Textures, Tones & Timbres

Art of Chong Fah Cheong
Published on the occasion of the exhibition

Textures, Tones & Timbres
ART OF CHONG FAHCHEONG

Official opening 31 January 2013

Acknowledgements
Ms Chong Kim-Ee for her assistance in facilitating communications with the artist and providing information on the artworks and artist resources

Curation
Ahmad Mashadi
Foo Su Ling

Exhibition Logistics
Donald-Eric Lim
Francis Wong
Suraendhiran s/o Ramadass (intern)

Programmes and Publicity
Michelle Kuek
Trina Bong

Published by

NUS MUSEUM
University Cultural Centre
50 Kent Ridge Crescent
National University of Singapore
Singapore 119279

Copyright © 2013 NUS Museum
All rights reserved
Chong installs sculpture at the pinnacle of a belief system which is nourished and shaped by humanism and in which the sculpted object and man share, even compete for dominance and privilege. In such a realm, sculpted works are discreet, privileged palpable and the direct result of the human formative urge.

... such positions are neither static or finite ... Chong displays tensions in his recent works which warn us that his proximity to [Herbert] Read’s paradigm is not that cosy after all


Having graduated from then University of Singapore (now National University of Singapore) in Political Science and Philosophy in 1971, Chong Fahcheong pursued a course in art education in Birmingham. As a teacher at St Patrick’s School, he was encouraged by Brother Joseph McNally, a sculptor who later founded LaSalle College of the Arts, to take up sculpture. Chong’s earliest sculptures were completed around the mid 1970s, initially influenced by the works of Rodin and Brancusi. His early pieces were mainly figurative, exploring the human figure, its scale and proportions as foundational basis for art making, while simultaneously engaging with materials and their qualities. Nature, his everyday environment, encounters with material and cultural sources shaped an approach that may be characterized as introspective and nomadic, where materials and their origins and contexts, negotiate with perspectives and often personal predicaments. Abstraction evolved as part of Chong’s artistic strategy, emerging as extensions to these investigations and deployed as indeterminate ways to reconcile between personal vision, context of practice and form. By 1978, Chong made his decision to practice art full time. In 1989, Chong moved permanently to British Columbia, Canada, to continue his practice, intermittently returning to Singapore on commissioning projects and exhibitions.

In 1991, the National Museum Art Gallery organized Sculpture in Singapore, an exhibition of significance to Chong Fahcheong. Curated by T. K. Sabapathy, the exhibition was conceived to provide a survey of sculptural
practices in Singapore, explored in the catalogue through the histories and approaches of ‘core artists’ presented in the exhibition that included Chong. Sabapathy wrote in his catalogue introduction that the aim of the exhibition is to “provide a critical frame for apprehending sculpture here [in Singapore] and understanding the aims of sculptors”. Chong’s primary attention to materials and sculptural values of mass and volume, and his regard for sculpture as being “able to stand on its own”, is significant to foreground one of two broad aspects of sculpture making then in Singapore. To initiate an entry and prospect further discussions, two broad trajectories of practices were proposed. Firstly, approaches that sustain sensibilities attributable to Herbert Read’s regard for sculpture - tactility, volume, and “ponderability”. Secondly, approaches referenced to Rosalind Krauss’ “the expanded field” that incorporates environmental and social contexts to the production and reception of sculpture. Along with Ng Eng Teng, Han Sai Por and Joseph McNally, Chong’s approaches according to Sabapathy “readily identifies with the ideals and values proclaimed by Read.”

