Foreword
Ahmad Mushahid, Head, NUS Museum

The sensual quality of Ny Eng Teng’s sculptures belies their ambiguous and ambivalent nature. Their elegant lines, truncated and manipulated body forms, textured surfaces and restrained colours merge to form ‘poetic objects’ that appeal to our sensual responses as audience. Yet these are underlined by a conceptual complexity that was often masked or coded. This exhibition, consisting of a broad selection of pieces from NUS Museum’s Ny Eng Teng Collection, seeks to represent the broad development of Eng Teng’s practice, and in doing so hopes to encourage its scope and highlight its productive capacity as objects of research and study.

The first donation of 760 pieces of sculptures, maquettes, drawings and paintings, was made by the artist to the National University of Singapore in 1997. By 2001, the collection was enhanced with a second and third donation, consisting of works completed between 1991 and 2000, bringing the total number of works in the collection to date to 1106. These donations provided a comprehensive account of the artistic practice of Ny Eng Teng (1954 – 2001), one of the region’s most significant and prolific modern sculptor and visionary in his experiments and investigations.

A monograph Ny Eng Teng: Art and Thoughts was published with the first donation in 1998. Authored by NUS-based art historian T.K. Sabapathy, the publication detailed development of Eng Teng as an artist; from his tentative engagements with art during the mid 1960s, his formal training at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and Stoke-on-Trent in UK, his short practice as an industrial pottery designer in Ireland, to his sculptural practice in Singapore up to the early 1990s. Sabapathy traces these developments by outlining Eng Teng’s conceptual and formal interests from 1965 and beyond. The study comprehensively surveys critical understandings of Eng Teng’s practice, identifying pivotal moments of the artist’s personal history, his innovations and accomplishments. It is also significant for its analyses of the body as a subject in modern art in Singapore. In particular, Sabapathy focuses considerable attention on Eng Teng’s various encounters with the figure, his attitudes, approaches and articulation of the body referenced to the modern condition.

In concluding his study on a group of works completed by Eng Teng in 1990, Sabapathy remarked “consequently, interpretations of form and meaning will have to be constructed on ambivalent grounds.” If foregrounded a later major exhibition presented by NUS Museum in 1999 which featured the second group of donations of sculptures and drawings completed after 1991. Curated by Constantino Sheares, the exhibition Bodies Transformed, Ny Eng Teng in the Nineties dealt with the border and perhaps the most radical period of Eng Teng’s practice — during which he advanced his interest in the figure and its poetic value, but transforming it in ways that are surprising, humorous, ambiguous and even shocking. Sheares identifies the Eng Teng sculptures as ‘poetic’ objects, yet regard “the metaphoric force of these strongly figurative and humorously fantastic works” as a powerful strategy of making ‘aesthetic connections’, but at the same time refuses to confirm them. Each work has many possible readings: “... they hide as much as they reveal, serving as containment as well as projection.”

In 2003, Configuring the Body: Form and Tenor in Ny Eng Teng’s Art was launched with the intention to “give rise to curatorial schemes” focusing on works from the artist’s third and final donation. To do this, its curator T.K. Sabapathy assessed prevailing and potential readings of Eng Teng’s works from formal and conceptual perspectives. Significantly, he prospected Eng Teng’s position and status in modern sculpture making, identifying the symbolic and emotive resonance that pervade the otherwise formal investigations. As such Eng Teng’s practice may be productively located as an interlocutor between various ideas such as the body and its representation in modern and contemporary expression, body as site of discourse, and psychoanalytic as an interpretative device. Indeed, these articulations are generative in prompting multifarious approaches, readings and outcomes.

This exhibition Sculpting Life is motivated by a number of interests: to assemble a body of works that represent salient themes and conceptual perspectives of the artist and in doing so, to highlight continuities and transformations, as well as strategies developed by the artist at different times of his practice; by adopting an ‘archival approach’ of display, including the display of maquettes, drawings and paintings, to encourage and facilitate a range of readings, so as to heighten the significance and interpretative possibilities of the collection as a scholarly or curatorial resource. This reference to the agency of interpretation and reading is critical, as it acknowledges the associative potentials and the ambiguity of meanings stressed in varied ways by Sheares and Sabapathy, as well as the capacity of the collection in accommodating a range of approaches and emphasis, among which may include investigations into conceptions on gender, sexuality, the body as metaphor, the individual in its societal context, and the articulation of new critical strategies.

Along with the provision of a permanent space for the display of works by Ny Eng Teng, the NUS Museum had also provided a temporary gallery hosting exhibitions that facilitate projects that may be read alongside the formal and conceptual interests identifiable from the practice of Eng Teng. Sabapathy’s 1989 essay ‘Vital Images of Life: Sculpture of Ng Eng Teng’ is instructive as a curatorial metaphor: “It has to deal with giving ideological, emotional and social subjects images that have sensual appeal and formal coherence.”
Introduction

Foo Bui Ling

Ng Eng Tang (1934 - 2011), a painter and ceramist by training, is recognised as one of Singapore’s most innovative sculptors. The artist made three generous donations of his artworks to the National University of Singapore (NUS), in 1997, 1998 and 2001, putting no conditions on his gifts except that they would not be sold or separated.

Having benefited from both formal and informal instruction, Ng was a firm believer not only of learning and experimentation, but also of sharing his knowledge. Those whom he mentored remember him as an unassuming teacher, generous in imparting his vast expertise and philosophy in art making but never imposing in his views. He believed that his works showcased a highly explorative approach and offered great educational value. Naturally, he thought of donating them to an educational institution and NUS came first in his mind.

Along the artist’s vision of making the collection accessible for education, NUS Museum has, over the years, held a number of shows based on the donations. The current exhibition, Sculpting Life: The Ng Eng Tang Collection, adopts a largely archival approach to provide a substantial cross-sectional view of Ng’s practice. It introduces key facets of Ng’s life and practice and so doing provides the background and foundation from which a myriad of interpretative accounts may be initiated. The range of Ng’s works presented – sketches, paintings, maquettes, sculptures, figures and pottery – makes this a conducive setting for further research into the artist, his creations and aspects of the Singapore art scene during this lifetime.

The breadth and depth of the Ng Eng Tang Collection allow for meaningful comparative analysis when it is placed alongside creations by Ng’s contemporaries as well as works of other artists exploring similar themes, media and techniques. With this in mind, the gallery has been conceived to accommodate short term ancillary exhibitions; the discussions advanced through these temporary shows will provide viewing of the Ng Eng Tang Collection in diverse ways.

