

Media Release

For immediate release

**Singapore surveys Minimalist art and its interactions
between Asia and the West with groundbreaking exhibition**

Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.

16 November 2018 to 14 April 2019

Singapore, 15 November 2018 – Organised by National Gallery Singapore in collaboration with ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands, ***Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.*** opens to the public from 16 November 2018. The five-month exhibition will be the first survey of Minimalist art held in Southeast Asia, and the first major Minimalism exhibition to include artists from this region as part of an expanded global perspective on the movement.

One of the most influential art movements of the 20th century, Minimalism offers a powerful new way of experiencing art. Rather than referencing the world outside, its simple forms invite us to contemplate what's physically before us in the present moment. This fundamental shift was inspired by the questioning of the role of art during the 1960s amidst great social change. It spurred a search for new forms of consciousness, with important inspirations being Asian spirituality such as Zen Buddhism and the I Ching, and emerging ideas on perception.

Minimalism contributed to the transformation of how artists use materials and space, and how they involve the viewer. This has been fundamental to the development of contemporary art forms including installation and performance art.

Dr. Eugene Tan, Director of National Gallery Singapore, said, "While Minimalism has had a significant impact on contemporary design and lifestyle in Asia, its relationship to art in the region has been less well understood. This exhibition will examine the relationship of Minimalism to art in Asia, as well as the influence that Asian spirituality and philosophy had on its origins. In so doing, the exhibition will re-evaluate the received understanding of Minimalism as a development of the Euro-American paradigm of formalist modernism. The exhibition will further examine the

connections and the legacies that this important movement has had on contemporary artists today. This is in keeping with the Gallery's perspective of modern art as a global phenomenon that results from complex and interconnected developments happening all around the world."

The exhibition will feature around 150 works of art by over 80 artists and 40 composers spanning two venues. Visitors can trace the development and rich legacies of Minimalist art and ideas from the 1950s to the present day at the Gallery, before delving into key aspects of the artistic tendency including colour and spirituality at the ArtScience Museum. The exhibition will also shed light on the ongoing engagement of Minimal art with Asian art and philosophy, and the contribution of Asian artists to a wider discourse of Minimalism.

Honor Harger, Executive Director of ArtScience Museum noted, "Playing to our strength as a museum of art and science, we have also chosen to present artworks which meditate on the notions of the cosmological void, emptiness and nothingness—principles which resonate with both Minimalism and science. Our exhibition at ArtScience Museum creates dialogue between the scientific notion of the vacuum and the Zen Buddhist idea of the void. Sound and silence also form a major part of the exhibition, with 40 musicians and composers presented in our Sound Room, which acts as an auditory counterpoint to the visual explorations of Minimalism presented within the galleries."

A gathering of iconic Minimalist art and new site-specific installations



Impenetrable (2009) by Mona Hatoum, *Enso* (2017) by teamLab, *Untitled (Six Boxes)* (1974) by Donald Judd, *To Reflect an Intimate Part of the Red* (1981) by Anish Kapoor



Room for one colour (1997) by Olafur Eliasson, *Mega Death* (1999/2016) by Tatsuo Miyajima,
Neon Light Installations (1970–2002) by Peter Kennedy

Featuring many iconic works that have never been shown before in Southeast Asia, the exhibition begins with a focus on how Minimalism moved from colour-field painting to Minimalist objects in series and geometric shapes in the 1960s. Subsequent artistic tendencies in favour of more open, expressive forms emerged, including Land art, Process art, Performance, and the use of light and cutting-edge technologies to transform the space and alter viewers' perception and experience.

The exhibition also features a range of contemporary works from around the world that employ Minimalist forms and ideas to advance social engagement and commentary. These include three major new commissions, by artists Sopheap Pich from Cambodia, Jeremy Sharma from Singapore and Frederik De Wilde from Belgium.

An immersive experience with Minimalism



Before: Gallery & Co cafeteria



After: Work No. 1343 by Martin Creed (2012)

Reflecting Minimalism's involvement of audiences in the experience of art, British artist and Turner Prize winner Martin Creed will present *Work No. 1343* for the first time in Asia at the Gallery's Gallery & Co cafeteria. This is a new edition of his well-known restaurant project in which no single item is the same, from utensils to crockery to furniture.



Left-right: Sticks by Trisha Brown (1973), TAO Dance Theatre

Minimalism also had an extraordinary influence on music, the performing arts, cinema, literature, design and fashion. Visitors are invited to experience the experimental and collaborative aspects of Minimalism through a changing programme of performances and moving image works. They include a one-night only dance presentation by the acclaimed TAO Dance Theatre from China, at ArtScience Museum, and performances by students from LASALLE College of the Arts, and visionary pianist Margaret Leng Tan – a recipient of Singapore's Cultural Medallion - at the Gallery. ArtScience Museum also presents Minimalist music and sound art by over 40 composers, including a new composition by Singapore-based Malaysian musician, Adeline Wong. These

special programmes, that introduce artists and scholars from diverse backgrounds, enrich our understanding of Minimalism's impact on today's art and lifestyle.

Minimalism: Space. Light. Object. is curated by Eugene Tan, Russell Storer, Silke Schmickl and Goh Sze Ying from National Gallery Singapore, and Adrian George and Honor Harger from ArtScience Museum.

Minimalism: Space. Light Object. at National Gallery Singapore is proudly supported by Lead Sponsors Singtel, Terra Foundation for American Art, Major Sponsors Changi Airport Group, Coca-Cola Singapore, Supporting Sponsors U.S. Embassy Singapore and Strategic Partner Singapore Tourism Board.

For more information, please visit www.minimalism.sg

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Annex A: Quotes from participating artists and sponsors

Annex B: About commissions for *Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.*

Annex C: Exhibition Highlights at National Gallery Singapore

Annex D: Exhibition Highlights at ArtScience Museum

Annex E: Programmes in November - December 2018

Annex F: Full Artist List at National Gallery Singapore and ArtScience Museum

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About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a progressive visual arts institution which oversees the largest public collection of modern art in Singapore and Southeast Asia. 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 metres venue. Reflecting Singapore’s unique heritage and geographical location, the Gallery 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 and Tate Britain to jointly present Southeast Asian art in the global context, positioning Singapore as a key node in the global visual arts scene.

In 2018, the Gallery was the only museum in Southeast Asia that received a ranking in The Art Newspaper’s annual global survey of attendance at museums and took the 38th place. It 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. For more information, visit <https://www.nationalgallery.sg>

About ArtScience Museum

ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands is the cultural institution in Singapore that explores the intersection between art, science, technology and culture. Since opening in February 2011, the museum has staged large-scale exhibitions by some of the world's major artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol, Vincent Van Gogh, and M.C. Escher. In addition, it has presented significant exhibitions which explore aspects of science, including, in recent shows, big data, particle physics, natural history, marine biology and space exploration.

ArtScience Museum's striking lotus-inspired building, designed by Moshe Safdie, features 21 gallery spaces spanning nearly 5000m². The museum has staged international exhibitions in partnership with renowned museums and galleries around the world, including the British Museum and Science Museum in London, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the Ambrosiana in Milan, Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, the Australian Centre for Moving Image in Melbourne, and many others. ArtScience Museum also originates and produces exhibitions in-house, and runs a full programme of education, events, activities and learning opportunities for a wide range of audiences.

ArtScience Museum is owned and operated by Marina Bay Sands.