This exhibition at the NUS Museum brings together a series of recent works, completed across locations in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore. Chong continues to work with a range of materials and dominantly represented in the exhibition are his wood and stone sculptures. These materials were sourced from the various locations mentioned, and often sculpted with the assistance of local technicians. The production of these sculptures necessitates Chong to constantly travel to workshops and studios in Canada and Southeast Asia, in doing so prompts him to maintain formal approaches in relation to the skills of artisans from diverse cultures who assist him, and to consider and situate such experiences of itinerancy and encounters as thematic elements or ways that may inform conceptual approaches to art making. In presenting Chong’s recent works, the Museum hopes to facilitate discussions pertaining to the artist’s practice and significance. How do we locate Chong’s practice in Singapore art today within a range of formal and conceptual tendencies? Chong’s practice may be initially comprehended by the primacy of the artist’s sustained regard for material, form and the autonomy of the object as basis of experience and reflections. Yet, positions are also advanced by thematic or conceptual underpinnings to render complex formal qualities that often shape initial encounters. Returning to Sabapathy’s words, his use of the ‘Read-Krauss axis’ in framing Singapore sculpture in 1991 was a “provisional way of initiating discussion on the aims and methods of sculptors in Singapore”. As such, it may be read as ways to appreciate and regard complexities, cautioned by the differing historical circumstances of art making in Singapore, and the very agency of artists to adopt and engender into their practices values and perspectives peculiar to or drawn from their personal contexts and positions, and their training and immediate networks. Working across geographies and cultures, Chong’s sensibilities towards gender relations, ethnicity, nature and environment are critical bases in which his art is to be assessed alongside its plastic concerns, and as such according to Sabapathy its ‘proximity to Read’s paradigm’ requires an extended appreciation to include propensities towards the conceptual and commentary.

The NUS Museum wishes to congratulate and thank Chong Fahcheong for the exhibition. Without his valuable discussions with curator Foo Su Ling and feedback and constant attention to detail, the project would not have been possible. We also thank Ms Chong Kim-Ee for her valuable assistance in coordinating arrangements between Museum and artist.
This exhibition presents a collection of recent sculptures by Chong Fahcheong. The works are inspired by the artist’s observations, encounters and experiences as he wanders in the natural and urban landscape. A closer examination of their subject matter, material origin and production location reveals the artist’s sense of connection to place and his interest in the notion of cultural identity.

Threshold
1982. Teak
201 x 105 x 30 cm

Gateways, the points of transition from one terrain to another, have been a sustained fascination for sculptor Chong Fahcheong. Threshold, produced in 1982, was Chong’s earliest artwork which launched a series exploring the notion of journeying across domains both tangible and conceptual. Ideas for the piece germinated from the sensations Chong experienced when crossing the security gates at airports, but it was his reflections on the many campaigns in Singapore aimed at guiding behavioral patterns that prompted the realization of the work:

Moongate
2011, Teak
249 x 249 x 28 cm

… it was meant to indicate the situation of being led like sheep through a door-way, everybody putting the same foot forward… (Sabapathy 1991: 37)

In the decades since the conceptualization of Threshold, Chong has employed a variety of formal elements in his studies for this series – the circular Moongate rendered in different media; the polygonal Pa Kua; and Cube Gate which sees the development of Threshold into a cuboid, assembled from a series of frames reminiscent of the
original structure. Originally conceived as a medium for social commentary, Chong’s recent works in this series are metaphors for his own journeys of discovery.

Journeying – the process of rambling in diverse places and spaces – is fundamental to Chong’s artistic practice; it involves meeting people, discovering unfamiliar perspectives, and opening up to new influences and experiences. Facets of society which capture his attention – objects and situations in everyday life, incidents, processes – and observations of the natural world and its phenomena are collected and retained, forming a repository of information and impressions from which creative ideas would emerge.

Chong’s exploration of the world around him materializes as sculptural works encompassing a wide spectrum of interests. The Moongate series arises from a decorative moon gate spotted en route to the Penang Botanic Gardens; the Tantra series reflects Chong’s initial impressions of tantric philosophy as a subject encompassing a complex web of ideas and practices; and Made to Measure is inspired by Leonardo da Vinci’s drawing Vitruvian Man, and constructed based on Chong’s corporeal proportions.
Central to Chong’s practice is a sense of connection to place and the earnest exploration of his identity. Born in Singapore of Peranakan descent, Chong received his education in a missionary school. After graduating in the early 1970s from the University of Singapore, he pursued an art education in the United Kingdom and returned to teach art at a local school during which he began to take an interest in sculpture making. The early decades of Chong’s life overlap the era of late colonialism and early independence when Western thought and culture were making significant inroads into Singapore society; it was in this environment that Chong’s early art practice was developed.

