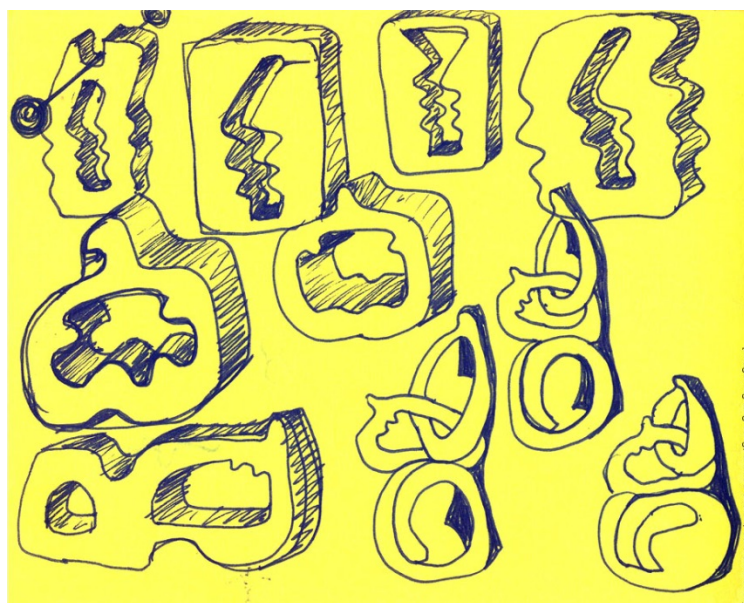


For immediate release

Figuring Ng Eng Teng

NUS Museum's latest permanent exhibition reveals previously unstudied elements and works from the late Cultural Medallion recipient's practice



SINGAPORE, 14 April 2016 – Drawing on the late artist's comprehensive donation to the National University of Singapore, *Ng Eng Teng: 1+1=1* departs from existing readings of the artist's practice to seek revelations into the artist's interests in the multiplicities of humanity and our identities.

Ng, who has been widely discussed and studied as a key figure in local art history for his sculptural practice and work on the body, donated over 1,200 works to the NUS Museum between 1997 and 2001. Ranging from sculptures, ceramic forms, maquettes, sketches, paintings, drawings and public art, the donation represents the most comprehensive collection of works by a single artist in Singapore, spanning over four decades of practice.

(More information about Ng Eng Teng in Annex)

The exhibition takes its name and central focus from a geometric sculptural series that has yet to receive critical attention, but arguably presents the artist at his most experimental. The series *1+1=1* features largely geometric frames ranging across the mediums of aluminum, brass, steel, stoneware, and ciment fondu. Each work in the series features a consistent diagonal line running across the frame and a potentially shifting orientation of display, left largely undictated by Ng. Its references to common themes and potentials of reading for Ng's practice is a key point of departure for the exhibition's curator Kenneth Tay, who hopes to shed new light on the artist's practice, while building on current scholarship.

"Given the breadth of the collection and also the diversity of Ng Eng Teng's practice, I think we can prospect more alternative points of entry and to build on the existing literature that has been produced by art historians such as T.K. Sabapathy and Constance Sheares. Building on the present emphasis placed on the body, the exhibition considers the compelling proposition of '1+1=1' when applied onto a reading of the artist's practice," says Tay. "Could we then perhaps read '1+1=1' as a question about oneness, towards a rethinking of identities, human relationships, but also the way we separate things around us into discrete units of meaning?"

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NUS Centre For the Arts

The exhibition considers the artist's interests in how the parameters of the human may be imagined or idealised. Among the works shown is *The Last Masterpiece*, Ng's final work that was completed posthumously by his family members, under his instruction. The work comprises swabs of what appear to be the artist's blood arranged with a syringe and plastic tube in a frame. Through this work, the artist presents the body in its most fragile and porous state, a call to reconsider idealisations of the human body as an enclosed and self-sufficient entity.

Shown for the first time since the artist's donation is *Where Have All The Flowers Gone?*, which comprises fabric flowers stretched across a hollow copper frame on a rounded cement fondu base. Shaped like a downward-facing missile, the work openly reveals a hollow interior, notably absent in the rest of his sculptural practice. Producing the work around 1991, the artist sought to condense the many political events that happened during the climate of the Cold War.

Assisting the exhibition's curator was Raffles Institution Year 5 art student Austin Chia who interned as part of the NUS Museum's curatorial team in September 2015 and again from November 2015 to January 2016. Austin worked closely with his mentor Kenneth, contributing important insights based on his extensive research into Ng Eng Teng's sketches. As part of his internship, Austin also had a hand in the installation of the exhibition.