Sculpting Life has three main sections: The Formative Years; Body / Form / Perspectives; and Materials / Processes / Public Art. A presentation of Ng’s works at NUS’ University Hall highlights aspects of the artist’s experimental approaches.

The Formative Years considers the types of art making Ng was exposed to during his years as an art student, and the teachers who left their imprint on his development and career. Ng initiated his artistic interests by taking up informal lessons but soon after received a formal art education at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and built a strong foundation in drawing and painting. A survey of Ng’s drawings and sculptures reveals that even in these early years, he displayed a deep interest in the figurative, its significance, and its ability to express the human condition. These themes, central to his sculptural practice, were developed and refined over the span of his career.

Ng’s passion for art making and his determination were evident from the start. Although beset with earlier ailments, he graduated from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and went on to receive further training in ceramics in the United Kingdom. Upon graduation, Ng was offered the position of a designer at an Irish pottery factory and worked there for two years before returning to Singapore to start his own art studio.

Body / Form / Perspectives looks at Ng’s evolving approaches in articulating the figure and related thematic concerns. At the core, the artist preferred the representational. Body parts, the musculature and facial expressions were rendered in relative detail revealing realism while exploring their expressive qualities. The 1960s and 1970s saw Ng developing an abstract language where the figures were simplified and stylised but still conceived to convey the range of human emotion.

For Ng, themes informing ideas, feelings and values hence the communicative value of a piece of artwork was an aspect never to be compromised and the form was most meaningful when it also had an accompanying message. By clustering Ng’s works into fluid and overlapping subthemes, this presentation offers a range of readings that encourage further investigations and speculations. The groupings serve as a guide in apprehending the topics Ng explored but they are by no means definitive. Viewers are encouraged to respond in their own way to the classifications which promote other viewpoints and fresh discourses.

Materials / Processes / Public Art examines the materials widely employed in Ng’s artistic productions, namely clay, cement, fondue and bronze. Each material involves a distinct production process, requires unique facilities and artists different methods of finishing. In this respect, sculpture as an art form demands not only artistic creativity but sound technical manufacturing knowledge from a practitioner aspiring to excel in the profession. Consequently, Ng’s mastery of these different media, and his proficient works in others such as aluminum and stainless steel, is further testimony of the artist’s talent and his appetite for learning. Amongst the materials he worked with, the durable, economical and versatile nature of cement fondue made it Ng’s choice for public sculptures. This section concludes with a glimpse of the artist’s contemplations when proposing designs for public art, and the differences as well as similarities in his approach towards public and studio productions.

Increasingly, NUS Museum seeks to establish satellite exhibitions in various parts of the campus to enhance access to the collections. A selection from the Ng Eng Tang Collection is currently being displayed at University Hall. In Spirit of Experimentation: Works by Ng Eng Tang at University Hall, Magdalene Chua observes the thread of experimentation weaving through these exhibits and discusses them along two main trajectories – abstraction as a means of revisiting traditional themes, and the innovative transformation of sculptural forms from static pedestal bound displays to lively kinetic objects. Chua views the artist’s interest in pulling new ideas to trial, and his awareness of societal concerns, as a mirror to NUS’ vision of shaping an engaged community, passionate about learning and zealous in adding value to the human experience.

Endnotes


Phoebing, 1981 (Cement fondue)
Sculpting Life: The Ng Eng Teng Collection

Fan Si Leng

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

This section highlights aspects of Ng Eng Teng’s life and training during the early years of his quest towards an art career. As a student at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and later in the United Kingdom from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, he undertook a range of investigations – drawing and painting of figures, portraits, still life and landscapes – as was customary in the art conventions and training of that period. Besides this formal training, he also experimented with three-dimensional forms and materials, making the best of whatever facilities were available to him.

Even in his early artistic productions, he displayed a keen sense of regard and sympathy for the human condition; this would become a key trait in his works, setting him apart from other modernists of his generation.

Early Art Education

Due largely to his health, Ng’s early art training was sporadic. His first art course was at the British Council where, for a few months in 1953, he learnt painting whilst concurrently receiving outpatient treatment for tuberculosis. 1 Students had to personally prepare raw materials for the classes and Ng recalled this experience as having provided him with a good understanding of paint materials and canvases.

In 1955, Ng enrolled at NAFA but his freshman year ended prematurely due to a recurrence of the illness. 2 Spending about a year recuperating at his uncle’s home in Tenggaroh, he attempted to capture the sights of the northern Malay state in drawings and paintings. However, he was dissatisfied with the results and determined that he needed formal training to acquire the necessary techniques for art making. Ng returned to Singapore in January 1958. Whilst working as a trainee artist, he took art classes at Liu Kang’s ‘Monrow Studio’, learning pastel drawing and oils. He also attended a short Chinese Brush Painting course at the YMCA in Shenton Way.

In late 1959, Ng rejoined NAFA as a second-year student. Being Singapore’s only fine art school in those days, NAFA was the training ground for many who would become well known in the art world. Amongst Ng’s contemporaries, whose works form part of NUS Museum’s collection, were Seih Kim Joo (Fig. 1), Wong Kian Ping, Thomas Yeo and Wei Beng Chong.

The curriculum at NAFA was developed along two main tracks – Western oil painting and traditional Chinese ink painting. 3 From Ng’s account and the relatively small number of his Chinese ink paintings in this collection, it appears that Ng placed greater emphasis on honing his skills in the former.

Attending Chinese painting class was optional; if you wished to, you could go and watch demonstrations, go back and paint and present your work at the next lesson and the instructor will comment or he may add a few strokes to correct the work. 4

Ready to explore the range of Western art traditions provided Ng with a strong grounding in figure drawing and portraiture, skills which would empower him to pursue a varied approach in figurative for his sculptural productions.

On the NAFA teachers who had left deep impressions on him, Ng recalled Georgette Chen (Fig. 2) and Cheong Soo Pieng.

Georgette Chen was teaching the first-year students in the main building during intervals, I would peer through the window and watch Mdm Chen with awe. I knew she was a great artist. I wished to be taught by her one day.

…when I re-encountered in 1969, I was taught by her. She spoke Mandarin, English, French and Malay – all fluently. I was thrilled to be in her class…

Mdm Chen was a quiet artist. There was much sensitivity and quality in her works. Her colours were very rich in tones and shades; a precision and accurate painter, she would mix her colours very accurately in the palette and each stroke she put on canvas counted. … Some of my early paintings had a touch of Mdm Chen, and that was the time when I was exploring and experimenting with different styles and ideas from different teachers. Cheong Soo Pieng has also left quite a bit of his imprint on my paintings.

