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**Media Release**

## **The Worlds of Georgette Chen**

The first-ever docudrama on Singapore's pioneer artist

Singapore, 19 June 2014 – National Gallery Singapore presents a three-part docudrama on Georgette Chen (1906 - 1993), one of Singapore's most loved artists. Commissioned by the Gallery in the run up to its opening, the docudrama will give the dramatic worlds of Georgette Chen a contemporary relevance. Produced by Channel NewsAsia, the series will feature MediaCorp's top actress, Rui En, as the iconic artist.

Shot on location in Europe, China and Southeast Asia, the docudrama is set in three periods: the French period from 1927 to 1933; the Chinese/Hong Kong period from 1934 to 1948; and the Penang/Singapore period from 1950 to 1980. Set against the tumultuous years of the Second World War, the storyline mirrors Georgette Chen's artistic oeuvre. Born in 1906, Georgette Chen received her art education in Paris, New York as well as in Shanghai. Immensely inspired by her surroundings, she produced still lifes, portraits and landscapes from each phase. Her portraits of her first husband and more importantly, of herself, are painterly windows to her cinematic life.

Georgette Chen eventually found her home in Singapore and taught at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts until her retirement in 1981. Regarded as an important artist who contributed immensely to the burgeoning Nanyang school of painting and to Singapore's art movement for over four decades, Georgette Chen was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 1982.

“Given the important position that Georgette Chen occupies in Singapore's art history, which is a key focus of the National Gallery, the enactments in the form of drama will allow us to further the appreciation and understanding of Singapore's art historical development among a new generation,” says CEO of National Gallery Singapore, Ms Chong Siak Ching. “And we will continue to explore new avenues of marketing, including digital and social media, to communicate the Gallery's offerings to a wide audience.”

Managing Director of Channel NewsAsia, Debra Soon, adds, ““There are many significant moments and people in Singapore’s history that are not sufficiently made known. For Channel NewsAsia, we want to help tell these stories for audiences as part of the record of Asia’s artistic history. We are delighted to work with the National Gallery in this ambitious project. We want to be able to bring the story of Georgette Chen to life, not to just capture her story, but to make it one that resonates with all viewers, in Singapore and beyond.”

Actress Rui En sees portraying Georgette Chen as a rare and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “The more I read about her, the more I realise how important the role is. In her day, it was rare for women to paint professionally. She was a pioneer on many fronts and her quiet strength and love for life will certainly inspire women today.”

The docudrama, produced by Channel NewsAsia’s English Current Affairs team, will telecast in April 2015 on Channel NewsAsia and MediaCorp Channel 5. The series will also be adapted into Chinese for telecast on Channel 8. Artworks by Georgette Chen will be on display in the DBS Singapore Gallery when the National Gallery Singapore opens in 2015.

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#### About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is a new visual arts institution which will contribute towards positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for visual arts. It manages a large public collection of visual arts from Southeast Asia and Singapore from the 19th century to the present day. 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 buildings – two important heritage buildings symbolic of Singapore’s nationhood – will be transformed into this exciting new visual arts venue. Opening in 2015, the Gallery will be a leading civic and cultural destination established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world. Information on National Gallery is available at [www.nationalgallery.sg](http://www.nationalgallery.sg).

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