



NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE



「dalam  
singapore」

18 JUL 2025-  
21 JUN 2026

# Tchang Ju Chi: Tireless Camel



DBS SINGAPORE GALLERY

A flexible annexe space next to DBS Singapore Gallery 3, Dalam Singapore presents focused exhibitions that reinvigorate and deepen understanding of Singapore's artists and art through new research, insightful curation and engaging programming.

The Malay word *dalam* means “inside” and is used when inviting someone to enter a place or room. The word also carries esoteric undertones, suggesting “deep within” or “interior”: the part of the self that can be perceived but not fully known.

The exhibitions at Dalam Singapore will be periodically refreshed.

This exhibition is in English, with room sheets in 中文, Bahasa Melayu and தமிழ்.

**ON COVER**  
*Self-Portrait*. 1939. Oil on canvas, 62 x 49 cm.  
Gift of Chang Si Fun (Shewin), daughter of the artist.  
Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

## Tchang Ju Chi: Tireless Camel

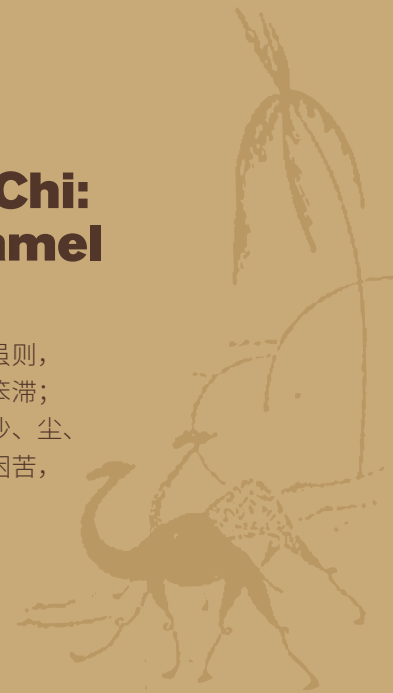
为此，骆驼出来了。虽则，脚步恁般迂缓，样子笨滞；但是它，纵使前途有沙、尘、有风、雷雨，与一切困苦，还是负着重大的使命，一步一步地前进，永远没有倦意。

*“For this, the camel emerges. Though its gait may be slow and its appearance clumsy, it presses on. Despite the sand, dust, wind, thunder, rain and all hardships that lie ahead, it bears a great mission, step by step moving forward, ever tireless.”* Tchang Ju Chi, in *Yeh Hui, Lat Pau*, 1930

Tchang Ju Chi (张汝器) (b. 1904, China; d. 1942, Singapore) was a prominent artist, playing a key role in shaping the city's nascent arts scene. A man of many talents—painter, cartoonist, graphic designer and activist—Tchang once compared artists to camels: unyielding and trudging tirelessly with slow but sure steps, driven by a sense of mission.

This exhibition brings together, for the first time in over 50 years, rarely seen artworks, reproduced cartoons and archival materials that shed light on Tchang's life and practice.

**[nationalgallery.sg/TirelessCamel](http://nationalgallery.sg/TirelessCamel)**



## Leading the Charge

「此正我辈以艺术警醒群伦时也。爰集同调。共组画社。」

*"Now is precisely the moment of our generation to awaken the masses through art. Thus, I gathered like-minded souls to form an art society."*

Tchang Ju Chi,  
in *Society of Chinese Artists*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition Catalogue, 1937

At just 31, Tchang was appointed founding president of the Society of Chinese Artists (SOCA). Under his leadership, the arts scene blossomed into a vibrant oasis of cultural and artistic activities, with group painting sessions and annual exhibitions.



《莲山双林禅寺》(Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery). 1927. Oil on canvas, 97.8 × 62 cm. Collection of Dr. Claire Ang.

This is one of the first works that Tchang created in Singapore, reflecting his connection to the local culture and inclination to capture Singapore's life and scenery.