I am lucky in many ways to have been taught by all five pioneer artists. … Cheong Soo Pieng, to me, was the greatest. We looked forward to seeing his new works every year in Singapore Art Society Exhibition. You can be sure there would be something new and interesting from him each year. As a result, in the following year, you would see a few following him in terms of style, images or colours, something of Soo Pieng. 5

Sculpture was not offered in NAFA’s curriculum so Ng taught himself three dimensional art making by referring to books, learning through trial and error.
and getting occasional advice from those who practised this art form. Ng used pastel and oil for his early sculptures; pieces made of the latter material were brought to Juring or Alexandra Brickworks (Fig. 3) for firing. In 1958, a chance meeting with Jean Bullock (Fig. 4), wife of a British air force officer, marked the beginning of Ng’s foray into sculpture-making in cementbond. Bullock was a sculptor already familiar with the medium and whilst helping her with the casting, Ng benefitted from her knowledge.

I learnt a lot from her and considered her my teacher. If not for her, I would not have been working in cementbond.

Georgette Chen noticed Ng’s interest in ceramics and, upon his graduation, she encouraged him to take a course in pottery. Ng’s parents were reluctant at the prospect of their son going abroad to study art as they had hoped he would be an architect; however, believing in the value of a good education, they eventually gave their blessings. Unbeknownst to the options available to him, Ng sought the advice of the British manager at the Alexandra Brickworks who recommended the North Staffordshire College of Technology in Stoke-on-Trent. When classes started, Ng was taken back that he had in fact been accepted for an advanced industrial pottery designer’s course even though he had no foundation in the subject. Trying to acquire the fundamentals in a short time was very hard work, but he persevered and eventually finished the course. Some of Ng’s impressions of Stoke-on-Trent are recorded in View of Stoke-on-Trent from North Staffordshire College of Technology (Fig. 5) and From an English Window (132 Oxford St., Stoke-on-Trent) (Fig. 6).

Ng spent the following year at the Fanam School of Art learning studio pottery. After graduating from Fanam, he accepted the post of a designer at Cambline pottery factory in County Cork, Ireland working there for two years before returning to Singapore.

Portraiture

During his early art practice, Ng produced a significant number of portraits, figure drawings and landscapes, interspersed with some still life and Chinese paintings. Portraiture was one of the dominant categories in art practices of that time; however, its proliferation in this collection is an indication of Ng’s interest in human expressions and moods.

In his effort to deal with the formal and conceptual aspects of portraiture, Ng was drawn towards Georgette Chen’s repertoire of techniques. Chen’s fascination with drapery is manifested in a number of Ng’s portraiture. In Melly Goh (Fig. 7), the soft fabric of the scarf flows from the head down the shoulders and over the right arm and left shoulder of the subject. Creases are formed on the sleeves as the material slides along the girl’s arm and folds gather on her lap. The hands are given prominence; in a number of works, they are featured in the foreground either resting on the subject’s lap or occasionally placed on the back of a chair. Portrait of K. Aiyasamy (Fig. 8) sees Ng adapting Chen’s use of pastel colours and also the detailed illustration of prints and textures of the fabric.

As a formal portraitist, Ng also produced paintings with social themes. Life is Hard (Fig. 9) shows a woman who, despite her youth, is bent from hard labour. Exhaustion is visible from her almost closed eyes, the bent knees suggest strain and difficulty in moving forward, and the outstretched fingers clutching at the pieces of wood emphasize the effort expended in trying to keep the load balanced on her back. In Old Age (Fig. 10), the elderly lady stands abroad and seems engrossed and troubled. The varis, both at the side of her forehead and on her left hand, prudently distinctly, stretching the skin. Overall, the image is one of shrinkage and decline – a stage and position we all reach when we age. The outlook is grim and the mood of pessimism is heightened by the sombre colours of the subject’s clothing and the black umbrella she holds.

The economic and political conditions in the late colonial period stimulated the production of artworks based on social realist themes. Ng’s constant struggle with health heightened his sense of empathy towards the struggles of others and inspired a number of paintings and sculptures featuring those psychological conditions. Corrode (Fig. 11) is one of the few sculptures in the collection made from plaster of Paris. The intensity of suffering is expressed through the exaggerated wrinkling of the subject’s neck, her enlarged eyes reveal the horror she is experiencing, and a well emanates from the contorted lips.

**Figure Drawing**

At NAPA, figurative study was compulsory. However, due to prevailing social and cultural norms, nude life drawing was seen as and the subject was taught using plastercast (Fig. 12).

Life drawing was a subject that I had always wanted to do even before I left NAPA. We were desperate for life drawing in NAPA but were not allowed; the nearest we had was when a European lady volunteered to pose in a bikini, reclining and facing the wall, we only painted her back view (Fig. 13). And imagine we had to close all doors and windows!  

Whilst studying at Fanam in 1963, Ng had the opportunity to explore the nude subject. Back in Singapore, he resumed this practice in 1961 with a group formed by a few art teachers. Very First Life Drawing (Fig. 14) and Thinking (Fig. 15) are examples from Ng’s life drawing practice at Fanam and in Singapore respectively. In the same way that he expressed emotions through sculptures, Ng used life drawing to interpret and convey the essence of the subject’s personality.

In my view, it [life drawing] is not so much to learn but to express and to interpret and, hopefully, to be inspired by it. In my life drawing, try to make the figures as sensitive and sensual as possible and that, to me, is the purpose of having a model... I have to be truthful to the subject. So what I try to do is to put life and bring out the spirit of the sitter, apart from concentrating on technique.
Indigenous culture described through its people, activities, food and clothing inspired rich visual expressiveness. Making knots (Fig. 17) was a familiar activity as the region was highly dependent on fishing. These corners were lengthy, usually stretching for a few yards, and Ng saw this as an opportunity to apply a compositional scheme advanced by Cheong Soo Pieng in the 1950s. The picture progresses in oblique angles along a vertical plane, starting from the man in the foreground and moving in a zigzag fashion on the shore, finally concluding at the boat in the horizon. Art historian T.K. Sabapathy describes this method of rendering the landscape as an "island way of synthesising aspects derived from the design of hanging (vertical) scrolls and of the easel picture."

