MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Gallery Singapore launches *Retired Singirl*, an artist-centred AI commission by Amanda Heng

Created by artist Amanda Heng in collaboration with National Gallery Singapore and Pantheon Lab, the interactive AI artwork invites visitors to converse with a digital avatar of the artist and explore Singapore art history through dialogue.



Installation view of artist Amanda Heng with her artwork commission *Retired Singirl (2025–2030)*, National Gallery Singapore, 2026.

SINGAPORE, 10 November 2026 – National Gallery Singapore launches *Retired Singirl* (2025–2030), a new digital commission by pioneering Singapore artist Amanda Heng that invites visitors to engage in conversation with an AI avatar based on the artist's likeness. Commissioned as part of *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art*, the artist-centred AI artwork functions as a living, interactive archive, drawing on Heng's extensive body of work, archives, and ideas to create a new way for audiences to engage with her practice and Singapore art history. The commission

marks a major milestone in the Gallery's ongoing exploration of how emerging technologies can create new ways of engaging with art and culture.

Through a microphone interface, visitors can speak directly with *Retired Singirl* about Singapore art history, Heng's artistic journey, and the ideas that have shaped her work. Responding in real time, the digital avatar creates a uniquely personal and highly participatory experience of art. It transforms an artist's legacy and archival data into a dynamic space for dialogue, learning, and exchange. Designed to evolve through conversation, the work invites audiences across generations to discover and engage with Heng's artistic legacy, with visitors' contributions influencing the AI's development over time.



Installation view of *Retired Singirl* (2025–2030) by Amanda Heng, National Gallery Singapore, 2026.

The commission builds upon Heng's longstanding interest in dialogue, exchange, and everyday encounters with art. It draws from *Let's Chat* (1996), a landmark participatory artwork in which Heng invited audiences to sit and engage in conversation over tea and cleaning beansprouts, as well as her ongoing *Singirl series* (2000–), which references the "Singapore Girl" icon through the kebaya to examine issues of identity, representation and gender. In *Retired Singirl*, these interests

are reimagined through emerging technology, extending the artist's practice into a new form of public interaction and reflection on Singapore art.

Artist Amanda Heng, says, "*Retired Singirl* grows from my long-standing mobilisation of conversation as a medium of art and human connection. Throughout my practice, I have been interested in creating everyday encounters with art that democratise its access. *Retired Singirl* is not an extension of me as much as it is an exploration of what a living archive of performance art can be. It expands on my reflections on ageing, legacy, transgenerational human connection and the role of art in and as a reflection of my experience of Singapore society and the world."

Retired Singirl is the culmination of more than four years of research, experimentation and collaboration between Amanda Heng and National Gallery Singapore. Developed with AI technology partner Pantheon Lab, the commission represents a considered model for the ethical use of artificial intelligence in the arts, demonstrating how technology can serve artistic inquiry and the role art institutions can play as a mediator and as a cultural steward that safeguards intellectual and artistic intent.

The project adopts an artist-centred framework, with Amanda Heng defining the conception, development and refinement of the commission since 2022. The work is built on licensed materials, including Heng's likeness and archival material, which remain under her ownership. Presented exclusively as part of the *Singapore Stories* exhibition, *Retired Singirl* offers a thoughtfully designed space for public interaction. Visitor conversations are anonymised, and contributions to the AI's development are guided to ensure the experience remains rooted in Heng's practice, ideas, and artistic legacy.

"*Retired Singirl* extends Amanda Heng's lifelong interest in dialogue and participation into a new technological context. It offers a new model for how museums can engage audiences with artists' ideas, archives, and histories through meaningful interaction. Through projects such as this, National Gallery Singapore remains committed to exploring how emerging technologies can deepen public engagement with art, and to supporting artists in experimenting with new forms of artistic expression, while keeping artists' voices and legacies at the centre of the experience,"

says Dr Seng Yu Jin, Project Director of *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art* and Director (Curatorial, Research and Exhibitions), National Gallery Singapore.

Retired Singirl at National Gallery Singapore

Launching on 13 November 2026, experience *Retired Singirl* at the Digital Immersive Space at City Hall Wing, Level 2, a commissioned work for *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art* at National Gallery Singapore. Admission to *Retired Singirl* is free. Entry to *Singapore Stories* requires a General Admission pass, which is complimentary for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents.

The media assets can be accessed via this link.

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For more information, please contact:

Tate Anzur
Fabiola Susilo
NGSTeam@tateanzur.com

National Gallery Singapore
Sarah Leong
sarah.leong@nationalgallery.sg

Amanda Heng's Artist Biography

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 1988, and WITA (Women In the Arts) in 1999. Her practice addresses history, memory and human relationships. While she also makes images and objects, 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 Singapore's Cultural Medallion in 2010, the 12th Benesse Prize in 2020, and was inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame in 2023.

About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution and the largest modern and contemporary art museum in Southeast Asia. Dedicated to making art accessible to all, the Gallery engages audiences of all ages through its exhibitions, educational programmes, and public festivals.

Home to the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian art, the Gallery is redefining the region's art history through pioneering research, strategic acquisitions, and thoughtfully curated exhibitions. By offering new perspectives, it recontextualises the region's artistic contributions within global narratives.

Located in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments – the City Hall and former Supreme Court – making it an iconic cultural landmark where architectural grandeur meets deep historical significance.

A vibrant cultural destination, the Gallery has been ranked among Asia's Top 10 most visited museums by The Art Newspaper since 2019. It has also received accolades at the Singapore Tourism Awards, including "Best Leisure Event" for Light to Night Festival 2020 and "Outstanding Leisure Event" for Gallery Children's Biennale 2021.

As a registered Charity and an Institute of Public Character, the Gallery relies on public support to expand its collection, advance research, and bring art to more people, shaping cultural discourse and inspiring creativity for generations to come.