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## Between the brush lines of Lim Tze Peng

Solo exhibition at NUS Museum considers 70-year oeuvre of Singapore's oldest living artist



Lim Tze Peng, *Trees* (2014), Ink and water on paper, 192 x 490 cm.

**SINGAPORE, 24 November 2016 –**

***Evening Climb: The Later Style of Lim Tze Peng*** foregrounds one of Singapore's most significant artists around his mastery of the ink brush. In a remarkably prolific seven decades, the calligraphic use of ink on paper has been the literal and figurative line linking an extensive practice that evolved from *plein air* landscape depictions to monumental abstract expressionism.

The 22 works presented in the exhibition span this practice, from *in situ* renderings of local historical landmarks produced in the 1950s, to the turn of the millennium, as the artist's experimentations with ink & brush grew markedly more dramatic. A significant work presented is ***Trees (2014)***, in which Lim pushes the boundaries of composition, colour and scale with a magnified canvas and style, bringing together Western composition techniques, colours reminiscent of the Nanyang tradition, and broad calligraphic brushstrokes to deliver a subject familiar to Chinese ink, nature.

Chang Yueh Siang, curator of NUS Museum's Lee Kong Chian Collection of Chinese art, notes, "Ink is not merely a medium or tool for Lim. The brush-line forms the substance of his works; when he thinks about calligraphy, he is considering how he can compose that as an image; and when he paints, he uses calligraphic lines. Eventually, in his later style, image and calligraphy become inseparable."

Lim, a self-taught artist who was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2003, has honed a firm foundation in calligraphy from his student days at Chung Cheng High School, building the breadth to experiment with medium, composition, imagery and even colour. Also presented in this exhibition is his recent work ***Singapore River (2014)***, where the artist at 94 revisits a familiar subject painted in its thousands before in his practice. Almost five metres across, the bird's eye panorama of the river in its bustling prime is exceptional for its size, skill, and attention to detail.

Writing for the exhibition, Teo Han Wue observes, “The focus of the exhibition at NUS is timely because the artist has during the past decade developed further in a completely new phase of creativity, which represents a significant shift of direction in his ink art characterized by bold experimentation, exceptionally large format and abstract expressionist gestures. This is a phase that saw the nonagenarian pushing the boundaries of his ink practice in what could be regarded as his “late style”. These late works are particularly interesting for most of us who are more familiar with his paintings of Bali, Singapore River, and Singapore’s fast disappearing scenes like old streets, lanes and villages.”

*Evening Climb: The Later Style of Lim Tze Peng* is on display in the Lee Kong Chian Gallery (Lobby Level) until 27 May 2017. The works include recent donations to the Lee Kong Chian Collection, pieces from Chung Cheng High School (Main)’s Lim Tze Peng Art Gallery, as well as loans from private collections.

**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 the Lee Kong Chian Collection
- Annex C: NUS Museum
- Annex D: NUS Centre For the Arts