The tragic aftermath of the Bukit Ho Swee fire in May 1961 moved a number of artists to produce works commenting on the victims' plight. Cheong Soo Pieng's frequent use of strong vertical lines to segment a composition is referenced in Ng's After the Fire (Fig. 18). The charred trunks and branches, located at various distances from the viewer - to the left of the foreground, at the centre, and randomly scattered in the background - draw attention to the massive scale of destruction. Promiscuous masonry in all directions, these cross-black organic remains heighten the gloom and evoke a sense of eerie silence at the scene. The central tree trunk dominates the right to the few houses which retain a semblance of their original structure, helping us to envisage what used to stand in place of the rubble which dominates the landscape.

End of History (Fig. 19) is another portrayal of the "heavily wounded, brooding mood, accompanying the demolition of a significant landmark. For many, the physical landscape is closely associated with fixed experiences and memories; place provides a tangible way to relate to people, occasions and encounters in life. The destruction follows a dilution or erosion of these memories and invokes an acute sense of loss. Ng's landscape productions such as After the Fire and End of History may be sparse in their representation of the human figure but extremely compelling in insisting on the primacy of emotions and the human condition.

ENDNOTES
1 T.K. Sabapathy, "Conversation between Ng Eng Hwa and T.K. Sabapathy," in T.K. Sabapathy, Ng Eng Hwa, Art and Thoughts (Singapore: NUS Museums, National University of Singapore, 1996), 140 - 141.
2 T.K. Sabapathy, "Conversation between Ng Eng Hwa and T.K. Sabapathy," in T.K. Sabapathy, Ng Eng Hwa, Art and Thoughts (Singapore: NUS Museums, National University of Singapore, 1996), 140 - 141.
Stylistics and Abstraction

In the 1980s and 1990s, Ng actively engaged in strategies of simplification and stylisation. I see my work developing from a more realistic and elaborate to a more stylised and simplified expression ... I am striving for this elusive and ambiguous balance (between expressiveness and simplicity) ...  

Ng approached simplification in two ways, expressing emotional perspectives on the one hand and form on the other. Where expressiveness is the key to messaging, such as in Looking Ahead (Fig. 20), Hopeful (Fig. 49) and Wondering (Fig. 50), the facial features such as eyes, mouth and nose, are rendered in dital. Other parts of the body are simplified, existing only for structural support or as a means to give compositional balance. The limbs are reduced to stumps and serve as the base or as a support for the head. This strategy of abbreviation is also seen in Adorabie (Fig. 21) but in this case, the hands, being positioned to cover the vital areas, also places emphasis on the message.

Red Maiden (Fig. 22) and Head (Fig. 23) are indicative of the second approach. Here, both the facial and anatomical features are reduced to their fundamental geometric or organic shapes. Form and profile take precedence and are stylised to communicate the essence of the subject matter. The body of Adorabie (Fig. 24) is stretched and exaggerated to represent the contours that these performers are capable of.

Communicative emphasis was a key aspect of Ng's art making; he felt that an aesthetically inspiring form would have greater impact if it also incorporated some subject matter or meaning which was universally understood. This aspiration for viewers to grasp the narrative content of his works often led to contemplations on how abstraction could be applied in an accessible manner.

...I feel the abstraction can be taken a stage further. I have only distorted certain features and eliminated parts of the body. ...but each component of the figure is treated realistically. It is a way of making my work expressive and easily identifiable, but it could be a restriction ... I have to resolve this contradiction in my art, wanting to please myself and at the same time serve society.  

These experiments with abstraction led to thought-provoking creatures especially when used as a tool for social commentary. Masked in Blue (Fig. 25) represents both a torso and a face. As a face, the censorship technique used by publishers is depicted where body parts considered obscene are masked over; as a face, the tapes have implications of one being prevented from seeing or speaking of the offending subject. Modesty X (Fig. 26) is also a visual interplay of the torso and face representing censorship through the cut-out body parts and at the same time suggesting restrictions to sight and speech through the removal of eyes and mouth. The artist's reaction to heavy censorship was one of surprise (Fig. 27) since nudity had no obscene connotations in his mind. The dark brown coating gives the impression of a figure tightly bound in a tube, perhaps suggesting constraints to artistic practices dictated by social norms and values.

In 1985, Ng painted End of History (Fig. 19) as a reminder of the consequences of the wrench removal of the physical fabric of human settlements. He advanced this theme in the 1970s through sculptural forms. SPW IV (Fig. 28) is from a series of abstract depictions about the artist's sentiments towards demolition work in Chinatown. For Ng, demolition of the built landscape meant the fragmentation of human memories and experiences.

It was like a split to the heart of Man. Humanity, represented by the broken chips and textural surfaces of crumbling walls, was torn and scattered and mankind reduced to a jig-saw puzzle. Sometimes the parts do not fit.  

Play

Ng Eng Teng's explorations into stylisation and abstraction are often accompanied by a sensibility characterised by wit, humour and play. This pique of fun is depicted in the audacity and excitement of kids at play as in Freedom Child Over Hill (Fig. 29). The child is active, carefree and always ready to launch off into adventure. A set of figures on animals use the trademark bat-like shape which Ng derived from his experiments with pots. The features of some animals are exaggerated to highlight their clothing characteristics, such as the elongated round eyes of Owl (Fig. 30).

Tension (Fig. 31) and Flat Torso (Fig. 32) show Ng's way of bringing sculptures, literally and figuratively, down from the pedestal and encouraging the audience to interact and participate with his creations; this was a projection of the artist's belief that sculptures should have room for the whimsical and light hearted.  

In some cases, the use of rockcig and rolling motions enhanced the sensation Ng wanted the sculpture to impart, and at the same time provided a lighthearted touch in the treatment of otherwise serious issues. Tension is about a man struggling for his dear life. A loss of control would mean an immediate falling over; this precarious situation, as well as the immense challenge of 'outmaneuvering' for dear life, is amplified when the scheme is rolling.

In another body of works, Ng injects wit to creatively transform parts of the body to encompass multiple identities. Jasper (Fig. 33) shows a head and neck but also alludes to the phallic form. Sitting Torso (Fig. 34) is a body resting on the lower limbs which are folded such that only the thighs and knees are visible. From the shape, the phallic form is also projected, thus superimposing the female torso to the male sign.

This mischievous metamorphosis of the body is further employed in the Torso-to-Face series. In Branded Eyes (Fig. 35), which evolved from drawings such as Abstract Torso II (Fig. 36), the eyes and breasts are interchangeable depending...
on whether one engraves the object as a face or torso. The series developed from Nig's drawing exercises.

