gallery, and access is free, without the need for a ticket.

The commissioned installations come from nine renowned artists and art groups from around the region: Dinh Q Lê (Vietnam), husband-and-wife duo Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan + Fruitjuice Factori (Philippines/Australia), Jeremy Sharma (Singapore), Joyce Ho (Taiwan), Khvay Samnang (Cambodia), Nandita Mukand (Singapore/India), Nona Garcia (Philippines), Sandra Lee (Singapore/Spain), and Speak Cryptic X ADDADDADD (Singapore).

Ms Suenne Megan Tan, Senior Director of Museum Planning & Audience Engagement at National Gallery Singapore says, “While digital platforms allow us to open up new possibilities, we acknowledge that physical experiences, are integral in engaging with our audiences. These in-person immersive encounters create an impactful and valuable experience that amplifies the positive role that art can play in nurturing critical thinking and building character in children. Together with the digital microsite, the complete experience of the “phygital” Biennale seeks to leverage the benefits of both digital and physical touchpoints to connect children with international artists and each other, as well as provide an enriching experience through art, in and beyond Singapore.”

An immersive on-site experience that inspires children through four timely topics

Home



Installation view of Head/Home by Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan + Fruitjuice Factori for Gallery Children's Biennale 2021

As part of their ongoing work, 'Project Another Country', art duo Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, and The Fruitjuice Factori Studio present the Singapore iteration at Gallery Children's Biennale 2021, titled *Head/Home*. Visitors are invited to walk through the impressive larger-than-life on-site installation, as if walking through a city. The installation was created using ready-made collection of houses and cardboard sculptures. Encouraging co-creation with the artists, the installation also features a makerspace for children to build their very own cardboard homes. Synonymous with the relocation of belongings and homes, the cardboard used to create this installation was collected by the artists from different migrant communities around the world as well as community groups in Singapore – tying together the movement of these migrant communities and the different notions of home and community with the symbolism of the material-

Diversity



Installation view of Illuminated by Nona Garcia for Gallery Children's Biennale 2021

An extension of the online work, Baguio-based artist, Nona Garcia's *Illuminated* features four life-sized landscape backgrounds which transport children into an other-worldly space. With an array of intriguing x-rayed bones, shells and fossils as magnets, children will be empowered to creatively express themselves and place these magnets anywhere on the backgrounds, creating their own sceneries of imagination and reflecting their unique perspectives. They may also view and add on to the creations by other children, co-creating artworks with them in real time, thus reflecting a diverse collection of stories as told by the artworks on the walls.

Environment



Installation view of Calling for Rain by Khvay Samnang for Gallery Children's Biennale 2021

Khvay Samnang's on-site installation of *Calling for Rain* welcomes visitors to enter an immersive viewing experience of the short film inspired by *Reamker*, the Cambodian version of the epic poem of Ramayana. The film takes us on a journey through the landscapes of Cambodia as it follows Kiri the Monkey on his quest to save the dying forest and its surrounding environment from the irresponsible behaviour of Aki the Fire Dragon. The story starts after he meets and falls in love with KongKea the Fish, and depicts the struggles he must overcome after the loss of his home in the forest. Housed in a space that resembles a Cambodian performance room, the installation features actual masks and headdresses used to create the film. The picturesque shots of Cambodia's landscape and compelling story of a forest in need of saving are meant to move children to care for and protect our environment. *Calling for Rain* touches on timely and pertinent issues of environmental damage, such as deforestation, pollution and climate change.

Time



Installation view of A Day's Book by Joyce Ho for Gallery Children's Biennale 2021

Children will be introduced to the concept of time through fun and engaging artworks such as Joyce Ho's *A Day's Book*. With stories submitted from children all over the world via the microsite, the online repository of daily 24-hour diaries transforms into a physical library with a selection of secret doors, some opened and some locked. The opened doors

reveal shelves of books containing the stories of each completed 24-hour diary, symbolising a look into the past, while the locked doors hold empty shelves which await future contributions from the online microsite. Workstations with iPads will be available for children to contribute their stories to the online repository and as the online archives grow, the locked doors will be opened monthly, filling the physical library with more stories of the past and allowing more stories to be shared.

