



FOUNDERS' MEMORIAL

PRESENTS

31 OCT 2025-
29 MAR 2026



CITY HALL CHAMBER, NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

THE MAKINGS OF
MULTICULTURAL SINGAPORE

Not Mere Spectators

Step into 1950s–1970s Singapore, when multiculturalism was thought about, talked about, and consciously forged through policies, ground-up efforts and the daily choices of ordinary citizens. Move through the tensions between ideals and realities, then find your place on the stage of multicultural Singapore — still in the making today.

《不仅是旁观者》

请步入1950至1970年代的新加坡 — 那是多元文化被认真思考，广泛讨论，并在政策，基层行动和并普通市民的日常生活中，被有意识塑造的时代。穿行于理想与现实的张力之间，在这个至今仍在演进的多元文化舞台上，找到属于您的位置。

Bukan Sekadar Penonton

Hayati suasana kehidupan Singapura dari 1950-an hingga 1970-an, ketika kemajmukan budaya difikirkan, dibincangkan, dan dibentuk secara sedar melalui dasar-dasar, usaha-usaha yang bermula dari peringkat asas serta pilihan harian warga biasa. Hayati ketegangan, cita-cita dan realiti, kemudian cari peranan anda di pentas Singapura yang berbilang budaya — yang masih berdenyut dan dibentuk hingga hari ini.

பார்வையாளர் மட்டுமல்ல

சிங்கப்பூரின் 1950கள்-1970கள் காலகட்டத்தில் அடியெடுத்து வையுங்கள். பல்லின பண்பாடு குறித்து சிந்திக்கப்பட்டு, விவாதிக்கப்பட்டது. கொள்கைகள், களப்பணி முயற்சிகள், சாதாரண குடிமக்களின் அன்றாட வாய்ப்புகள் போன்றவற்றின் மூலம் அது உணர்வுபூர்வமாக உருவாக்கப்பட்டது.

Malaya and the “Malayan Consciousness”

You will come across the terms... “**Malaya**” and “**Malayan consciousness**” in this exhibition.

- “**Malaya**” refers to the Federation of Malaya in the 1950s and early 1960s. It comprised the nine states of the Malay Peninsula and the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca.
- “**Malayan consciousness**” refers to a sense of belonging to Malaya that transcended racial identities. Thought leaders such as S. Rajaratnam promoted the idea of a Malayan consciousness that would pave the way for self-governing Singapore to merge with independent Malaya.

Timeline

1948

Federation of Malaya is formed

1957

Malaya becomes independent

1959

Singapore gains full internal self-government status

1963

Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak merge to form Malaysia

1965

Singapore separates from Malaysia and becomes independent

Pick these up at the entrance...



Translation booklets
(Available for loan)



**Education Resource
and Family Guide**

Look out for these icons/QR codes throughout the exhibition...



Conversation prompts

Reflect and have a conversation with others on these questions.



Audio Guide

(available from Dec 2025)

Scan the QR codes in the exhibition to hear the curators explain each section.

+65 Journal

Scan the QR code to read more about this topic in our journal. Limited hardcopies of the journal are available at the exit.

Before you leave, share your reflections...

Write your reflections on activity cards and place them on our reflection wall. Take home a sticker sheet when you do so!



Exhibition Highlights



2. Gather

聚集

Berkumpul

ஒன்றுகூடு



Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat – An animated film

2025

Directed by Mark Wee

A Finding Pictures Production

Commissioned by Founders' Memorial

Duration: 2:40 min

Fun fact:

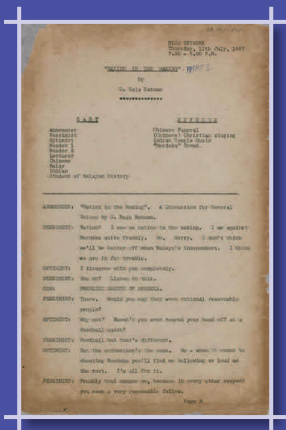
The former City Hall
(now the National Gallery
Singapore) was the
backdrop for several
Aneka Ragam Ra'ayat
concerts!