... the Torso-to-Face series... came about from doing these little drawings... at each session I see an image of a face looking at me from the body, and this impression gets more intense each time.  

Perspectives

Nourished by his observations of the human condition, Nig explored a range of ideas, energies and emotions which he shaped into three dimensional forms offering us a perspective of the artist's own interests and concerns. The major themes which Nig explored over an extended period were family, the psychological states, and self.

Family

Family was close to Nig's heart. He spoke fondly of his parents, recalling the carnation bush which his mother grew in the garden and his father's support of and assistance with his life building project at home. 11 The wish to be near his parents was one of the motivations for Nig's return to Singapore in 1966 even though he was doing well as a designer at Corning glass factory in Ireland.

Another reason why I came back was for my parents: they were getting on in years... after I had done so well in health and life, I thought I must come back before it was too late.12

Nig was keen observer of the family unit, individuals in the unit, relationships amongst family members and their interdependence. Being a centre where children learn values and interactions with people, the home and family is the core of humanity.13 From these studies, production on the mother and child series emerged which later included father and child and works on children.

The mother and child productions are composed in a variety of ways. In Mother and Twin 2600 (Fig. 2), each child is supported by the mother and sits contented and restful in her arms. Mother and Twins 1988 (Fig. 28) is similar in its portrayal of the calm and secure child in the embrace of the parent but here, the form is simplified and the child represented only as a head supported by the mother's palm. The mother's arm can be viewed alternately as her own limb or as the body of the child. In Madonna and Child II (Fig. 38), the child starts to assert some independence and although undeniably, seems intent on being on his feet. The mother supports the child in his endeavours but maintains control.

Fig. 30 Madonna and Child II, 1988 (Bronze)
Fig. 31 Madonna and Child III, 1988 (Bronze)
Fig. 32 Over Mother's Head, 1987 (Bronze)
Fig. 33 Madonna and Child III, 1988 (Bronze)
Fig. 34 Over Mother's Head, 1987 (Bronze)

Over Mother's Head (Fig. 40) shows the child attaining almost complete freedom and rising joyfully on the mother's head. Hands Full (Fig. 41) works on the same idea but in simplified form. This composition became increasingly popular in Nig's works and offers a few possible readings, one being the greater independence a child seeks as he grows. Created in a period when Singapore's family planning programme was actively promoted, these works may also be contextualised as an exploration of the effects that the successful campaign had on the parent child dynamics.

In the early 1970s, Nig started producing works on the father and child and also explored compositions of parents with their children. In Responsibly (Fig. 42), the father holds the child on his shoulder. This arrangement plays with the idea of the father shouldering the responsibility to care for his offspring but is also indicative of Nig's perception of a father's role:

A father is like a mountain overlooking the valley which is the child, very attentive, guiding and guarding from afar... Sometimes we see a father carrying a child, or a child sitting on his shoulder which a mother does not do. This to me is a father's way of guiding a child to be brave, looking ahead with confidence.14

Whilst traditional division of household labour defined the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the homemaker and caregiver, there has been more emphasis in recent decades on the essential role of the father in a child's upbringing. The emergence of the father and child works evokes early affilitional changes in society towards greater involvement of fathers in parenting.

The Human Condition

Psychological or emotional traits was a dominant theme in Nig's works. Dejected (Fig. 43) is a product from his interaction with a boy whom Nig talked out of 'doing harm to his life'. The artist recorded this incident at the back of the canves (Fig. 44).

Several years before painting
persuaded a boy from doing harm to his life. An orphan: finding this world too cruel,
and lonely, without money and...

...and LOVE.

Fig. 42 Dejected, 1980 (Bronze)
Fig. 43 Dejected (back view)

Exploration of the human condition continued through the late 1960s and 70s with a series of sculptures representing figures waging war or experiencing various forms of distress and agony. In Prostration of a Lover on a Rock (Fig. 45), the anguish and intensity of suffering is emphasised through the tensed muscles, stretched in some parts and clumped into knots in others. Yet another group containing figures curled inwards in a crouching position. The protagonist in Feer (Fig. 49) wraps his limbs around his body; his concerns are internalised and there is a reluctance to engage with the world. The eyes are deeply recessed and peer with apprehension conjuring a sense of bewilderment and dread. Such works compel viewers to confront the darker side of life and may be uncomfortable for some; even so, Nig felt the need to be open and forthright in communicating these emotions — 'in truth I feel beauty'.15

Observing the lives of others provided Nig with inspiration for his art; however the artist also participated actively in society, lending a hand or a listening ear to those in need. In the mid 1960s, Nig taught his craft on a weekly basis at the Agape Centre, an organisation providing support for the rehabilitation of ex-drag soldiers and troubled youths. Nig's impact was remembered by the director of the centre who recalled that the problems of the inmates overlapped the artist but he never used it as an excuse to avoid the sessions. Furthermore, he always treated them as his equals.16 A former inmate, who has since become a pastor, attributes his accomplishments to the mentoring and encouragement provided by Nig.17 Nig sums up his philosophy of actively participating in life and society:

Art is life... You have to feel what is around you. I do not think you can be a hermit... There are those who withdraw from reality, but I do not work in that way.18

Self

In exploring art productions and their contents, one is often tempted to conclude the works to phases or aspects of the artist's life as a potential for seeking greater insight into the individual behind the creations.

Fig. 44 Prostration of a Lover on a Rock, 1973 (Bronze)
Fig. 45 Self Portrait, 1967 (Oil on canvas)
Fig. 46 Nude Portrait, 1967 (Oil on canvas)

Both Satapaty and Shreeves explored the autobiographical nature of Nig's works. Through a viewing of the artist's self portraits produced from 1961 to 1967, Satapaty assessed the images between episodes in the artist's life and the moods depicted in his self portraits.19 Periods of uncertainty in Nig's life were associated with portrayals of self in a preoccupied and divested state, withdrawn and unwilling to be sociable such as in Self Portrait 1967 (Fig. 48). In times of greater optimism, such as when the artist had just returned from the
The artist also had kidney and heart complications since the 1970s, a fact that he hardly shared with anyone until the 1980s. The analysis of his work, illustrations at the lack of opportunity in the ceramic arts, and possibility apprehension about more wasted years from illness are not unlike the sentiments embodied in works such as *Rudiments of a Lover on a Rock, Fear II* and the entire range of figures in distress.