Chong moved to Canada in 1989. At that time, he felt that the varied styles of artworks that he saw in his adopted homeland did not ‘reflect particular cultural backgrounds’ due to influences from a wide mix of different cultures. Against this backdrop, Chong experienced a heightened awareness of his own cultural origins and its particular characteristics, an aspect which would become an integral feature of his practice:

[The many different cultures in Canada] makes me feel acutely different. This is why I try to own my roots and my own traditions. … when you leave to reside overseas, instead of losing contact with your background… you become all the more acutely, fully conscious that you have a different background; so I choose to use this difference and this background in my works (Sabapathy 1991: 37).

The imprint of Southeast Asia is present at multiple levels in Chong’s sculptural works – titles, themes, materials and execution. Bergolek-golek is Indonesian for a doll or puppet which rolls. In Chong’s hands, the rolling puppet is renamed Golek Bergolek and takes shape in a riot of hemispherical forms which rotate and rock at different velocities. The material for Golek Bergolek is Indonesian teak and the pieces were made in Semarang where Chong enlisted the help of local craftsmen familiar with the tradition of wood carving.

In the centres within Southeast Asia where he chose to carry out his recent artistic creations, Chong felt entirely at ease working and living among local artisans. These sojourns were cogent in helping him to consolidate sentiments about his own identity:

These places I go to are, in fact, not “foreign” at all. Being Asian, they help me to identify my own roots, my psyche and person. I feel at home and don’t think I have had to adapt my thinking and working style very much… When I travel to these different countries and they are all Asian, I’m able to sense my Asianness a lot more, and my history, my connection with the region (see ‘Conversations’ in this volume).

Snow Studies is a series motivated by Chong’s encounters with the changing size and shape of falling snowflakes in the town of Merritt where he lives. The introduction of snow in Chong’s works affords an interesting study of how identity is an ever evolving notion, shaped in no small measure by locality and home. Snow Studies in Wood II is rendered in tropical teak wood, with the assistance of the region’s craftsmen. The interplay with snowfall, a phenomenon of the temperate region, presents a hybrid formulation not unlike Chong’s own position, firstly as a Peranakan and more recently as a global citizen, constantly moving between Asia and Canada. Carved from Canadian Fir at Chong’s studio in Merritt, Snow Studies in Wood I has a more homogeneous constitution; at present, the piece is still a work in progress, as is the process of identity formation.
The exhibition Sculpture in Singapore was held in 1991 to commemorate the inauguration of the National Museum Art Gallery. It was the second sculpture show organized on a national scale in Singapore, the first having taken place in 1976. Over 170 objects were submitted from which 116 pieces by 50 established and emerging artists were selected (Sabapathy 1991: 5). The exhibition also featured works individually executed by eight invited artists; six of the eight, including Chong, were interviewed by art historian T K Sabapathy. The publication accompanying the exhibition includes these interviews and an introduction by Sabapathy offering a comprehensive survey of the invited artists’ ‘principal interests and modes of work’. Through Sabapathy’s deliberations, we are furnished with the first substantive discussion on Chong’s practice.

Sabapathy employed two principal approaches in his scrutiny of the varied 3-dimensional works presented at the exhibition. The first takes into account Herbert Read’s definition of sculpture as a solid form which encompasses mass, has volume giving it spatial presence, and possesses a distinct tactile quality that appeals to our sense of touch (Read 1964: 250). According to Read, a sculpture should also be embedded with vitalism, a kind of ‘inner power’ which functions like a magnet, drawing the viewer towards it and into a mode of contemplation (Read 1964: 77, 272). The element of vitality ‘is not a physical, organic attribute of sculpture – it is a spiritual inner life’ (Krauss 1977, quoting Barbara Hepworth: 141). For proponents of vitalism in relation to sculptural works, this quality emerges mainly from the artist working directly on the material, transforming it according to a creative idea, but also allowing the material’s intrinsic properties to guide and shape the eventual outcome.

