



What's this about?

This space is imagined by the artist Amanda Heng and our design and innovation partners. Inspired by the communal void deck of Singapore's public housing, it explores how technology and art change the ways we connect.

Chat with Amanda or her AI-double, *Retired Singirl*, about her practice and art in Singapore, how digital "doubles" of humans resist or reinforce our ideas about identity, and whether technology ultimately facilitates conversations or hinders them.

Feel free to form your own questions and answers as you inhabit the space and join the conversation alongside the artist herself!

Let's Chat Further!

Let's Chat Further (2025) and *Retired Singirl* (2025–)

Amanda Heng (王良吟)

(b. 1951, Singapore)

Commissioned for *Singapore Stories*

Bookending *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art*, these two new commissions by artist Amanda Heng respond to key works from Heng's career through the technologies of holographic display and artificial intelligence (AI). Developed in collaboration with AI human developers Pantheon Lab and social-design studio Lekker Architects, the installation is a space for gathering, reflection and conversation. The adjoining space provides room to reflect upon Heng's long-standing engagement with performance, feminism and identity.

The first work *Let's Chat Further* is a series of live telepresence performances. It draws from Heng's formative work *Let's Chat* (1996), now in Singapore's National Collection. The artist appears as a holographic presence, engaging visitors in episodic conversations about Singapore's art history and identity, pointing to how people, rather than national policy, form collective identities.

In the second work *Retired Singirl*, an AI avatar will perform on behalf of Heng until 2030. This avatar is based on the artist's archive and data, and will develop through conversations. The public's contributions to discussions in this space will inform the AI over time. *Retired Singirl* is also an urgent feminist reimagining of digital humans that are often depicted as ageless assemblages and ideals of femininity. The art work resists a patriarchal gaze and encourages women to reclaim their natural image from virtual filters.

The artworks also radically consider our digital futures and the future of the artwork and its archives. How long can "live art" persist? Does it live beyond the artist and its collaborators? Can an artist archive be more than a reference to the past? Can it produce new ways of being? *Let's Chat Further* and *Retired Singirl* are evolving installations that will grow with public. The two works will be performed periodically until 2030. No two encounters are alike.

***Let's Chat* (1996) in Context**

First presented at The Substation in 1996, *Let's Chat* is an installation and performance artwork in which Amanda Heng recreates her mother's gatherings with friends at the void decks of Singapore's public housing estates. She brings together tables, chairs and domestic implements such as tea or beansprouts to evoke these informal, everyday encounters. Rooted in casual conversations over shared tasks like plucking the roots off beansprouts, *Let's Chat* creates moments of communal exchange and bonding.

Over the years, Heng has developed the conversational themes to explore the evolving relationship between art and everyday life. The reproductions from Heng's archive presented here include the inaugural presentation of the work at The Substation in 1996 as part of *October*—an exhibition organised by The Necessary Stage, at Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) in Indonesia in 1998 as part of the regional programme *Urbanisation*, at the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale in 1999 and at *FEAST! Food in Art!* at Singapore Art Museum in 2000.

About the artist

Amanda Heng (b. 1951, Singapore) has been a full-time art practitioner since the late 1980s. Heng was involved in the founding of two artist initiatives in Singapore, The Artists Village in 1989 and WITA (Women In The Arts) in 1999. Her practice addresses history, memory and human relationships. Heng is committed to live art—performance-based and process-driven work wherein the artist is a convenor of shared space, exchange and experiences. Her artworks blur the lines between art and reality and are also often made in collaboration with people from different backgrounds and thus, democratise access and appreciation for art. Heng was awarded the Cultural Medallion for Visual Arts in 2010, the 12th Benesse Prize in 2020 and was inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame in 2023.

On display are annotated photographs of Amanda Heng's mother and her friends meeting at a public housing void deck, alongside the artist's statement describing the project. This display is inspired by Heng's earliest installations of *Let's Chat*. She presented *Let's Chat* with this material in the 1990s and 2000s, most notably in the original installation of the work at The Substation in 1996, and later at the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale in 1999.

Digitised by National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive with kind permission from Amanda Heng

These photographs document Amanda Heng's installations of *Let's Chat* at the 1st Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, which was also the 5th Asian Art Show organised by Fukuoka Art Museum, commemorating the opening of Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. As part of the festivities and in relation to the Triennale's theme "Communication: Channels for Hope," 25 artists and artist collectives were invited to stay in Fukuoka for several weeks. The artists presented their work, conducted workshops and performances and gave talks about their practices. As part of this residency, *Let's Chat* was presented twice—at a shopping centre and at Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. Heng's presentation of *Let's Chat* at the museum is documented in these photographs. One of Heng's key interests in recreating "a chatting corner in a gallery" was to introduce casual communication as a necessary means of building and sustaining relationships.

Reproduction of exhibition documentation from *Let's Chat* presented at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum as part of the 1st Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale from 14 to 21 May 1999.

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Reproduction of exhibition documentation from *Let's Chat*, presented as part of *Urbanisation*, a regional art event at the Bandung Institute of Art held from 14 February to 2 March 1998.

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Reproduction of exhibition documentation from *FEAST! Food in Art!*, a group exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum when it was located at the former St. Joseph's Institution (SJI) building on Bras Basah Road, held from 5 April to 9 July 2000.

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Reproductions of exhibition documentation from the exhibition *October* at The Substation, Singapore, presented from 25 September to 2 October 1996.

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This vitrine contains material from Amanda Heng's artist archive, which can be referred to at National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive on Level 3 of the Supreme Court wing.

This collection provides an intimate, behind-the-scenes perspective on the relationships and research process that informed the first iteration of *Let's Chat*, presented at The Substation by The Necessary Stage in 1996. It includes a postcard to the artist from playwright Haresh Sharma of The Necessary Stage; exhibition flyers that illustrate the diversity of community events, theatre performances and art events that were part of the exhibition *October*; and photographs taken by the artist in a bean factory in Seletar, Singapore, as part of her research for developing *Let's Chat* in 1996.

Reproduction of exhibition collateral from *October* at The Substation, Singapore, presented from 25 September to 2 October 1996, alongside the artist's statements describing *Let's Chat*.

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