

Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art

Edited by
JEFFREY SAY
SENG YU JIN

Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art

“This publication alters the landscape
for writing on art in Singapore.”

TK Sabapathy

What are the ideas, practices, issues and institutions that have shaped contemporary art in Singapore? *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* presents an anthology of writings on Singapore contemporary art since the 1970s. Editors Jeffrey Say and Seng Yu Jin have selected 33 wide-ranging essays by leading art historians, art critics, curators, artists, playwrights and academics. Comprising texts that reflect diverse writing styles and modes of expression—from personal narrative to theoretical texts to manifestos—this book is an essential resource for students, researchers and art lovers alike.

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INSTITUTE OF
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
s i n g a p o r e



Dear Mr. President,

I am an artist

I am important

Yours Sincerely,

Tang Da Wu

Histories,
Practices,
Interventions:
A Reader in
Singapore
Contemporary Art

Edited by

JEFFREY SAY

SENG YU JIN

INSTITUTE OF
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
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COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Histories, Practices,
Interventions: A Reader in
Singapore Contemporary Art

Editors: Jeffrey Say and
Seng Yu Jin

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Cover image:
Tang Da Wu's note was
first seen in his 1995
performance work, *Please
Don't Give Money to the Arts*.
Tang later recreated the
note for the Fukuoka Asian
Culture Prize exhibition
*Tang Da Wu: A Perspective
on the Artist—Photographs,
Videos and Text of Singapore
Performances (1970 to
1999)* at The Substation
in 1999. Photograph by
Koh Nguang How. Courtesy
Tang Da Wu.

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FOREWORD

By TK Sabapathy

This publication is the first to provide a compilation of writings on contemporary art and artists in Singapore. It features 33 texts by diverse hands, culled from a variety of sites and spanning the 1970s through the first 10 years of this century.

By any reckoning, 40 years is an appreciable chunk of time for regarding the contemporary distinctly in an art world, even if the decades are represented only spottily. But the editors did not intend to present an equitable spread of texts nor a selection of texts weighted commensurably across four decades. The practice and production of art that is contemporary does not conform to chronologies that are set out as if they have unfolded evenly, constantly and continuously. This publication demonstrates that writing has prevailed as an active sphere in the contemporary art world in Singapore, thereby satisfying a primary and binding intention for its production.

There are other interests that illuminate how and why texts have been selected. They have to do in the first instance with ascertaining writings that shed light on the contemporary as sufficiently set apart from other art. When—recalling Raymond Williams and Geeta Kapur—we may ask, *is/was the contemporary?* How was it spoken? Who voiced it? How is it distinctive when writing it? And so on. Questions such as these have prompted the editors' thinking and contoured their brief in selecting and arranging the texts.

In the second instance, attention has been trained on texts that advocate and explicate the contemporary with critical urgency and with some particular historical weight or significance. In the third instance, the selection of writings is spurred by ambitions to enliven thinking on histories, practices and interventions particular to the contemporary in Singapore. These three notions are declared salient by appearing in the title of the publication. Their impact reverberates in expanding spheres. Hence, the three notions also serve as topics, whereby texts are grouped or assembled into the distinct sections that make up this publication. Furthermore, as topics they signal pathways along which the

texts may be read as connecting or relating to one another in any one of the three sections.

There are other publications of collected writings on art in Singapore, largely texts produced by a single writer or, rarely, by writers paired to generate an imagined conversation or dialogue. There are also publications featuring writers who were commissioned to produce texts to consolidate a project, such as inaugurating an exhibition, recording and publicising a conference, or to develop a topic of significance.

In these respects, and bearing in mind the field that this publication sets out to illuminate, mention has to be made of the text, *Contemporary Art in Singapore*, published in 2007 by the very institution issuing this current volume. Although they were conceived differently, with the former issued in conjunction with the *Singapore Art Show*, they are entwined. In these two publications, Singapore is installed as the site of the contemporary, the time span is from the 1970s and into the present century, the aim in both of them is to propose trajectories along which the contemporary may be gauged historically, and so on.

Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art furnishes evidence of a practice of writing on the contemporary in art, a practice that is varied in its intensity and veracity. Its editors envisage this practice as related and even co-existent with creative practices that are distinguishable as contemporary. That is to say, writing and producing art are conceived as feeding off and attending to each other; this is a relationship that is esteemed by the editors. And this is an important premise for devising this publication. It is formative for Jeffrey Say and Seng Yu Jin, in developing their thinking and in settling on a brief for this anthology. Its significance, for example in discerning a relationship between writing and creative practice that is dynamic, may be gauged by its extensive treatment in their editorial essay.

This publication is billed as a reader, thereby signifying a foundational and requisite status for this collection. This calls attention to a terrain that is recognisable as textual and claims significance for it. By designating this as a reader, Jeffrey Say and Seng Yu Jin propose orientations for traversing such a terrain, signalling prospects for cultivating discourses in the fields of contemporary art. These are laudable aims and their scope and tenability will be tested when reading this publication.

This publication alters the landscape for writing on art in Singapore.

It raises awareness of prevailing texts on art so that excuses for feigning ignorance of what has been written on the contemporary here are no longer tolerable; neither is it now plausible to advance writing on the contemporary on the assumption that it has not yet been written.

Reading and writing the contemporary are critically and historically inscribed. This publication furnishes resources and pathways to apprehend such inscriptions, specifically and comparatively.

PREFACE

By Jeffrey Say and Seng Yu Jin

Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art brings together key writings about ideas, practices, issues and art institutions that have shaped our understanding of contemporary art in Singapore. This reader was conceived as a resource to advance critical debate and reflection on post-independence Singapore art and culture. Its production was motivated by a desire to make available a body of significant texts and create a context in which the texts could be better appreciated and understood.

Since this is the first published reader on contemporary art writing in Singapore, we have included a broad range of key texts that enrich art discourse by engaging in debate and offering new perspectives. *Histories, Practices, Interventions* is intended to function not as an end in itself but as a catalyst for the proliferation of critical dialogue on contemporary art.

A reader such as this begs the question of who might constitute an assumed readership sufficiently interested in and knowledgeable about contemporary art in Singapore. There is no easy answer to this question except that the very existence of the art writing compiled here demonstrates that there exists an impetus and desire to write about art even though that readership may be largely unidentified. The perception of a lack of readership for contemporary art in Singapore is supported by the constant struggle to establish an art history programme at a university undergraduate level. Growing a readership is as important a task as generating art writing, as one cannot sustain itself without the other. *Histories, Practices, Interventions* serves as a bridge between readers and art writing by bringing together in a single volume a body of art discourse that is art-historically significant.

This reader provides a new foundation for constructing a critically engaged art discourse. Much of the selected art writings directly engage with the role of the state during a period when the effects of government interventions such as the funding of art institutions, promotion of an art market and support for patronage, were more visible than ever in cultural production. *Histories, Practices, Interventions* provides insights into these and other issues through writings that examine contested issues, experimental

practices, theories and histories pertinent to the discourse on contemporary art in Singapore. As a project, this anthology thus represents our desire as editors, educators and art historians to search for discursive density amidst the richness of writings on contemporary art in Singapore.

EDITORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would never have been realised without the generous assistance, expertise and support of a number of individuals and organisations.

First and foremost, we would like to thank the authors and their publishers for allowing us to republish their essays.

We are grateful to LASALLE College of the Arts for providing the research funds and for fostering the research culture that made *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* possible.

We extend our gratitude to the National Arts Council and Ode to Art for their generous support of this book.

The advice, insight and knowledge provided by the editorial committee, comprised of art historian TK Sabapathy, art educator and writer Lim Kok Boon, the Director of LASALLE's Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, Bala Starr, and Associate Professor Kwok Kian-Woon, have been instrumental in sharpening the criteria for the selection of the texts.

Thanks to Susie Wong and Lim Kok Boon for writing the section introductions, and to Venka Purushothaman, Bala Starr and TK Sabapathy for reviewing our editorial introduction and essay.

We extend our great appreciation to the designers, Shawn Loo and Priscilla Kwee at Every Matter, not only for creating this beautifully designed book, but for their patience and attention to detail at all stages of its production.