Sabapathy identifies Chong’s practice and productions as theoretically analogous with the ‘the ideals and values proclaimed by Read’ (Sabapathy 1991: 12 – 13). Relating the process of working on a recent piece, Chong reaffirms his regard for material and the act of carving:

   Many of the pieces here depart from any kind of strict narrative and allow for a focus on the material and process of carving. When I first saw the wood which is now the work Softly Falling, my thoughts were on how one could go about working on such a hard piece of timber. The form was not evident at the beginning but as the wood was being chipped away, its intrinsic qualities were gradually revealed and the ideas came together (‘Conversations’ in this volume).

The second approach that Sabapathy referenced involves a model proposed by Rosalind Krauss. The blossoming variety of three-dimensional artworks in the mid 20th century that did not conform to traditional conventions of sculpture – those attributes described by Read – led Krauss to propose a new scheme to aid in our thinking about these forms (Krauss 1979: 30 – 44). She advocated the ‘expanded field’ model where a three dimensional structure could be located in one of four possible categories depending on how the form is conceived relative to the space in which it exists. Sculpture, as historically understood in a Western art context, is one category. Of the other three possibilities, the one that Krauss calls ‘axiomatic structures’ is of interest to our discussion here. Krauss defines axiomatic structures as objects which are ‘architecture, yet not-architecture’. They are artworks located within architectural spaces, intervene with the original, transform our visual experience, and lead us to reflect on the structures which have been interrupted. Axiomatic structures are conceived to draw attention to banal aspects of architecture – walls, rooms, or the building itself – which we take for granted.

While aligning Chong’s productions along the concepts of sculpture privileged by Read, Sabapathy also references the artist’s work Ayob’s Table and notes that “… Chong displays tensions in his recent works which warn us that his proximity to Read’s paradigm is not that cozy after all’ (Sabapathy 1991: 17). A sense of uncertainty has been introduced to attempts at positioning Chong’s works within a tightly defined category.

Nudged by Sabapathy, we begin to consider forms such as Moongate – a structure which could be positioned as a real doorway between two rooms or as an opening connecting a building’s interior and exterior – and Log Wall II, an arrangement which would make a snug addition to a placid stretch of concrete separating two spaces. We are prompted to contemplate how Chong’s practice can be understood in relation to the paradigm marked out by Read and the expanded field proposed by Krauss.

References

Foo Su Ling is a curator at NUS Museum.

Material, Mass and Space

The exhibition Sculpture in Singapore was held in 1991 to commemorate the inauguration of the National Museum Art Gallery. It was the second sculpture show organized on a national scale in Singapore, the first having taken place in 1976. Over 170 objects were submitted from which 116 pieces by 50 established and emerging artists were selected (Sabapathy 1991: 5). The exhibition also featured works individually executed by eight invited artists; six of the eight, including Chong, were interviewed by art historian T K Sabapathy. The publication accompanying the exhibition includes these interviews and an introduction by Sabapathy offering a comprehensive survey of the invited artists’ ‘principal interests and modes of work’. Through Sabapathy’s deliberations, we are furnished with the first substantive discussion on Chong’s practice.

Sabapathy employed two principal approaches in his scrutiny of the varied 3-dimensional works presented at the exhibition. The first takes into account Herbert Read’s definition of sculpture as a solid form which encompasses mass, has volume giving it spatial presence, and possesses a distinct tactile quality that appeals to our sense of touch (Read 1964: 250). According to Read, a sculpture should also be embedded with vitalism, a kind of ‘inner power’ which functions like a magnet, drawing the viewer towards it and into a mode of contemplation (Read 1964: 77, 272). The element of vitality ‘is not a physical, organic attribute of sculpture – it is a spiritual inner life’ (Krauss 1977, quoting Barbara Hepworth: 141). For proponents of vitalism in relation to sculptural works, this quality emerges mainly from the artist working directly on the material, transforming it according to a creative idea, but also allowing the material’s intrinsic properties to guide and shape the eventual outcome.