Enriching on-site programmes and performances for children

To further enrich visitors' on-site experience at Gallery Children's Biennale, there will also be an array of complementary on-site children's programmes by artists and partners, such as sessions by master storyteller Kamini Ramachandran, sonic exploration workshops by LittleCr3aturesTM and somatic movement workshops by movement artist and somatic therapist Vincent Yong. Art packs are also available for purchase for \$5 each and are designed to enhance the appreciation and understanding of the art on display in a fun manner.

Gallery Children's Biennale is proudly supported by Development Partner Tote Board, Strategic Partner Cultural Matching Fund, Major Partner Keppel Corporation, Supporter Deutsche Bank and Programme Patron Vivian P J Chandran.

Mr Fong Yong Kian, Chief Executive of Tote Board says, "Gallery Children's Biennale serves to inspire our next generation through art. Tote Board supports Gallery Children's Biennale and its continued efforts to empower children as they encounter art and learn through play – building a community that is creative, vibrant and resilient."

The on-site installations for Gallery Children's Biennale will be available from 6 November 2021 to December 2022 at National Gallery Singapore. Visitors who are unable to join for the physical experience may still participate in this edition of Gallery Children's Biennale through the microsite. The online experience continues to be accessible at



<http://childrensbiennale.com/> until December 2022. Please refer to the Annex for the list of participating artists and their on-site artwork installations, and visit <http://childrensbiennale.com/> for more information about the Biennale and the programmes. Media assets can be accessed via this [link](#).

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About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which oversees the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian modern art. Situated at the birthplace of modern Singapore, in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments - City Hall and former Supreme Court - that have been beautifully restored and transformed into this exciting 64,000 square metre venue. Reflecting Singapore's unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery aims to be a progressive museum that creates dialogues between the art of Singapore, Southeast Asia and the world to foster and inspire a creative and inclusive society. This is reflected in our collaborative research, education, long-term and special exhibitions, and innovative programming. The Gallery also works with international museums such as Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay, Tate Britain, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT) and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA), to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a key node in the global visual arts scene.

In 2020, the Gallery was the only museum in Southeast Asia that received a ranking in The Art Newspaper's annual global survey of attendance at art museums, taking 20th place. It was the first museum in Asia to receive the Children in Museums Award by the European Museum Academy and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums in 2018. The Gallery also won the awards for "Best Theme Attraction" at TTG Travel Awards 2017, "Best Attraction Experience", "Breakthrough Contribution to Tourism" and "Best Customer Service (Attractions)" at the prestigious Singapore Tourism Awards in 2016 for its role in adding to the vibrancy of Singapore's tourism landscape.

About Tote Board

Established in 1988, Tote Board (Singapore Totalisator Board) is a Statutory Board of the Ministry of Finance. As a grant-making organisation, Tote Board works closely with stakeholders and partners, to support broad and diverse worthy projects in the sectors of Arts, Community Development, Education, Health, Social Service and Sports. Through these projects, Tote Board helps to uplift the community by giving hope to vulnerable groups and improving the lives of all in Singapore.

Tote Board channels gaming surpluses of its agents - Singapore Pools (Pools) and Singapore Turf Club (STC) – as well as the collection of casino entry levy – to grantmaking projects that help build an inclusive, resilient and vibrant community. Tote Board also ensures that Pools and STC conduct their businesses in a socially responsible manner, to provide legal and safe gaming, and to counter illegal gambling.

For more information, please visit www.toteboard.gov.sg

ANNEX: PHYSICAL INSTALLATIONS FROM 2021 GALLERY CHILDREN'S BIENNALE: WHY ART MATTERS

Artworks under the theme of Home



***Head/Home* by Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan + The Fruitjuice Factori Studio**

In *Head/Home*, the Singapore iteration of Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan's ongoing work, 'Project Another Country', finds a new sphere in the building of imagined and perceived community in the worldwide web.


The physical installation sees the presentation of a ready-made collection of houses, cardboard sculptures collected by the artists from different communities across the world as well as the continuous process of building of communities and relocation.

In contrast to the other artists whose starting point is to conceive of the work for the digital space, the Filipino-Australian artist duo re-imagines the translation of their large-scale installation for the online platform.

About the artist

Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan have exhibited extensively in galleries and institutions worldwide, such as at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Japan), Auckland Art Gallery (New Zealand), Immigration Museum (Australia), Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art (Australia), Singapore Art Museum.