"The internship was fun and eye-opening, especially when I looked through Ng Eng Teng's sketchbooks which gave me fresh insights into both his thought process and his works," shares Austin.

Outreach and education manager Michelle Kuek shares, "The structure of our internships offer opportunities to pursue research and make important contributions to on-going curatorial projects and programmes. They have managed publication projects, contributed curatorial writings, designed publicity collaterals, and seeded ideas for programme series. Significantly, many have also transitioned from interns to project co-collaborators."

Ng Eng Teng: 1+1=1 is presently on display in the NUS Museum's Ng Eng Teng Gallery. The exhibition displays an extensive range of the artist's works as part of an effort to maintain the collection as a study collection.

For more information about the exhibition, media interviews, gallery tours or high resolution images, please contact:

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Annexes:

- Annex A: About the exhibition
- Annex B: About Ng Eng Teng
- Annex C: About NUS Museum
- Annex D: About NUS Centre For the Arts
- Annex E: About the NUS Museum Internship Programme

Annex A: About the exhibition

Ng Eng Teng: 1+1=1

Ng Eng Teng Gallery, NUS Museum
Free Admission

The exhibition takes, as its point of departure, the “geometric” series $1+1=1$ produced by artist Ng Eng Teng as a means to re-read the artist’s practice. $1+1=1$ has not received, as yet, critical attention in the existing literature, with past efforts by art historians and curators focused on a reading of Ng’s practice through the changing figure or figurations of the body. Presented with excerpts from a conversation between the artist Ng Eng Teng and art historian Constance Sheares, this exhibition is an attempt to prompt a reading of Ng Eng Teng through the motifs of spacing, difference, and the question of one-ness.

Annex B: About Ng Eng Teng

Known as one of the region’s most significant and prolific artists, Ng Eng Teng (b.1934) was an artist, who worked across the various disciplines of painting, drawing, sculpture and ceramics and dealt with a variety of themes including the human figure and condition, identity politics as well as global currents. First trained at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), he furthered his art education in the United Kingdom between 1962 and 1964. He returned to Singapore, post-Independence, in 1966 to set up his artist studio and actively practiced as an artist until his eventual passing in 2001. Having exhibited internationally in Australia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and the United Kingdom, Ng’s choice to donate his works to an educational institution came out of a firm belief in learning, experimentation and the sharing of knowledge.

Annex C: About NUS Museum

NUS MUSEUM

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NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 8,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The Lee Kong Chian Collection consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the South and Southeast Asian Collection holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the Ng Eng Teng Collection is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient. A fourth collection, the Straits Chinese Collection, is located at NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road. NUS Museum is an institution of NUS Centre For the Arts.

10am–7.30pm (Tuesdays–Fridays)
10am–6pm (Saturdays & Sundays)
Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays
Free Admission

B: nusmuseum.blogspot.com
F: facebook.com/nusmuseum
T: twitter.com/nusmuseum

Annex D: About NUS Centre For the Arts

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Established in 1993, NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA) is a vibrant space for the appreciation of the arts and nurturing of the creative and inquiring spirit. It supports student engagement with the arts and the integration of the arts into the life of the University.

NUS CFA encompasses the NUS Museum, NUS Baba House and a Talent and Development arm that oversees 22 student arts excellence groups. Through its myriad of programmes, practices, exhibitions, workshops and outreach, such as NUS Arts Festival and the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts, the Centre enhances and augments the university experience and contributes to the building of knowledge and transformation of students.

CFA also manages facilities such as the University Cultural Centre, with its 1600-seat Hall and 450-seat Theatre, and rehearsal spaces in Runme Shaw CFA Studios and University Town.

Annex E:

About the NUS Museum Internship Programme

The NUS Museum's internship programme began in 2007, and has engaged more than 100 interns through providing opportunities to work closely with museum staff and resources and gain first-hand experience of museum work in various areas ranging from curating, collections and conservation, to education and outreach. Graduates from the programme have continued their work with the museum through co-collaborating on exhibitions, programmes and publications, as well as later in their own professional careers as arts professionals and educators.

Besides working with students through attachments and educational visits, the museum's educational initiatives take a variety of forms. Since 2015, the museum has presented annual workshops on museum-based learning as part of the Museum Education Symposium, organised by the Singapore Teachers' Academy for the aRts (part of the Ministry of Education, Singapore). The museum has also worked with educational institutions, providing resources and expertise to students to curate their own exhibitions that are eventually presented in their own schools. Most recently in March 2016, eight History students from River Valley High School (RVHS) presented an exhibition in their school on the photography of the Vietnam War after two months of work and consultation with museum staff. The exhibition will be further utilised by the RVHS History department as a teaching resource for all Year 5 and 6 History students studying the Vietnam War.