Sabapathy identifies Chong’s practice and productions as theoretically analogous with the ‘the ideals and values proclaimed by Read’ (Sabapathy 1991: 12 – 13). Relating the process of working on a recent piece, Chong reaffirms his regard for material and the act of carving:

   Many of the pieces here depart from any kind of strict narrative and allow for a focus on the material and process of carving. When I first saw the wood which is now the work Softly Falling, my thoughts were on how one could go about working on such a hard piece of timber. The form was not evident at the beginning but as the wood was being chipped away, its intrinsic qualities were gradually revealed and the ideas came together (‘Conversations’ in this volume).

The second approach that Sabapathy referenced involves a model proposed by Rosalind Krauss. The blossoming variety of three-dimensional artworks in the mid 20th century that did not conform to traditional conventions of sculpture – those attributes described by Read – led Krauss to propose a new scheme to aid in our thinking about these forms (Krauss 1979: 30 – 44). She advocated the ‘expanded field’ model where a three dimensional structure could be located in one of four possible categories depending on how the form is conceived relative to the space in which it exists. Sculpture, as historically understood in a Western art context, is one category. Of the other three possibilities, the one that Krauss calls ‘axiomatic structures’ is of interest to our discussion here. Krauss defines axiomatic structures as objects which are ‘architecture, yet not-architecture’. They are artworks located within architectural spaces, intervene with the original, transform our visual experience, and lead us to reflect on the structures which have been interrupted. Axiomatic structures are conceived to draw attention to banal aspects of architecture – walls, rooms, or the building itself – which we take for granted.

While aligning Chong’s productions along the concepts of sculpture privileged by Read, Sabapathy also references the artist’s work Ayob’s Table and notes that “… Chong displays tensions in his recent works which warn us that his proximity to Read’s paradigm is not that cozy after all’ (Sabapathy 1991: 17). A sense of uncertainty has been introduced to attempts at positioning Chong’s works within a tightly defined category.

Nudged by Sabapathy, we begin to consider forms such as Moongate – a structure which could be positioned as a real doorway between two rooms or as an opening connecting a building’s interior and exterior – and Log Wall II, an arrangement which would make a snug addition to a placid stretch of concrete separating two spaces. We are prompted to contemplate how Chong’s practice can be understood in relation to the paradigm marked out by Read and the expanded field proposed by Krauss.

References

Foo Su Ling is a curator at NUS Museum.
Producing jade Buddhas; nephrite jade from Canada is one of the jade works. I have a contact there who specializes in jade making in Mae Sai, near the Thai-Burmese border, that I produced wood carvings. Unfortunately, they destroyed a number of my clay models and moulds. It was a difficult experience, but I persevered and decided to do bronze. There would have been a lot of fine-tuning for this piece.

When I first spotted it at the workshop, the form and rocking motion suggested a seated mother tending to her child. As I worked on it, a bawling child began to emerge. I'm not sure why, but the carving process seemed to bring out the child in me. As I continued working, I realized that the wood may have come from other parts of Indonesia. The stone for Sayang Sayang is a marble boulder — they call it ‘potato stone’ in Ipoh. When I first saw it, it looked like a big potato, and that's why I named it Sayang Sayang.
of understanding and trust that allows for a productive exchange, how was your experience like?

CF: I have managed, over the years, to form an easy rapport with the people in places that I go to, especially in Thailand and Indonesia. Being able to handle the local language helps greatly, as well as being Asian myself. I depend on the skills of these craftsmen but I don’t just work with them. I live with them, eat with them, eat what they eat, sleep on the floor with them in their homes. I travel with them on holidays. My association with them is not just work. I am friends with many of these people with whom I have associated for many years.

FSL: Your sculptures present a certain tranquil quality. They are not burdened by the kind of psychological angst that characterizes the subjects in a body of works by the late sculptor Ng Eng Teng. Is the relatively serene tone of your artworks influenced by the gentler pace the Canadian environment offers?

CF: A place like Canada offers the breadth and expanse to reflect on things. It helps in the creative process. Since moving to Canada, I’ve started writing verses connected to various ideas and encounters. When I was in school, my essay writing was wretched and I now realize that I always had too much on my mind. Thoughts were scattered in all directions and it was a challenge to get to the point.