*Self-Portrait*. 1939. Oil on canvas, 62 × 49 cm. Gift of Chang Si Fun (Shewin), daughter of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

## Painting Local Colours

「椰林皓月。尽是写青佳作。暮霭朝霞。岂非大块文章」

*"Beneath the luminous moon, the coconut groves stand as perfect subjects for painting; and are not the evening mist and the morning glow also great for literary works?"*

Tchang Ju Chi,  
in *Society of Chinese Artists*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Exhibition Catalogue, 1937

Tchang arrived in Singapore just as a new literary movement was gaining ground, calling writers to underpin their stories with Nanyang colours, reflecting their local lived experiences and culture. Tchang was one of the earliest artists who translated this ethos into his work, depicting scenes of local life and people—tropical fruits, labourers and people from various communities across the region.



[Not titled] (*Still Life*). c. 1930s. Oil on canvas, 130 × 94 cm. Gift of Chang Si Fun (Shewin), daughter of the artist. Collection of National Gallery Singapore.

## Cartooning Life



As a prolific cartoonist and editor, Tchang offered sharp socio-political critique through his cartoons. His works explored themes ranging from mass hunger to the challenges faced by young people and the political apathy of immigrants.

倡导和平的人拼命把地球装满炸弹 [Advocates for peace are filling the Earth with bombs] in *Sin Kwang* 《星光》, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* 《星洲日报》, November 18, 1929. Reproduction. Courtesy of National Library Board Singapore.

「仅凭悠悠遐想，已或许捉住了一刹那现实的人生味，苦闷与厌倦，亦从而消逝。」

*"By mere imagination, one may have captured life's experiences in a moment, thus wiping out bitterness and weariness."*

Tchang Ju Chi,  
in *Sin Kwang*,  
*Sin Chew Jit Poh*, 1929

### EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

This catalogue brings together rare archival material and artworks, many unseen in more than 50 years, that offer a fuller picture of Tchang's life and his practice. An essay by the curator presents a layered portrait of Tchang, whose commitment to the arts and the cultural and political life in Singapore was, above all, tireless.



SCAN FOR  
FREE CATALOGUE



## PROGRAMMES

In conjunction with the exhibition, we have put together a series of programmes—including talks, tours and workshops—that offer deeper insight into Tchang Ju Chi's life and artistic journey. From pre-war comics to early graphic design, these sessions will explore the diverse facets of Tchang's practice. For more information and registration, please visit **[nationalgallery.sg/TirelessCamel](https://nationalgallery.sg/TirelessCamel)**

## TOURS

Register for free at our Tours & Programmes Counter, City Hall Wing, Level 1  
**English** | Thu–Sun | 3.30pm **Mandarin** | Sat–Sun | 2.30pm

## GALLERY PASSES

Purchase your Gallery Passes and register for programmes and tours at **[tickets.nationalgallery.sg](https://tickets.nationalgallery.sg)**

**FREE ADMISSION<sup>^</sup>** for Locals (Singaporeans/PRs) | Gallery Insiders | Children aged 6 and below | Local/locally based students and teachers | Persons with disabilities (PWD) and their caregiver

<sup>^</sup>VALID VERIFICATION IS REQUIRED.

## JOIN US

Unlock the world of art as a Gallery Insider. Enjoy free exhibition access, complimentary parking, dining and shopping discounts and more. Sign up now!



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MORE INFO

## SUPPORT US

As a registered Charity and an Institute of Public Character, National Gallery Singapore relies on your support to build collections, engage in research, develop programmes and bring art to everyone.



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## AN ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

The Gallery is committed to creating an inclusive experience that can be enjoyed by visitors with access needs.



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ACCESS GUIDE

## OPENING HOURS

**Daily 10am–7pm**

General ticket sales end  
30 minutes before closing time.



NationalGallerySingapore



NatGallerySG



新加坡国家美术馆

## ENQUIRIES

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