

Family Guide

(Recommended for ages 9 to 12)

NOT MERE SPECTATORS

THE MAKINGS OF
MULTICULTURAL SINGAPORE

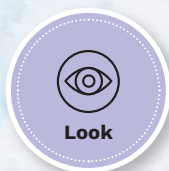
This book belongs to:

.....
.....



Hello children!

This guide is made specially for you to explore this exhibition!
As you go around and flip through this activity guide, spot these 3 icons:



Have a look around as you enter a new section. What artefacts, artworks and activities are there?



Take some time to think about what you see!



Have a conversation about the questions with your siblings, friends or grown-ups around you!

But before we begin, remember to...



so that we keep the exhibition an enjoyable experience for everyone!

To the Grown-ups:

This guide is not just for the young ones, but for you too! Use it to explore the exhibition with the children and engage in conversations through the **Imagine** and **Talk** prompts.

Read. Examine. Pause. Reflect. Ask children questions and share stories you may have about the topics with them too!

Gallery Map



Enter
here



8

Project Citizens

To the grown-ups:

These #NoStrangerDanger panels around the space are for an exhibition programme that encourages visitors to meet someone new and have conversations with each other on multicultural Singapore.

You can have these conversations with your children using the **Talk** prompts provided in this guide!



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Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat
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in the Spotlight

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National Consciousness
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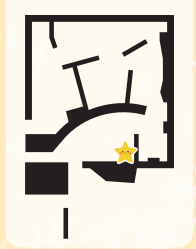
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7

Move
Our Multiculturalism
Moves

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Presenting... The Makings of Multicultural Singapore



Singapore is home to different races and backgrounds. We practise different religions and speak various languages.

Throughout the year, we observe special occasions and celebrate festivals from our diverse cultures. How did multicultural Singapore come about?

Psst...



This has something to do with Singapore's history as a British trading post from 1819. People from China, India, Europe, and neighbouring countries came to trade and build new lives.

**What is
multiculturalism?**

**"multi" =
many**

**"culture" =
the way people
live, their beliefs,
practices, food,
languages, and
traditions**

When Singapore was looking to become independent of British rule in the 1950s, our leaders and people had to think what kind of future they would build. A key thought was how to unite diverse groups of people who were working and living with one another.

Today, we still have a part to play in building multicultural Singapore together. But how can we do so?

In this exhibition, note the actions in our section headings: **Gather, Connect, Relate, Live, and Move!**



Can you find the words that inspired our exhibition title "**Not Mere Spectators**"?

Hint:

It's on one of the walls when you enter!

"spectator" =
a person who watches something happen

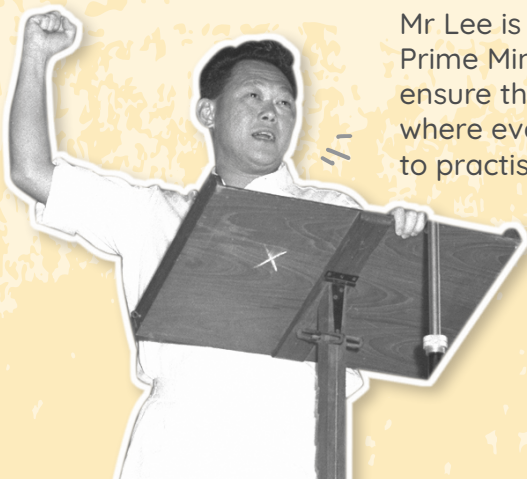
"participant" =
a person who takes part in something



Fact:

Who gave this speech?

Our founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew at the *Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat* in 1959. Mr Lee is our first and longest-serving Prime Minister (1959 to 1990). He worked to ensure that Singapore would be a country where everyone is treated equally and able to practise their own religions and customs.



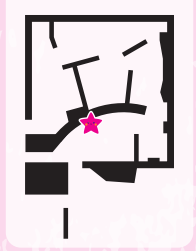
Mr Lee Kuan Yew

9 December 1959

Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

**NOT MERE
SPECTATORS**

2 Gather: *Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat* Variety of Cultures in the Spotlight



Learning each other's cultures

Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat (say: “ah-NEH-kah RAH-gahm RAHK-yat”), or People’s Cultural Concerts, started in Singapore from 1959 by the Ministry of Culture. These concerts travelled to different parts of Singapore and brought together both performers and audiences from diverse races.



Fact:

Who is S. Rajaratnam?

Mr S. Rajaratnam was Singapore’s first Minister for Culture from 1959 to 1965. He was also a journalist who wrote many articles about what he thought a nation should be like.

Extra fun fact:

He had a hand in
our National Pledge
(flip to the next page to find out more!)

