

Art exhibition marking first anniversary of closure of Sungei Road market to be held next month

Homage to people, friendships

JESSIELIM

The young film-maker was shooting a documentary on the Sungei Road market last year when it started to rain.

An elderly vendor offered Mr Ong Kah Jing shelter at his stall, under his canvas sheet. An hour later, the rain stopped and the 25-year-old Mr Ong had become friends with the vendor, Mr Fong Ming Wei.

Mr Fong, whom he calls Ah Ming, is one of five main characters featured in Mr Ong's documentary, *Trespass: Stories from Singapore's Thieves Market*.

The 30-minute documentary includes footage of vendors displaying their wares, interacting with customers, and sharing their personal histories at the market.

"Young people can get to know the market's rich history, and recognise the inevitable tensions between development and heritage, in small countries like Singapore," Mr Ong, a National University of Singapore student, told *The New Paper*.

He is one of 15 artists to be featured in a three-day art exhibition marking the first anniversary of the Sungei Road market's closure.

To be held from July 6 to 8 at The Substation Gallery, the exhibition, titled *OnBorrowedLand: Sungei Road Market*, consists of



11 artworks, including portrait paintings and mix media installations.

HERITAGE

Event project manager Brendan Mayle Kor, 21, said: "We hope to continue the dialogue about the Sungei Road market while shining light on the importance of conserving Singapore's heritage through art."

Mr Kor, who won the Gold Award in the Emerging Artist Category for Singapore's UOB Painting of the Year in 2014, will himself be showcasing paintings of Sungei Road market vendors at the exhibition.

"There is no specific narrative I want to tell through this series," he said.

"It's more of a homage to the real people, emotions and friend-



(Left) Mr Ong Kah Jing. (Above) One of Mr Brendan Mayle Kor's paintings that will be exhibited at the *OnBorrowedLand: Sungei Road Market* exhibition.

PHOTOS: IVAN HO, BRENDAN MAYLE KOR

ships forged at the Sungei Road market."

The Sungei Road market was in operation from the 1930s until July 10 last year, and was the go-to place for vintage goods, including cameras, jewellery and stamps.

Commenting on the exhibition, Mr Chua Ngak Theng, 62, an ex-vendor, told TNP: "My conscience is more at peace, now that these young people want to do something for our society."

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