3. Imagine

想象

Menyulam Impian

கற்பனை செய்



Digital interactive:

Original typescripts of
S. Rajaratnam's radio play,
A Nation in the Making
1957

S. Rajaratnam Private
Papers Collection,
“A discussion for several voices
by S. Rajaratnam”, SR.091
Courtesy of ISEAS Library,
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

For illustrative purposes only



Three-part audio play: *Becoming a Nation*:

- Language: *Tuning In* in **4** Connect
- Race: *In Development* in **5** Relate
- National Consciousness: *A Place to Dream* in **6** Live

2025

Kaylene Tan

Commissioned by Founders' Memorial

Duration: About 2:30 min each

4. Connect

连接

Jambatan Hubungan

🌀 6060T

For illustrative purposes only



Facsimiles of learning materials from 1950s to 1980s



Eating on Banana Leaves

1979

Chua Mia Tee

Gift of Times Publishing Limited
Collection of National Gallery Singapore



Do we need to speak the same language
to have a common identity?

5. Relate

关联

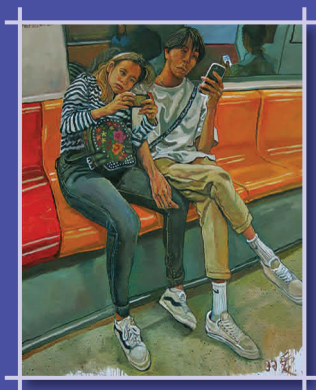
Jalanan Kaum

தொடர்புபடுத்து



Digital interactive storybook: Interracial stories featuring Toshiko Kadir

Courtesy of Toshiko Kadir



Lovers on a Train

2021

Yeo Tze Yang

On loan from Nic Lim



Are we *unbothered* by race, and should we be?

6. Live

生活

Kehidupan

வாழ்

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Interactive photo opportunity:
Select a common space, and take a photo.



Singapore Idols – Aunties & Uncles
2009
Jing Quek

On loan from Singapore Art Museum



We can share a void deck or a classroom, yet merely coexist. We can cross paths each day but remain isolated in our social media bubbles. How can we connect more deeply and genuinely?

7. Move

行动

Melangkah

நகர்தல்

For illustrative purposes only



Dance interactive:
Take the Stage —
don't be a mere
spectator!



Multiculturalism is a journey.
How will *you* take this forward?

8. Project Citizens

《我们是新加坡公民》

Projek Warganegara

குடிமக்கள் திட்டப்பணி

For illustrative purposes only



Eight of our founding generation share their stories of embracing citizenship in multicultural Singapore.

Programmes

All programmes will be conducted in English only, unless stated otherwise.

Tours

Walk-in Guided Tours

Volunteer-led tour of *Not Mere Spectators* and select artworks in Gallery's collection.

- Every Sat and Sun: 3pm
- For general public

Bus Tours (by registration)

Guided tours with bus pick-up and drop-off at locations around the island.

- Refer to Founders' Memorial website for available slots.

Curator Tours (by registration)

Explore *Not Mere Spectators* through the lens of the curators.

- 15 Nov (Sat) and 17 Jan (Sat), 4.30pm

Family Tours (by registration)

Tailored for families with young children aged 4 to 9, learn about Singapore's multicultural journey through storytelling and interactive activities.

- 6 Dec (Sat) and 14 Mar (Sat), 10.30am

For all programmes that require registration, please refer to Founders' Memorial website via the QR code:



Special Programmes

#NoStrangerDanger

Pick up a wristband and strike conversations with others wearing wristbands in the exhibition space. Exchange views and stories of multiculturalism in Singapore.

- Available during selected periods.
Refer to Founders' Memorial website.

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 the mid-1960s.

- 7 Dec (Sun), 14 Feb (Sat) and 14 Mar (Sat)
Refer to Founders' Memorial website for exact timings.
- Venue: Singapore Courtyard, Level 2

Panel discussions (by registration)

Engage in thought-provoking dialogue with artists and academics as they share perspectives on multiculturalism in Singapore.

- 23 Nov (Sun) and 7 Mar (Sat)
Refer to Founders' Memorial website for exact timings.
- Venue: Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium,
National Gallery Singapore

On the Flipside – Conversations on Multiculturalism

(by registration)

Forge deeper connection and shared understanding through open and authentic conversations on the exhibition's content. This edition brings locals and foreigners together!

- Friday evenings: 21 Nov and 19 Dec 2025,
6 Feb, 27 Feb and 13 Mar 2026,
7.30pm – 9.30pm

Connect with Us!