They have participated in the Busan Biennale (2019); Thailand Biennale (2018); Gangwon International Biennale, South Korea (2018); Sharjah Biennale, UAE (2013); Asia Pacific Triennale, Australia (2009); Singapore Biennale (2008); Biennale of Sydney,

	<p>Australia (2006); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2004), Venice Biennale, Italy (2003), amongst others.</p> <p>Their works are included in the major collections such as the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (Australia); Singapore Art Museum; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum; Queensland Art Gallery Gallery of Modern Art; MAIAM Contemporary Art Museum (Thailand); and Lopez Museum Foundation (Philippines). In 2019, the Aquilizans (Fruitjuice Factori Studio) were commissioned to create a site-specific work at Facebook’s headquarters at Menlo Park, California, USA.</p>
	<p><i>BEHOME</i> by Speak Cryptic X ADDADDADD</p> <p>Drawing inspiration from the hardworking honey-producer and its iconic hive structure, <i>BEHOME</i> by Speak Cryptic x ADDADDADD relates to topics of gratitude, support, community, and the building of connections in a world reeling from the effects of a pandemic.</p> <p>The physical manifestation of <i>BEHOME</i> is a sculpture comprising three hexagonal structures that emulate the artists’ own rendition of overlapping beehives and houses playful holograms and immersive infinity mirrors. There are also two arcade machines where visitors can play two of the interactive games from the artists’ digital work.</p> <p>About the artist</p> <p>Speak Cryptic is an artist currently working and living in Singapore. Endless manifestations of the self are a feature of Speak Cryptic’s work – identity rippling forth through texts and phrases extracted from punk lyrics, intricate patterns and figures. His constellation of drawings, paintings and installations stem from personal inquiries into ancestral migration, ethnic</p>

dislocation, gentrification and alternative subcultures. Arriving at the realm of contemporary art via urban art origins, Speak's distinctive style has amassed a large fan base and taken on a painterly quality.

ADDADDADD, is a newly formed Singaporean art collective and are invited as guests of Speak Cryptic.

Artworks under the theme of Time




***Superstar* by Jeremy Sharma**

Created in collaboration with his two sons, Singaporean artist Jeremy Sharma creates a clickable, speculative world through *Superstar*.

In the physical space, the artist hopes to offer an immersive experience of this speculative world, with a display of dioramas and a motion triggered interactive video as part of this visual storytelling

About the artist

Born in 1977 in Singapore Jeremy Sharma is a multidisciplinary artist who works around ideas of aesthetics and production. His practice investigates various modes of enquiry in the information age, addressing our present relationship to modernity and interconnectivity in the everyday, as well as our place in an increasingly fragmented and artificial reality. He has a BA in Fine Art from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia and an MA in Fine Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. Jeremy has exhibited widely at major exhibitions including Fundación Sebastián, Mexico City (2015); Busan Biennale, Korea (2014); Singapore Biennale, Singapore (2013); Grey Projects, Singapore (2013); *Apropos*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore (2012); *14th Asian Art Biennale*, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, (2010); The 5th Bangkok Experimental Film Festival, Thailand (2008); The Singapore Season London 2005 by Theatre Works;

	<p>and The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2005).</p>
	<p><i>A Day's Book</i> by Joyce Ho</p> <p>In Joyce Ho's <i>A Day's Book</i>, the online archive of books filled with contributed stories will be presented as a full collection of books in the physical space. The onsite installation will offer visitors, a selection of secret doors, some open and some locked. The open doors contain the day's book as reference to events of the past. The locked doors are empty shelves, awaiting future contributions. They are labelled according to the creation of the day's book. The online platform becomes the makers space while the physical installation is turned into a library of stories.</p> <p>About the artist</p> <p>Born in 1983 in Taipei, Joyce Ho is an interdisciplinary artist, focusing specifically on painting, sculpture, and theatre. Ho has worked as a scriptwriter and theatre director.</p> <p>Ho has exhibited internationally, including NO ON: Joyce Ho Solo Exhibition, TKG+, Taipei, Taiwan (2019); 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2018); Inhabiting the World, Busan Biennale, Busan Museum of Art, Korea (2014); and Everyday Life — Asian Art Biennale, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung (2013).</p>
<p>Artworks under the theme of Environment</p>	
	<p><i>Calling for Rain</i> by Khvay Samnang</p> <p><i>Calling for Rain</i> is a short film inspired by <i>Reamker</i>, the Cambodian version of the epic poem <i>Ramayana</i>. The film takes us on a journey through the landscapes of Cambodia as it follows Kiri the Monkey on his quest to</p>



save the dying forest and its surrounding environment. At the on-site installation, visitors will be invited to enter an immersive space that resembles a Cambodian performance room. They will have the chance to view the masks and headdresses created for the film.

