

## NUS MUSEUM

### CONSTRUCTED LANDSCAPES: SINGAPORE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Welcome to NUS Museum!

##### 1. Portraiture

A portrait is a pictorial representation of a likeness of a person or a painted resemblance of a subject such as the work by Xu Beihong. This painting by Xu Beihong introduces architect Ho Kwong Yew, the first Singaporean architect who was foreign educated. Ho is known for his modern architectural designs such as Haw Par Villa Mansion and the Chee Guan Chiang House.

The portrait of this family revealed the artist's engagement with his subject matter. While the portrait was being executed, Xu had handed Mr Ho one of his architectural drawings and insisted his subject hold it while he painted him in a life sitting. Besides a portrait painting of the subject, the work highlights the subject's profession as an architect and his role in the Singapore landscape.



Xu Beihong  
*Portrait of Mr & Mrs Ho  
Kwong Yew & Ho Kok Horng*  
1939  
Oil on canvas  
87.5 x 120 cm  
Collection of Dr Ho Kok Hoe

- a. Find a photograph of an elderly relative or someone much older than you who are prepared to sit for you. Discuss with them the type of objects you could include in your portrait that would give a viewer an idea of their likes and dislikes.

## 2. *Plein-air* Paintings

a. *Plein-air* is a manner or style of painting that has been executed out doors and representing a direct response to the scene or subject in front of the artist. In the section on “Memory”, a common scene is represented in the works of 4 artists, Foo Chee San, Lim Cheng Hoe, Doris Duke and Lim Xiu Xiang, working in the *plein-air* style but in varied media.

What is the subject matter depicted in their paintings? \_\_\_\_\_

b. We can learn about history from an artwork. For example, the painting below shows a construction site in the 1950s. We observe that these **women** played an important role in building and construction activities during that time.

	<p>Fill in the title of this painting.</p> <p>Liu Kang</p> <p>_____ (1951)</p> <p>Oil on canvas</p>
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Think of the building/construction sites in Singapore today. How are they different from what you see in the picture?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Do a comparative study using the below works.



Sylvia Manasseh  
*Temple Courtyard*  
1956



Charles Dyce  
*The Esplanade, Singapore*  
1842 - 47

### 3. Woodblock Prints – Art Process

Woodblock print is a relief print process which originates from China around the 19<sup>th</sup> Century or earlier. In Singapore, woodblock printing also known as woodcuts came in as an artistic medium together with a group of immigrant artists from China who stayed on to teach at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Art. Although woodcuts as an artistic medium were known to have been practiced in Singapore as early as the 1930s, it is only during 50s and 60s where it would be described as 'the eras of woodblock print in Singapore'.

The technique involves sketching a design and drawing it onto a woodblock. The Chinese boxwood was the most common and preferred material used in Singapore as they were readily available in bookstores. Following that, the artist using woodblock tools gouges and scoops away the surrounding parts of the wood leaving the outlines. Once inked, the woodblock is pressed onto paper or cloth which leaves the imprint of the design .

a. Using Lim Mu Hue's *Backstage of a Puppet Theatre* as an example, what is the sequence of order in the woodblock print making process?



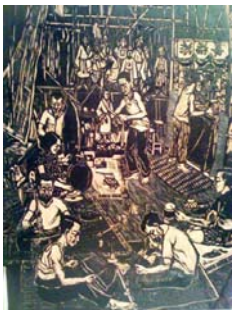
*Transfer for "Backstage of a Puppet Theatre"*



*Backstage of a Puppet Theatre*



*Studies for "Backstage of a Puppet Theatre"*



*Backstage & Fortune Teller*

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#### **4. Create A Story!**

Choose an artwork in the exhibition and from the image create and weave a short story or a poem. Share this with your friends.

***We hope that you have enjoyed yourself. Thank you for visiting our Museum!***