Warm thanks to our copy editors and proofreaders, Jimmy Yap and Dale Edmonds, whose methodical and careful work is greatly appreciated.

Last, but certainly not least, a heartfelt thanks to our dedicated research assistants Rohaya Binte Mustapha and Carrie Chia. We especially appreciate Rohaya's valuable contributions in the early development stages of the book and Carrie's meticulous attention to detail during the later stages.

EDITORS' NOTES

We have made every effort to republish texts in their original form but have sought to ensure consistency in terms of citation style, spelling and dates. We have edited punctuation and grammar without affecting expression or structure in order to facilitate reading of the texts. Where changes have been made on the advice of an author, these changes are acknowledged at the end of the essay. Where an original text was missing footnotes or page numbers, every effort has been made to contact the author to obtain the missing information.

We have omitted the images that were included with most of the original texts. The book is primarily focused on text and we wanted to standardise the book as not all the texts were accompanied by images. The reproduction of the *Trimurti* exhibition catalogue is an exception. The accompanying images and their placement within the text are integral to understanding the philosophy and concept of the text and the exhibition.

NOTES ON WRITERS

ALFIAN SA'AT

Alfian Sa'at is currently a resident playwright with WILD RICE. His plays with the company include *Homesick*, *Happy Endings: Asian Boys Vol. 3* and *Cooling-Off Day*. His published works include poetry: *One Fierce Hour*, *A History of Amnesia* and *The Invisible Manuscript*; short stories: *Corridor* and *Malay Sketches*; and plays: *Collected Plays 1 & 2*. Alfian has been nominated eight times for Best Script at the Life! Theatre Awards, winning for *Landmarks*, *Nadirah* and *Your Sister's Husband*. He has also won the Boh Cameronian for Best Original Script for *Parah* and Best Original Book or Lyrics for *The Secret Life of Nora*. He has been nominated for the Kirayama Asia-Pacific Book Prize and the Singapore Literature Prize for *A History of Amnesia*. In 2001, Alfian won the Golden Point Award for Poetry as well as the National Arts Council Young Artist Award for Literature.

S CHANDRASEKARAN

S Chandrasekaran is well-known for performance works dating as early as 1983. He was a recipient of the Young Artist Award in 1999. He is a founding member of the Arts Fission Company and artistic director of Biological Arts Theatre. He has represented Singapore in major exhibitions such as the Havana Biennial (Cuba), the Asia-Pacific Performance Art Festival (Canada), the International Performance Art Festival (Poland), the 49th Venice Biennale, the World Sculpture Park (China), the Sharjah International Biennial (UAE), the National Review of Live Art (Australia), the Lulea Biennial (Sweden), the 3rd Asia Pacific Arts Forum (Taiwan), the International Artist Museum's fringe festival at the 56th Venice Biennale, documenta, the Biennale of Electronic Arts (Australia), and *Art Stays* (Slovenia), 2010. His performance work *Bleeding Angel* was nominated for the APBF Signature Art Prize 2008 in Singapore. His research interests are in the areas of posthumanist concerns between life sciences and Indian mythology, and the notion of the "third skin."

CHEO CHAI-HIANG

Cheo Chai-Hiang currently lives and works in Malacca and Singapore. After graduating from the Royal College of Art in London in 1978, he was awarded the position of Rome Scholar at the British School at Rome in Italy. He then taught for 20 years in the School of Contemporary Arts at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. His work negotiates trajectories through domains related to identity, culture and place. His practice spans a wide range of disciplines, including writing.

ISABEL CHING

Isabel Ching is currently a PhD student at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, investigating conceptualism in Myanmar, the Philippines and Singapore from the 1960s to 1990s. She is project coordinator for the research group Arts and the Transcultural at the university's Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context." She has curated exhibitions of artists from China, Hong Kong, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

CHU CHU YUAN

Chu Chu Yuan is a visual artist, practice-led researcher and cultural producer, born in Malaysia and currently based in Singapore. With a background in English literature, she was involved in publishing, writing and teaching before embracing art practice in 1994. Together with Jay Koh on the iFIMA (International Forum for Intermedia Art) platform, she has been developing a form of art practice based on dialogue, exchange, negotiation, and creating projects that activate cross-cultural exchanges and interpersonal knowledge-sharing, build collaborations, and aim at evolving new forms of social organisation in response to contextual conditions, issues and capacities. Her PhD with Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, completed in 2013, explores negotiation within relational art practice as a framework for participative learning.

