

MEDIA RELEASE



Wu Guanzhong, *The Yangtze River Bridge at Nanjing* 南京长江大桥, 1973, oil on board, 48 x 120cm, collection of National Heritage Board

National Art Gallery, Singapore Takes Art Overseas for the First Time

Master Chinese Painter Wu Guanzhong's works exhibited at Zhejiang Art Museum

11 November 2010 – In a show of solidarity with the regional community of Asian art museums, The National Art Gallery, Singapore will be travelling key works to China under its banner for the first time. From 20 November to 25 December 2010, the artworks of recently bereaved master Chinese painter Wu Guanzhong belonging to Singapore will be exhibited at the Zhejiang Art Museum in Hangzhou. Titled *East Meets West – The Exhibition of Wu Guanzhong's Paintings*, it comprises a total of 307 works of art by Wu, of which 76 will hail from Singapore's national collection. Singapore's contribution of works is the second largest amongst the eight participating art institutions.

A retrospective on the legendary artist, the exhibition at Zhejiang Art Museum will boast a range of oil and ink paintings, sketches, calligraphy and watercolours. It is co-organised with China's Ministry of Culture and eight other art institutions. They include the Zhejiang Cultural Centre, Art Academy of China, National Art Museum of China, Zhejiang Art Museum, Shanghai Art Museum, Hong Kong Art Museum, National Palace Museum and

Beijing Lu Xun Museum. The National Art Gallery, Singapore is the only non Chinese institution in the partnership.

Mr. Kwok Kian Chow, Director of the National Art Gallery, Singapore and member of the Exhibition Organising Committee, said, “Wu Guanzhong is one of China’s 20th century greatest artists and an inspiration to many. His generous and unparalleled donation of artworks to Singapore has allowed many Singaporeans and visitors to our island to appreciate and enjoy his artistic achievements. In honouring the spirit of Wu Guanzhong, we are happy to share his invaluable works outside of Singapore, allowing friends from China and around the world to have a chance to see his celebrated artworks. As an active member of the global community of leading art museums and galleries, we certainly look forward to holding more of these travelling exhibitions in future.”

Wu had considered Hangzhou his artistic hometown and a source of inspiration, often referring to it as a ‘spiritual homeland’. It was at the National Arts Academy of Hangzhou where he studied both Chinese and Western painting under Pan Tianshou and Lin Fengmian. A strong advocate of developing culture and the arts, Wu Guanzhong was one of the most influential Chinese painter, art educator and essayist of the 20th century. Wu’s belief in art creation as one’s pursuit of beauty and form is reflected in his ability to integrate the two art forms of ink and oil, which represent art historical and aesthetic contexts of traditional Chinese and Western art.

In 2008, Wu Guanzhong donated to the national collection of Singapore his largest and most comprehensive collection of 113 oil and ink paintings ever presented to a public museum. Together with an earlier donation of one work, the Singapore collection of 114 works painted over five decades represents Wu’s entire creative oeuvre. They enable the National Art Gallery, Singapore to conduct extensive research on Chinese ink as an important medium in visual art. These works were valued then at about SGD\$73.7 million and represent the highest valued donation of artworks to any museum in Singapore. Wu Guanzhong passed away peacefully on 25 June 2010, in Beijing, China, aged 91 years.

10 lectures and seminars will be held in conjunction with the exhibition. These talks will be spearheaded by credible personalities in the industry such as Faya Causey, head of academic programmes at the National Gallery of Art, Washington; Martin Powers, Professor of Chinese Arts and Cultures at the University of Michigan and Director of the Centre for

Chinese Studies, and John Onians, Director of the School of World Art Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich England, amongst other international and Chinese scholars.

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Notes to Editor

About the National Art Gallery, Singapore

The National Art Gallery, Singapore (*working title*) is a new visual arts institution which will contribute towards positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for visual arts. It manages the world's largest public collection of modern Southeast Asian and Singapore art. The Gallery focuses on displaying, promoting and researching these artworks, relating them to the wider Asian and international contexts, and hosting international art exhibitions.

Situated in the heart of the Civic District, the City Hall and adjacent former Supreme Court building - two important heritage buildings symbolic of Singapore's nationhood - will be converted to house this exciting new visual arts venue, and is anticipated to be completed by 2013. The National Art Gallery will be a civic and creative space, established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world. Information on the National Art Gallery is available at www.nationalartgallery.sg.

About the Zhejiang Art Museum

The Zhejiang Art Museum located in Hangzhou was officially opened on 9th August 2009. Occupying a total area of more than 35,000 square metres, the building is the biggest art museum in China. Located at 138 Nanshan Road, Zhejiang Art Museum boasts of a specially selected geomantic and treasured site with the West Lake in front backed by the Mt. Jade Emperor (Mt. Yuhuang) at the back. . Information on the Zhejiang Art Museum is available at www.zjam.org.cn.