**Mr S. Rajaratnam and
his wife Pirooska Feher**
1943–1947
S. Rajaratnam Collection,
courtesy of National Archives
of Singapore





Can you spot the different performances in the animation? Tick them off from the list below!



☐ Chinese ribbon dance



☐ Eurasian Jinkli Nona



☐ Malay Tari Payung



☐ Indian Kathakali



☐ Juggling Act



☐ Bicycle stunt performance



If you were a performer, what would you share with others from your culture?

Ask and Share!



Have you ever watched a performance similar to *Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat*?

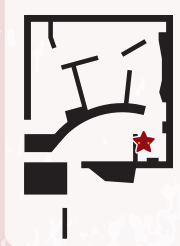


What did you like about it?

Like *Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat*, today we also get to experience many different ethnic celebrations and festive occasions in our schools and neighbourhoods!

Image sources:
Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore
The Straits Times © SPH Media Limited, permission required for reproduction

3 Imagine: "A Nation in the Making" Ideals and Lived Realities



"As one
united
people"

We recite this familiar phrase during pledge-taking at school morning assemblies and national celebrations. Have you ever wondered what these words mean and why it was written?

Fill in the blanks:

We, the citizens of Singapore,
pledge ourselves as one united people,
r _ _ _ _ _ of race, language or religion,
to build a d _ _ _ _ _ society,
based on j _ _ _ _ _ and e _ _ _ _ _ ,
so as to achieve h _ _ _ _ _ ,
p _ _ _ _ _ y and
_ _ _ _ _ s for our nation.



Fact:

A pledge to unite!



After Singapore's independence, Minister for Education Ong Pang Boon (1963 to 1970) and his team wrote the Pledge for school-flag raising ceremonies to build patriotism and remind students of their identity as Singaporeans. They drafted 2 versions of the Pledge and sought Mr S. Rajaratnam's views.

Mr Ong Pang Boon

1966

Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection,
courtesy of National Archives of Singapore



Mr S. Rajaratnam rewrote the pledge almost entirely to highlight multiculturalism. Take a look at his draft and compare it to the Pledge you know today. **What differences do you notice?**

"We, as citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves to **forget differences** of race, language and religion and become one united people; to build a democratic society where justice and equality will prevail and where we will seek happiness and progress by helping one another."

Excerpt taken from Mr S. Rajaratnam's letter to Mr Ong Pang Boon

18 February 1966

Ministry of Education Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

These words were later revised by the Ministry of Education. The phrase "forget differences" was replaced by "**regardless**". To "forget" meant to ignore, but "regardless" recognises our differences and that our race, language or religion should not stop us from being united as Singaporeans.

Ask a grown-up!



Can you say the Pledge in a different language?

Fact:

Did you know?

It was only in 1988 when we started taking the Pledge with our right fists over our chests. This change was to express that our loyalty to Singapore was something close to our hearts.

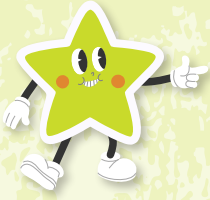
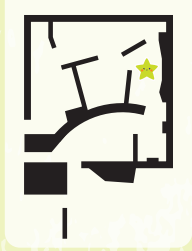
1966 (left)

Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

1988 (right)

The Straits Times © SPH Media Limited, permission required for reproduction





Learning in a new language



Our diversity means that people (both then and now) speak in different languages. While some picked up languages through daily conversations, this was not enough. How could people from various backgrounds understand each other and work together?

A few years after Singapore became independent, people started to use English more to get good jobs. Later, the government made most schools teach English as the main language with Mother Tongue. Learning this new language required effort, but it enabled communities to converse with one another and made Singapore more connected to the world!



Have a look at the textbooks on display and on the shelves! Can you tell which subjects they are and what languages they are in?



How would you feel if you had to learn your school subjects in a different language?



Exhibition Activity

1

Pick up a library card at the activity booth.



2

Select a textbook from the shelf and fill up the library card.

3

Drop the paper into one of the drawers and read what others have written!

Ask a grown-up!

Do you recognise any of these textbooks?



Talk

What experiences do you have trying to communicate with others in a different language?

Fact:

Values in our Mother Tongue

Our Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) lessons are taught in our Mother Tongue for important reasons! We learn valuable lessons such as respect, responsibility, and harmony through traditional examples. They come alive when shared in our own languages.



Good Citizens textbooks in vernacular languages

1991–1993

Courtesy of National Library Singapore

Cover, 《好公民》 6A ISBN 9971-0-5665-8

Cover, *Rakyat yang Baik* 3A ISBN 9971-0-6410-3

Cover, நற்குடிமக்கள் 3A ISBN 9971-0-6408-1



Take a closer look! What do you notice?



