

MEDIA RELEASE

INFLATABLE INSTALLATION TAKES ART TO NEW HEIGHTS AT NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE'S NG TENG FONG ROOF GARDEN

Internationally acclaimed artist Shilpa Gupta explores the complexities of human existence through thought-provoking installation "Untitled".



**NG TENG FONG
ROOF GARDEN
COMMISSION**

SHILPA GUPTA



4 JUN 2023 – 31 MAR 2024 | NG TENG FONG ROOF GARDEN GALLERY, CITY HALL WING, LEVEL 5

SERIES PARTNER  For East Organization

© Shilpa Gupta. Untitled (2023). Commissioned by National Gallery Singapore for the Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission. Image courtesy of artist/For East Organization. © The artist.

LET *Art* SURPRISE YOU

Singapore, 30 May 2023 – National Gallery Singapore is honoured to announce the launch of renowned artist Shilpa Gupta's latest artwork, *Untitled* as part of the Gallery's annual Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission Series. The thought-provoking installation pushes the boundaries of art, exploring themes of physicality, perception, and the complexities of human existence.

Gupta's *Untitled* delves into the intriguing contradictions inherent in human behaviour, inviting us to question and reflect on the complexities of geopolitical struggles, social conflicts and internal dialogues within individuals' psyches.

The viewers first encounter the two intertwined bodies locked in combat from a distance via the two far end entrances of the terrace. As they walk towards them, a



revelation occurs—the bodies are perched atop a single head. The intertwined bodies reveal a tapestry of meanings, encouraging reflection on physical and emotional wounds endured by all.

Set on an elevated platform resembling an arena, the artwork is enveloped by the visual density of a bustling metropolis, offering a visceral experience of art, architecture and Singapore's urban skyline. It prompts visitors to reflect on their own experiences within a vibrant city and how conflict, duality and the complexities of existence manifest in their lives.

Gupta's unconventional choice of inflatable medium challenges traditional conventions, opening new possibilities. The soft and malleable nature creates contrast with the surroundings, enhancing the visual impact and audience experience. Visitors are encouraged to touch and interact with the artwork, particularly children who will find themselves intrigued and inspired by its stories.

Shilpa Gupta said, "I seek to create spaces that challenge preconceived notions and to initiate conversations across wider audiences. The work on the terrace explores the complexities - outside and inside of ourselves. I am excited that this proposal was selected by the National Gallery and that it will run in parallel to the children's biennale as it creates opportunity to share a series of interactive art activities and an online game that are being developed as extensions of the work!"

Complementing the artwork is ***Activities: Exploring Inner and Outer Worlds through Art***, an activity book launching in August 2023 that comprises colourfully illustrated sheets, co-created with an experienced art therapist, Rosemary U-Ling McGowan. The sheets will guide children and adults through art activities, facilitating their exploration of emotions and reactions, as well as their personal and external conflicts and complexities.



Launching in September 2023 is an interactive web-based game inspired by Gupta's style and themes. This visually stunning game provides real-time multiplayer matches and engaging social features for friendly competition and interaction.

The Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission series invites one leading international artist each year to present site-specific works reflecting Southeast Asia's cultural heritage. Previous commissioned artists include Danh Vo, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Cao Fei. The Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission is made possible through a generous gift by Far East Organization.

Untitled by Shilpa Gupta will be on display at the Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Gallery, Level 5, City Hall Wing at National Gallery Singapore from 4 June 2023 to 31 March 2024. Admission is free.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.nationalgallery.sg/shilpagupta>. The artist's biography is available in [Annex A](#). Description of the artwork is available in [Annex B](#). Accompanying programmes are available in [Annex C](#).

National Gallery Singapore

Yvonne Lim

9647 0664

yvonne.lim@nationalgallery.sg

**Ogilvy on behalf of National Gallery
Singapore**

Ada Tong

9297 0748

ada.tong@ogilvy.com

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.

ANNEX A: BIOGRAPHY OF SHILPA GUPTA



Image credit: Joseph Nair, Memphis West Pictures.

Shilpa Gupta (b. 1976, India) lives and works in Mumbai, India. Growing up as a woman in a traditional and conservative society, Gupta was always aware of the lines which are constantly being drawn and the numerous predefined pathways that individuals follow. This has had a significant influence on her work, which often seeks to blur the lines and embrace all the potential meanings that people may read into it. Gupta uses her art to tackle sensitive topics like nationalism and class barriers with subtlety and nuance, creating opportunities for dialogue.



NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE



ANNEX B: ARTIST'S WORK AND DESCRIPTION

In *Untitled*, two bodies are seen interlocked in a combative position. However, upon going around the work, one realises that they are in fact perched on a single head. The two bodies can be read from the perspective of geopolitical conflicts and social struggles or the dualities that experience within our own selves in everyday life. Constructed as a large scale inflatable on an elevated site at the Gallery, *Untitled* responds to a space surrounded by the visual and historical density of a large metropolis, echoing the manufactured and dissonant realities of global cities. The multiplicity of meanings, the inversion of the figures and the malleability of the material used for the inflatable all subvert the conventions associated with the grandeur of traditional monumental figurative sculpture.

By using an inflatable medium, the work invites visitors to approach it in a more playful and exploratory manner. This non-traditional approach to art-making opens up new possibilities for engagement and interaction with diverse communities, creating opportunities for unexpected and meaningful encounters.

This is the 6th Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission series, which annually showcases the creations of leading international artists.

ANNEX C: ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMMES

DATE, TIME & VENUE	PROGRAMME	DESCRIPTION
<p>3 June 2023, 5.30pm</p> <p>Level 5, Glass Room, Supreme Court Wing, National Gallery Singapore</p>	<p>Talks and Panel Discussions Opening Programme: Shilpa Gupta in Conversation with Adele Tan</p> 	<p>Join artist Shilpa Gupta and curator Adele Tan as they discuss her work <i>Untitled</i>, the process of the commission, and its relation to the artist's broader practice.</p> <p>Register for free here.</p>
<p>14 and 15 October 2023, 2.30 – 3.14pm, 3.30 – 4.15pm</p> <p>Level 5, Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Gallery, City Hall Wing, National Gallery Singapore</p>	<p>Family Programmes Art Alive!</p> 	<p>A highly interactive storytelling experience for families, Art Alive! will stir your imagination and help you connect with artist Shilpa Gupta's work.</p> <p>Registration required. \$5 per adult-child pair.</p>