+65 Journal

Limited copies available for pickup at the exhibition or scan the QR code to read:



This 4th issue of +65 explores the topic of multiculturalism, providing visitors and interested readers with broader contextual information about the origins and evolution of multiculturalism in independent and post-independent Singapore (1950s–1970s).

About +65

+65 is the flagship publication of the Founders' Memorial. It aims to build thought leadership on Singapore's independence and post-independence history and society by exploring different facets of how our nation's formative years (1950s–1970s) are interpreted, represented, and remembered.

Our Mailing List

Want to volunteer and be part of the making of the Founders' Memorial?



Sign up
as a volunteer



Join our
mailing list



www.foundersmemorial.gov.sg



Founders' Memorial Singapore



[foundersmemorialsg](https://www.instagram.com/foundersmemorialsg)



Founders_Memorial@nhb.gov.sg

New to the Founders' Memorial?

The Founders' Memorial honours independent Singapore's founding values and nation-building journey. Opening at Bay East Garden in end-2028 as an integrated garden and gallery experience, it presents the story of how our founding leaders and generation built independent Singapore, establishing it on values and ideals such as multiculturalism, openness and integrity. The Memorial aims to spur Singaporeans to reflect on our founding values and draw inspiration for Singapore's future.

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

建国先贤纪念园承载着新加坡独立后的建国价值观和发展历程，并将于2028年底在滨海东花园正式开放。纪念园将融合园林景观与展馆体验，述说建国领袖如何连同建国一代，以多元文化，开放进取和诚实正直等价值信念为基础塑造新加坡。纪念园旨在鼓励新加坡人思考建国价值信念，从中受启发，共创明日新加坡。

《不仅是旁观者》是建国先贤纪念园的第二个启程展览，聚焦建国核心价值：多元文化。

Taman Tugu Pengasas memberi penghormatan kepada nilai-nilai asas Singapura yang merdeka dan perjalanan pembinaan negara. Dibuka di Taman Bay East pada akhir tahun 2028 dengan menawarkan pengalaman sebuah taman dan galeri yang bersepadu, tugu peringatan ini memaparkan kisah bagaimana pemimpin dan generasi pengasas kita telah membina Singapura yang merdeka, berlandaskan nilai dan cita-cita seperti kepelbagaian budaya, keterbukaan dan kewibawaan. Taman Tugu ini bertujuan mendorong warga Singapura merenungkan nilai-nilai asas kita dan mendapatkan inspirasi untuk masa depan Singapura.

Bukan Sekadar Penonton ialah pameran rintis kedua Taman Tugu Pengasas yang memberi tumpuan kepada salah satu nilai pengasas kita: Semangat Berbilang Budaya.

நிறுவியோர் நினைவகம், சுதந்திர சிங்கப்பூரின் அடிப்படை விழுமியங்களையும் நாட்டு நிர்மாணப் பயணத்தையும் போற்றிக் கௌரவிக்கிறது. பூந்தோட்டத்துடன் ஒருங்கிணைக்கப்பட்ட காட்சிக்கூடமாக 2028-இன் இறுதியில் கிழக்குக்கரைப் பூந்தோட்டத்தில் திறக்கப்படவிருக்கும் இந்த நினைவகம், நமது முதல் தலைமுறைத் தலைவர்களும் மக்களும் பல இனக் கலாசாரம், திறந்த மனப்பான்மை, நேர்மை போன்ற விழுமியங்கள், இலட்சியங்களின் அடிப்படையில் சுதந்திர சிங்கப்பூரை எவ்வாறு நிர்மாணித்தனர் என்னும் கதையைப் படைக்கிறது. இந்த நினைவகம் நம் அடிப்படை விழுமியங்களைப் பற்றிச் சிந்தித்து சிங்கப்பூரின் எதிர்காலம் குறித்து ஊக்கம் பெற சிங்கப்பூர்களைத் தூண்டுகிறது.

பார்வையாளர் மட்டும் அல்ல என்பது நினைவகத்தின் இரண்டாவது முன்னோடிக் கண்காட்சியாகும். இது, பன்முகக் கலாசாரம் என்ற மதிப்புமிக்க விழுமியம் நிறுவப்பட்டதில் கவனம் செலுத்துகிறது.

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