Eating on Banana Leaves

1979

Chua Mia Tee

Gift of Times Publishing Limited

Collection of National Gallery Singapore





What food
and cuisine
are the people
eating?

What is
their food
served on?

How do
they eat?

Who are
the people
around the
table?

Where do
you think
this might
be?

Do you think
they speak
the same
language?

Sharing a common language or learning each other's languages allows us to gather around the same table and connect with each other of different cultures!



Living together with differences



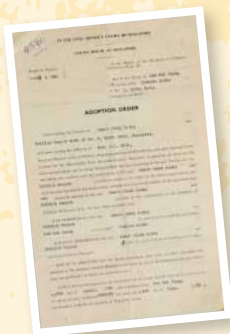
Every day, we meet people who look, eat, and talk differently from us. These make up our culture. Sometimes, tensions and arguments can occur when people express their dislike over these differences.

To harmoniously live together, we must learn to be understanding and respectful. We may be different, but we are all Singaporeans together.



Toshiko Kadir was adopted by parents of different races when she was a baby. Find out more in the interactive storybook!

Look into the blue bag, can you spot her birth certificate and adoption papers? What details about Toshiko and her parents do they tell us?



Toshiko Kadir's birth certificate and adoption papers

1964–1970s

Reproduction

Courtesy of Toshiko Kadir



Image of blue suitcase belonging to Toshiko Kadir's late father

1964–1970s

Courtesy of Toshiko Kadir



**Would you introduce yourself by your race?
Why or why not?**

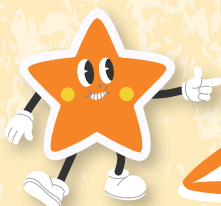
Ask a grown-up!



Are you or anyone you know from a mixed-race family?

What cultural celebrations are celebrated?

In multicultural Singapore, we have many opportunities to learn about different cultures from our friends and family! This can help us understand how we can respect each other and live harmoniously together.





If you are asked to pick a space in Singapore to share about, where would you pick?

We might think of places where our families and friends hang out or spaces that hold fond memories for us. In multicultural Singapore, these are also places for us to gather and connect with people from different backgrounds.



Singapore Idols – Army Boys

2006

Jing Quek

On loan from Singapore Art Museum



Singapore Idols – Aunties & Uncles

2009

Jing Quek

On loan from Singapore Art Museum



Take a closer look: Who are these people? Why do you think the artist photographed them in these spaces?



Where do you spend time with
people outside your family?
What do you do there?

Draw a picture of yourself
having fun there!



Exhibition Activity

Can you recognise
any of these places in
the photobooth?

Strike a pose in the
space and ask a
grown-up to snap a
picture of you!





What's my part?

Just like how the people of the 1950s to 1970s played different roles in building a multicultural nation, we too have a part to play! Our founding leaders Mr Ong Pang Boon and Mr S. Rajaratnam made this a goal in the Pledge we recite, declaring it as our responsibility to Singapore. How will you build multiculturalism?

Exhibition Activity

Take the Stage — don't just be a spectator!
Have a go at the dance activity you see in this section.

1

Learn a cultural dance!

2

Pick a word from the Pledge you feel is important.

3

Move your body and dance to your favourite movements!

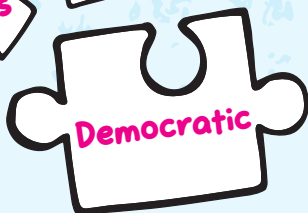
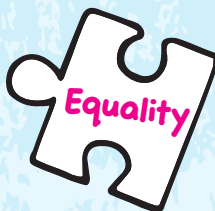


Multiculturalism requires us to all play our own individual part, but together as one.
Look up and watch how the different silhouettes dance in harmony with one another on stage!



Which keyword did you pick?

(circle your keyword)



Which dance did you do?

(circle the name of the dance)

Malay *Inang*

Chinese Ribbon Dance

Indian *Thillana*

Eurasian *Jinkli Nona*

What can you do?

(pick one or more options below)

I can _____ to help build multiculturalism in Singapore!