The artist invites children to ponder on environmental issues and its impact through a compelling visual storytelling piece that combines traditional and contemporary dance, poetry and music.

About the artist

Born in Svay Rieng, Cambodia, Khvay Samnang currently lives and works in the capital, Phnom Penh. He graduated from the Painting Department at the Royal University of Fine Art in Phnom Penh. His practice draws attention to social, cultural, economic and environmental issues in Cambodia, with himself as the protagonist, raising questions about land, its use and the rights to the land.

Samnang's multidisciplinary practice offers new views on historic and current events, as well as on traditional cultural rituals using humorous symbolic gestures. In his work, which includes all media, he focuses on the humanitarian and ecological impacts of colonialism and globalisation.



***Because It Makes Me Feel...* by Nandita Mukand**

For many children, the relationship between families and friends have changed since 2020.

The social experience of holding hands, playing together and visiting one another's homes to spend time together is crucial to the physical, cognitive and social-emotional development of children.

	<p>Nandita Mukand presents a whimsical installation of homes and houses for families and children to imagine visiting different houses, to engage in ‘<i>masak-masak</i>’ and think about what home feels like.</p> <p>About the artist Nandita Mukand examines relationships and connections between city dwellers, nature and material. She questions how cities change us and impact the way we see ourselves, such that we no longer see ourselves as part of nature. Mukund has been based in Singapore since 2003.</p>
	<p>CONVERSATIONS WITH AN OCTOPUS by Sandra Lee</p> <p><i>CONVERSATIONS WITH AN OCTOPUS</i> narrates an ongoing conversation between The Girl with the Red Shorts and her wise old friend, The Octopus, as they embark on hours of fun activities together and discuss important topics regarding the environment such as climate change. The artworks will depict different stories and scenarios in the conversations between the Octopus and the Girl in the Red Shorts.</p> <p>About the artist Sandra Lee graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore in 1998 with a diploma in Visual Arts. She was awarded an Honourable mention in the Phillip-Morris Singapore-ASEAN in 2003 and the National Arts Council Bursary in 1996. Her works have been exhibited at Singapore Art Museum, National Museum Singapore and as well as presenting The Enchanted Tree House at National Gallery Singapore in 2015, as part of the Keppel Centre for Art Education’s Art Playscape.</p>



***Voices from The Centers* by Dinh Q Lê**

Through *Voices from The Centers*, Lê hopes to acquaint young audiences with a variation of his signature art-making approach by using a digital filter to weave images into a seamless 60-seconds video. In creating their own video, children are empowered to build their own stories and explore image-making practices. His artwork will also introduce children to 60 works from the National Collection in a fun and playful manner.

About the artist

Internationally acclaimed artist Dinh Q. Lê was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the US at the age of ten. Lê is best known for his large-scale photographic weavings and video works that question the way in which world events are perceived. Inspired by traditional Vietnamese grass mat weaving, Lê weaves images chosen from a variety of motifs including the Vietnam War and Cambodian ruins. Lê's research focuses on people's personal memories of historical events, notably on the complex legacy of the Vietnam War and its ongoing impact on contemporary Vietnam. Identity, memory and history are concepts that permeate Lê's works and installations.



***Illuminated* by Nona Garcia**

Illuminated is a continuation of Garcia's works using x-ray, where she employs a collection of x-rayed bones and shells, and different life-sized landscape backgrounds for young children to participate in image-making and storytelling. Through the use of a collection of x-rayed bones and shells, children are able to observe the inherent patterns within nature and encouraged to create their own sceneries of imagination. The physical version is an extension of the online work.

About the artist

Nona graduated from the University of the Philippines with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting. She probes into the essence of things, setting up a dichotomy between the transparent and concealed, framed and natural, the sublime and the everyday. In 2013, she moved to the mountainous region of Baguio City and began creating large-scale paintings inspired by the immediate landscapes around her.