An examination of NUS Museum’s collection reveals that production of figures in distress ended in the early 1980s. The mother and child works continued but in general, the artist leaned towards more abstract and simplified art forms in the later decades. Of particular interest is the series of bronze sculptures comprising works such as *Looking Ahead* (Fig. 20), *Hopeful* (Fig. 49) and *Wandering* (Fig. 50) which, both in visual presentation and naming, suggest a more optimistic outlook in life. The figures sport generally relaxed postures and a measure of composure in their expressions. One is persuaded to draw parallels between this change in mood and the breakthroughs that the artist had achieved locally and internationally through a decade of struggle.10

NOTES


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**MATERIALS / PROCESSES / PUBLIC ART**

Ng Eng Hing experimented with different materials for his sculptural works but had a greater affinity for clay, ciment fondu and bronze. His motivation for making art stemmed from the wish to put his thoughts and emotions into visual and tangible forms so that they could be shared with others. Consequently, a key criterion in the selection of a medium was how well it would allow him to express these ideas and feelings. Explaining his preference for bronze over stainless steel, Ng said:

…I like bronze material, I know the reason why. I like bronze is so warm and inviting … I feel I can respond to it, cooperate with it … Steel does not call out to me in this way.12

Closely related to the affinity for certain materials was his preferred sculpting technique. Ng learnt from experience that the substitution method of sculpting where the material was chipped or scraped off to produce the form did not suit his temperament. He was more inclined towards the additive approach of building up, shaping and modelling which allowed for reworking until he was satisfied.13

This section looks at the stages in Ng’s art making, from conceptualisation to execution, and covers some basic production and finishing techniques he employed.

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*Fig. 49 Hopeful, 1982, Bronze
Fig. 50 Wandering, 1982, Bronze*
Developing an idea

A survey of the collection reveals that sketches and drawings were the genesis of Ng’s sculptural artworks. He had a firm regard for drawing skills and felt that the ability to accurately represent the world in two-dimensional space provided the crucial foundation for more advanced art making such as abstraction and three-dimensional constructs.

Yoga Posture into Form (Fig. 51) is an instance of how Ng translated things arising from the surroundings into ideas for artistic works. As the lady practising yoga attempts to pull her feet towards her raised head, her back is fully arched with only the atomsian resting on the ground. This posture is at the core of the reclining figure which was developed into gourd features and form in works such as Acrobat (Fig. 52), Wealth and Contentment (Fig. 53).

Before transforming the ideas in his sketches to the final product, Ng was known for making maquettes (Fig. 54) as a means of experimentation. These scaled-down pieces facilitated the testing of composition and balance, allowed for refinement of proportions, and also made it possible for Ng to investigate how far a design could be stretched. Clay was the dominant medium for Ng’s maquettes. However, for large commissioned works which would eventually be cast in cement foundry, the same material was used for the maquettes.

The sketches, sketch books and maquettes in this collection are valuable for further analysis of Ng’s art making process; they offer a glimpse into the methodical way in which the artist took his ideas from preliminary concept to final production, the experimentation he was engaged in and possible factors which influenced his design decisions.

Clay

Even though he was widely quoted as favouring cement foundry for sculpture making, clay had a significant place in Ng’s practice. Aside from sculpture, most of Ng’s maquettes and the original models for cement foundry casts were rendered in clay. He would use clay for conceptualising the design and only when he was fully satisfied would a casting be carried out.

Used in the production of bricks for the construction industry, clay was readily available in Singapore during the 1950s and 60s; consequently, Ng used this material for his early sculptures. He purchased the clay from Aleksand or Jaring brickworks and used their kilns for firing the fired works. Naturally, the artworks were not given priority and Ng recalled the impracticality and frustration – lost, broken or vandalised sculptures as well as those that became stuck to the bricks. After he was introduced to cement foundry, Ng made less figurative works in ceramics and was deeply reacquainted with the material again only when he went to the United Kingdom to study pottery.

Ng studied industrial pottery during his first year in Slieve-Tramont, followed by a year of learning studio pottery at Frome. He became an accomplished potter and upon graduation worked for two years as a designer in a pottery factory in Ireland. Vase (Fig. 55) and Taotao with Two Cups I (Fig. 56) are examples of the more conventional ceramics he produced in the early stages of his pottery practice. His earnestness to pursue the ceramics art form is evident from the gas kiln that he built that returned to Singapore. With an interior height of four feet, this was constructed in the kitchen of the family home with his own assistance from his father.

Even after becoming an established sculptor, Ng continued his practice in pottery. By then, he was less concerned with making functional pottery and instead preferred unusual forms where the pots might be decorated or contain figurative or symbolic meanings. ‘Woman’ Teapot I (Fig. 57) is an example of how Ng advanced his practice of figuration into the arena of pottery. The field of the woman acts as a lid; the bent left arm resembles the teapot’s handle; the rounded stomach is part of the pot’s body and provides a stable base as well as a support for the spout, which is formed by the angled right arm with an upturned palm.

Climent Fondu

From the 1960s to early-70s, ceramics would gather as a group twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Ng’s studio except when he was away from Singapore. Referred to as the Studio 106 group (Fig. 58), the members’ chosen medium was clay. They discussed techniques, exchanged ideas and learnt from Ng who would share the knowledge and experiences from his overseas trips. Ng was their acknowledged leader and mentor but he allowed members to develop in their preferred direction, providing guidance when necessary. Led by Ng, this group also held a series of exhibitions called ‘Céramic.’

For a time in the 1970s when Ng was making the torso-to-face series, he worked mainly in ceramics and actively experimented with a variety of surface treatments. Red Maiden sports a pomegranate (or oxiod) red finish which took Ng halfway across Asia to perfect. Ng tested the recipe for this glaze locally but, due either to the recipe or firing conditions, was unable to achieve the desired blood-red effect. As a result, he went to a pottery factory in China to work on this form of glazing. The sculpture is coated with a glass rich in copper oxides.

During the firing process, the existing conditions in the kiln invoke a chemical reaction, known as reduction, forming coppery oxides (Cu2O) which gives the dazzling red to the sculpture.

Fallen Crown (Fig. 59), which required three firings, is another of Ng’s experiments with techniques and surface finish. The crown was cast in blue crystal glass and fired to 1,300 degrees centigrade. Clay was then used to build a cocoon around the crown, a spiral wire with a ceramic sphere was attached and the whole piece fired to 1,000 degrees centigrade. The cocoon became a base after the firing, making it strong enough to withstand the third process which was pit firing, in pit firing, a pit is either dug into the ground or built upwards with bricks. The pit is filled with sawdust on which the object to be fired is placed. Copper carbonate and salt are sprinkled around the object which is covered with more sawdust. A fire is built above the pit and left to burn overnight. Resulting from pit firing, decorative patterns of black, white and pink appear on the cocoon.