In Merritt, I have the opportunity to observe how snowflakes change in shape depending on the conditions and how the form of melting snow alters as the season progresses. This is the inspiration for Snow Studies, a current series I’m working on.

FSL: From the early stages of our discussions, you mentioned that the works for this exhibition would be less occupied with socio-political commentary and largely motivated by a variety of encounters in your passage through life. The Moongate series reflects this idea of journeying. What was the inspiration for this piece?

CF: A moon gate is a common feature in Chinese garden designs but I first saw it decades ago on the road to the Penang Botanic Gardens. Yes, the Moongate pieces as well as the cuboid forms are all part of the idea of portals leading us to various planes of discoveries. But I question the need to rationalize everything. Many of the pieces here depart from any kind of strict narrative and allow for a focus on the material and process of carving. When I first saw the wood which is now the work Softly Falling, my thoughts were on how one could go about working on such a hard piece of timber. The form was not evident at the beginning but as the wood was being chipped away, its intrinsic qualities were gradually revealed and the ideas came together.

Working a material by hand, whether wood, stone, or clay allows the tactile manipulation of form, a translation and transformation of ideas into reality. The workings of the hand orchestrate and harmonize the meanderings of my mind.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Forms in Jade</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Canadian Jade</td>
<td>6 pieces, approximately 11 x 8 x 3 cm each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bao</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Bronze &amp; Wood</td>
<td>71 x 71 x 25 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bark Studies in Wood</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>256 x 50 x 5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cube Gate</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>120 x 120 x 96 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dune Seat</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>173 x 170 x 40 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Squared</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>138 x 138 x 20 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golek Bergolek</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>9 pieces, approximately 61 x 61 x 16 cm each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Really Doesn’t Matter II</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>Main piece: 105 x 46 x 30 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 small pieces: 50 x 18 x 12 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 x 20 x 16 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keropok</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>95 x 80 x 20 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Wall II</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>190 x 140 x 15 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to Measure</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>160 x 130 x 130 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moongate</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>249 x 249 x 28 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night &amp; Day</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Black Granite, Marble</td>
<td>88 x 86 x 25 cm (Night), 92 x 92 x 45 cm (Day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Tree II</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>10 pieces, approximately 48 x 55 x 15 cm each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa Kua</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>155 x 155 x 30 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayang</td>
<td>Work in progress</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>52 x 74 x 63 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Studies in Wood I</td>
<td>Work in progress</td>
<td>Canadian Fir</td>
<td>125 x 30 x 10 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Studies in Wood II</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>125 x 28 x 14 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softly Falling II</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>260 x 62 x 32 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sol Invictus</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>87 x 80 x 18 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantra Series Panel III</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>243 x 52 x 6 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantra Series Panel IV</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Teak</td>
<td>182 x 48 x 8 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled</td>
<td>Work in progress</td>
<td>Indian Black Granite</td>
<td>156 x 126 x 18 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 artefacts 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 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the Straits Chinese Collection, is located at NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

NUS Museum launched the NX Gallery in 2006. It is conceived as a contemporary art venue to showcase emerging artistic trends in Singapore, Southeast Asia and beyond, as well as to encourage critical curatorial and museum practices. For the NUS Centre For the Arts and the NUS Museum, these aims afford an emphasis in partnerships within the University and beyond, underscored by the recognition that art and culture form a powerful nexus that connect different disciplines and institutional interests. Past exhibitions organized at the NX Gallery include Picturing Relations: Simryn Gill and Tino Djumini (2007), Strategies Towards the Real: S. Sudjojono and Contemporary Indonesian Art (2008), Bound For Glory: Wong Hoy Cheong (2008), Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary (2009), Illuminance | Agus Suwage and Filippo Sciascia (2010), Cingondewah | An Art Project by Tisna Sanjaya (2011), Writing Power | Zulkifli Yusoff (2011), and most recently Semblance/Presence | Renato Habulan and Alfredo Esquillo Jr. (2012).