- ☐ learn to befriend and play together with other children around me
- ☐ celebrate festive occasions of different cultures
- ☐ learn to ask when I am curious about the practices of different traditions
- ☐ respect the practices of different cultures
- ☐ treat everyone around me fairly no matter the language they speak, or the race and religion they belong to



**NOT HERE!
SPECTATORS**

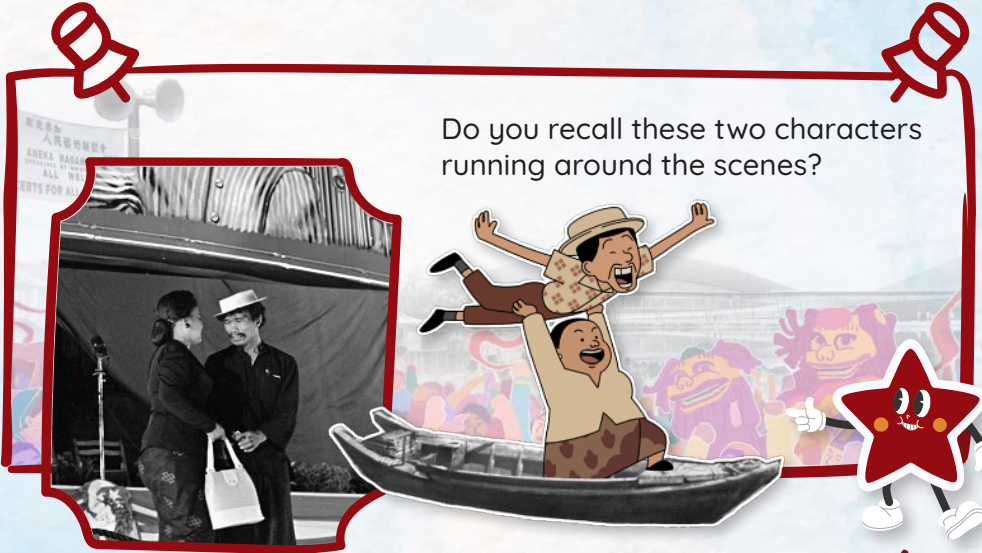
Bring home stickers of characters from the *Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat* (2025) video by Singapore animation studio, Finding Pictures.



Do you remember
seeing some of them?



These are the 4 dancers that performed the Eurasian *Jinkli Nona*, Chinese Ribbon Dance, Malay *Inang*, and Indian *Thillana* to us at the start of the show!



Do you recall these two characters running around the scenes?

Momo Latiff and Alias Congo performing at the Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat
1959

Ministry of Information and the Arts
Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

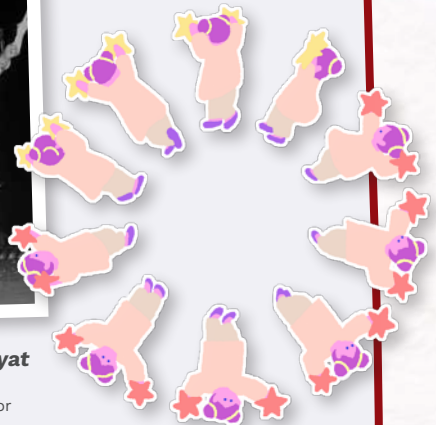
They are Malay comedians, Momo Latiff and Alias Congo!

If you had looked closely, you might have spotted these star girls dancing in the grand finale!



Star girls performing at the Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat
1959

The Straits Times © SPH Media Limited, permission required for reproduction



Exhibition Programmes

Check out some of our programmes you and your family may be interested in!

Tours



Family Tours (by registration)

Tailored for families with young children aged 4 to 9. Learn about living in multicultural Singapore through a storytelling session and interactive activities.

6 Dec (Sat) and 14 Mar (Sat),
10:30am

Bus Tours (by registration)

Hop on our bus pick-up and drop-off services from locations around the island that accompany the guided tours of the exhibition!

See available slots and register for our tours via the Memorial's website below.

Special Programmes



Aneka Ragam Remix

Participate in a multicultural mix of song and dance as we put a modern spin on *Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat*, the People's Cultural Concerts that ran from 1959 to 1964.

7 Dec (Sun), 14 Feb (Sat) and 14 Mar (Sat)
Venue: Singapore Courtyard, Level 2

For more information on the above programmes and other exhibition programmes, please refer to our Exhibition Brochure or the Founders' Memorial Website via this QR code:



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Singapore**



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on Instagram
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our mailing list!

Presented by the Founders' Memorial

The Founders' Memorial honours independent Singapore's founding values and nation-building journey. It will open at Bay East Garden in end-2028 as an integrated garden and gallery experience.

Since 2015, Singaporeans have contributed to the Memorial's concept, design, visitor experience and content through public engagements, pilot exhibitions and programmes.

Not Mere Spectators is the Memorial's second pilot exhibition, focusing on Multiculturalism.



Artist's impression of the Founders' Memorial

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This resource has been put together in consultation with the Ministry of Education (Academy of Singapore Teachers and Character and Citizenship Education Branch).

The Founders' Memorial would like to credit Mr Lim Kim Sze, an educator at West Spring Primary School, for his contributions to this resource, as part of his Teacher Work Attachment with the Memorial in 2025.

All information is correct at the time of print. The National Heritage Board reserves the right to make changes and modifications to the exhibition without prior notice.

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