Climent fondu is a very beautiful material. You can stall it to different colours and, should it be damaged, you can repair it back to its original condition.

Climent fondu is a mixture of cement with one or more aggregate materials. The cement acts as the binding agent for the mixture whilst the aggregate material, which is granular, gives the mix its strength and texture. Ng made his cement fondu works using the casting method. A fast scale model of the required sculpture is first made, possibly in clay, and this is used to prepare a mould. Once the mould hardens, the clay model is removed, the mould is cleaned and a coat of painting agent applied.

The moulded sculpture can now be cast. The casting process involves applying a layer of cement fondu over the mould surface followed by a layer of glass fumes. Alternating layers of cement fondu and glass fumes are built up until the required thickness of the cast is achieved, with the final layer being the cement mixture.
When necessary, metal wire are used to reinforce delicate areas such as the nose. Wire mesh is also included in the layers of the cast as reinforcement, if the mould comprises a number of pieces, the process is repeated for each section, after which they are assembled and held tightly together. The mould assembly is covered with a piece of damp cloth or placed in a plastic bag with some water and left to cure. When the cement mould has cured, the mould is chipped off to reveal the cast. Flaws on the cast have to be made good before applying the finishing. Using the casting method, the sculpture is hollow and, especially for larger works, the reduced weight facilitates movement and transportation.

![Image of a sculpture being cast.](image1)

**Public Art**

Ng Eng Teng was commissioned to produce artworks for public spaces both locally and abroad. While his gallery sculptures were created mainly for self-expression, works sited in public areas were designed with the aim of enhancing the location and projecting its identity but with practicalities taken into account. These were not the only considerations, however; Ng's philosophy that art should encompass substantive subject matter extends to his public art. The initial stage in the commissioning process was spent on conceptualising theme, space and design.

- First you have to listen to the commissioners and try to understand their clients, and their desire for a piece of sculpture; and then go away and research on suitable design, to tell a little story and to enhance the site.
- You have to study the site first. Usually you view the surrounding areas too, and if the sculpture is meant for a building, the design and line of the building need to be taken into consideration. ... the size and volume of the work have to be suitable to the location.
- The completed sculpture has to be safe for the public, no unnecessary law provisions endangering people. You should not design a sculpture with materials that will collect rainwater and breed mosquitoes. The work should not invite people to vandalise it.

![Image of a sculpture on a pedestal.](image2)

**Bronze**

Practical considerations play an important part in an artist's choice of materials. The absence of a foundry in Singapore delayed Ng's foray into bronze even though Ng had always been interested in this medium. Only when he was in Australia in 1969 was Ng introduced to bronze casting and there he made his first piece Looking Afield. He found that bronze allowed for more extensive rendering of shapes made from the metal could be casted more substantially and also made thinner, widening his options for geometric and abstract compositions.

It allows me to create more attenuated or extended shapes such as elongated arms and neck, and even frowning and tapering hair which would not be possible in cement-fondi or ceramics because of their brittleness.

The properties of bronze are exploited in works such as Hopeful and Wondering. These sculptures were made during trips to Thailand in 1992 and spent the ‘frowning hair’ which Ng spoke of, as well as a general fury in constitution.

Ng used the cast iron process for casting the bronze pieces. This method involves building an investment mould around a wax model or wax cast. The mould is placed in a kiln, where the investment material hardens and at the same time the wax is melted away leaving a cavity within the mould. Molten bronze is poured in to fill the cavity. Once the mould has cooled, it is chipped away revealing the sculpture.

![Image of a bronze sculpture.](image3)

**Of his overseas commissions, the one which received most attention was the enlarged 2.7 metres of Portrait for the 1989 Olympic Games in Seoul. Ng was delighted at the opportunity to display his works alongside almost 200 international sculptors. The original sculpture which caught the attention of the representatives from the Olympic Committee is currently situated at NUS University Hall (Fig. 72).**

**KNOWLEDGES:**

Spirit of Experimentation: Works by Ng Eng Teng at University Hall

Ng’s artworks sited at University Hall are emblematic of the artist’s spirit of experimentation. The limits of form, techniques, and materials in sculpture making are explored, with the body still figuring as a central theme. The artist’s engagement with the depth and range of human emotions are apparent in the way that these works provokes thought on the conditions of life, be they circumstances specific to a time, community, or universally encountered.

Throughout his years of sculptural practice, abstraction was used to investigate the properties of materials, and propensity for the body to be conceived of in different ways. In Family Group (Fig. 64) and Refugee (Fig. 65), the bodies of individual family members are fused, a departure from his earlier works where bodies, though presented as part of a family unit, were sculpted as distinct family members. The physical joining of the bodies of the family members can be seen as an extension of Ng’s earlier works which dwell on the relationships between parent and child.

Several of Ng’s works reveal his use of geometric abstractions, from the family cubist appearance of Refugee (Fig. 65), to the geometric forms of Head Profile (Fig. 66), and $1 + 1 = (3/2)$ (Fig. 67). The shaping of these forms was itself a means to experiment with different materials.

Survival (Fig. 70) and Yin Yang (Fig. 71) are works in which Ng experiments with presentational strategies through a suite of mobiles with crescent or spherical bases which are allowed to rock. These kinetic forms question the physical placement and regard of sculpture by moving them down from the pedestal and bringing them closer to the audience. Realizing that the effect of a mobile’s movement is best demonstrated with the viewer’s intervention, Ng displayed these sculptures on the floor, in his second solo exhibition in 1972.

Beyond experimenting with properties, techniques, and materials, several of the artworks bear the imprint of an artist conscious of societal and human conditions depicted through the use of binary opposites. In particular, Portrait (Fig. 72), of which the two angles on the top but like component “denote the contradictions or duplicity of man” in crying for both peace and war. Refugees...
The selection of artworks speaks of Ng Eng Teng’s creativity and exploration in his sculptural practice. Coupled with his awareness of the issues faced by individuals and society, this set of sculptures parallels the University’s vision of shaping a dynamic community with a passion for learning and discovery, adding value to NUS and the wider community.

Locating Ng’s artworks at University Hall in relation to the exhibition at NUS Museum is also reflective of the ongoing dialogue between the Museum and the University, and the Museum’s role in actively contributing to the academic life and intellectual pursuits of the NUS community.

ENDNOTES
Artist’s Biodata

NG ENG TENG

1955
- Enrolled in art classes conducted by the British Council, studying painting.

1956
- Enrolled in Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), discontinued studies after a few months due to illness; submitted to the care of Dr Ng Yew Beng, an uncle, in Kuala Lumpur for about a year.

1958
- Returned to Singapore; employed as frame artist by Show Brother and later at Fortune Advertising; Studied privately with Lu Kong.

1959
- Met Jean Bullock, who was instrumental in introducing him to ceramics foundry, a material which he continued to employ throughout his practice. Began to exhibit work in group shows, displaying painting and sculptures.

1959-61
- Reenrolled in NAFA completing studies and majoring in painting, attended classes taught by Chen Chong Swee, Georgine Chen, Chen Wen Hsi and Cheong Soo Peng.

1962-63
- Pursued study of industrial pottery at North Staffordshire College of Technology in Stoke-on-Trent, England.

1963-64
- Studied studio pottery at Penrith School of Art, England.

1964-66
- Resident designer at the Ganghwa pottery factory in Inland. Travelled to see England and other parts of Europe.

1966
- Returned to Singapore, set up a studio and built kiln at the family residence at 109 Joo Chiat Place.

1969
- Began a full-time career in art, after 2 years as a visual arts officer at the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

1991
- Appointed Fellow to The Centre for the Arts, National University of Singapore (NUS) since 8 June.

1997
- Donated 760 artworks to NUS.

1999
- Made second donation of 173 artworks to NUS.

2001
- Made third donation of 162 artworks to NUS.

EXHIBITIONS

1980
- 10th Singapore Art Society exhibition, Singapore
- Exhibited one piece, ‘Miss Vogue’

1980
- 11th Singapore Art Society exhibition, Singapore
- Exhibited 66 States; the only sculpture in the exhibition.

1981
- 12th Singapore Art Society exhibition, Singapore
- Exhibited Aboriginal Woman, one of two sculptures works in the exhibition.

1982
- 13th Singapore Art Society exhibition, Singapore
- ‘Two-Person Sculpture and Painting Exhibition’ with Katherine A. Schmidt, National Library, Singapore.

1983
- Society of Staffordshire Artists’ Spring Show, Hanley Museum, Staffordshire, UK.

1984
- Open Exhibition of the Work of Younger Graftsmen, Crafts Centre of Great Britain, London, UK.

1985
- Dublin Spring Show, Dublin, Ireland.

1986
- National Art Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1987
- Exhibited in the first Singapore sculpture exhibition, National Library, Singapore.

1989
- ASTA Convention Exhibition, Contemporary Sculpture Centre, Tokyo, Japan.
- ‘Sculpture and Ceramics’ in Malaysia, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1970
- First one-artist exhibition of sculpture, painting and ceramics, National Library, Singapore.

1970
- Second one-artist exhibition of sculpture, painting and ceramics, National Library, Singapore.

1975
- 14 Ceramic Artists, National Museum Art Gallery, Singapore.

1987
- Sculpture and Paper: East and West Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia.
- Inaugural Exhibition, National Museum Art Gallery, Singapore.

1990
- Contemporary Asian Art Show, Fukoka Art Museum, Japan.

1991
- First ASEAN Sculpture Symposium, Fort Canning Hill, Singapore.

1995
- Contemporary Asian Art Show, Fukoka Art Museum, Japan
- International Ceramics Exhibition, Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Sculpture and Pottery, Alpäre Gallery, Singapore.

1997

1997

1998
- Sculpture, Gumbool Gallery, Western Australia
- World Invitational Open Air Sculpture Exhibition, held with the 1998 Seoul Olympics, South Korea.

1999
- Sculpture, East and West Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia.
- Clayivity 99, Goethe-Institut Art Gallery, Singapore.

2000
- Urban Artist: 26 Years of Singapore Art, National Museum Art Gallery, Singapore.

2001
- Clayivity 91, Goethe-Institut Art Gallery, Singapore.

2003
- Art in Asia, World Trade Centre, Singapore.

2004
- Singapore Showcase, World Trade Centre, Singapore.
- Clayivity 96, Goethe Art Gallery, Singapore.

2006
- Inaugural exhibition held in conjunction with Ng Eng Teng’s 1st donation to NUS, NUS Museums, National University of Singapore.

2007
- A Thematic Approach to the Works of Ng Eng Teng, NUS Museums, National University of Singapore.

1993
- Ceramics: the first statement, The Centre For the Arts, National University of Singapore.
- ‘Bodies: Transformed: Ng Eng Teng in the Nudes’, NUS Museums, National University of Singapore.

2002
- Ceramics: the second statement, Centre For the Arts, National University of Singapore.

2003
- Configuring the Body: Form and Tenor in Ng Eng Teng’s Art, NUS Museums, Singapore.

2005 – 2006
- Sculptures of Ng Eng Teng, NUS Museums, Singapore.
- Ceramics 2005: a portfolio, NUS Centre For the Arts, National University of Singapore.

AWARDS & HONOURS

1991
- Tagore Centenary Open Painting Competition, Gold Medal, Singapore.

1992
- Silver Medal, Nanyang University Open Painting Competition, Singapore.

1997
- Second Prize, Ceramics section, Craft Competition sponsored and organized by the Singapore Tourism Promotion Board.

1997
- London British Council Artist Travel Grant to England.

1999
- FMSAA Group, awarded by the Association of Artists of Various Races for contribution to the development of visual arts in Singapore.

1999
- Tan Tze Chor Art Award Medal for Sculpture, Singapore Art Society.
- Cultural Medallion Award, conferred by the Government of Singapore.

2000
- ASEA Cultural Award of Visual Arts (Sculpture).

2001
- Honorary Doctorate, National University of Singapore.

2004
- Montblanc Paton of the Arts Award.
Acknowledgements

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- Singapore Press Holdings for supporting this exhibition through providing press articles relating to Ng Eng Teng and allowing us to use and display them.

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NUS Museum

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 7,000 artifacts 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 of over 1,200 artworks. A fourth collection, the Straits Chinese Collection, will be located at NUS' Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

NUS Museum

University Cultural Centre
50 Kent Ridge Crescent, National University of Singapore
Singapore 119079
Tel: (65) 6516 8617
Website: www.nus.edu.sg/museum
Email: museum@nus.edu.sg

Opening Hours:
10am – 7.30pm (Tuesdays – Saturdays)
10am – 9pm (Sundays)
Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays

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