CHUA EK KAY

Chua Ek Kay was the first Chinese ink painter to win the United Overseas Bank Painting of the Year Award (1991). Chua trained under master ink painter Fang Chang Tien of the Shanghai School but later developed a keen interest in Western art. He was conferred the Cultural Medallion Award, the highest art accolade in Singapore, in 1999 in recognition of

his artistic excellence and contributions. Prominent in Chua's paintings is the blend of traditional Chinese art forms and Western theories and techniques. Chua died in 2008.

KEVIN CHUA

Kevin Chua specialises in the history of 18th- and 19th-century European art, with an emphasis on French painting. With a PhD in the history of art from the University of California at Berkeley, Chua has held fellowships at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts in Washington, DC, and at the Center for 17th- and 18th-century Studies at the University of California in Los Angeles. Besides essays on European art, Chua also writes on modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia, and has published essays on Simryn Gill, Ho Tzu Nyen, Donna Ong, the Migrant Ecologies Project, 1950s Nanyang painting, and the politics of animality in 19th-century Singapore. His research and teaching interests include modernity as a global condition, trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific visual culture, scientific visual culture—especially with regard to vitalism, second-order cybernetics, and posthumanism—and art-historical methodology.

GOH EE CHOO

Goh Ee Choo is an established Singaporean contemporary multidisciplinary artist. His artistic practice includes painting, installation and performance art. He has won numerous awards and accolades in Singapore and abroad, including the Jurors' Choice in the Philip Morris Singapore Art Awards of 1996, 1997 and 1999. Goh is also one of a trio of artists, together with S Chandrasekaran and Salleh Japar, who participated in the groundbreaking exhibitions that include *Trimurti* (1988) and *Power Structure* (1991) at the Goethe-Institut Singapore. Besides participating in local and overseas exhibitions, he has taught art at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) and LASALLE College of the Arts.

HO HO YING

Ho Ho Ying is Singapore's pioneering artist of the modern art movement and an influential art critic and leader for more than half a century. Ho co-founded the Modern Art Society, Singapore (MASS) in 1964 and subsequently the Federation of Art Societies (Singapore) (FASS) in 1992. He served as president of MASS for 13 years, president of the Singapore Art Society for 11 years, and also two terms as president of FASS. With his

literary background, he was a prolific writer who generated intellectual discourse and contributed to shaping public opinion on art. His articles serve as important documentation of the development of the arts in Singapore. He was conferred the Cultural Medallion Award, the highest art accolade in Singapore, in 2012, in recognition of his artistic excellence and contributions.

HO TZU NYEN

Ho Tzu Nyen makes films, videos and theatrical performances. One-person exhibitions of his work include *MAM Project #16* at the Mori Art Museum (2012), the Singapore Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), and *Earth* at Artspace, Sydney (2011). Recent group exhibitions include *Homeworks 6*, Beirut (2013), the 5th Auckland Triennial (2013), and *No Country* at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (2013), and his films have been presented at film festivals such as 41st Director's Fortnight, Cannes International Film Festival (2009) and the 66th Venice International Film Festival (2009). He is currently an artist-in-residence at the DAAD (Berlin).

BINGHUI HUANGFU

Binghui Huangfu is one of the world's leading curators of contemporary Asian art. She was director/curator at the Earl Lu Gallery (now called Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore) at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, from 1996 to 2003 where she curated a number of major international exhibitions, accompanied by conferences and substantial catalogues. She has been a senior visiting fellow at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales in Sydney since 2008, and an independent curator working internationally.

JOAN KEE

Joan Kee is Associate Professor of the History of Art at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, the first academic position in North America specifically created for the study of modern and contemporary art in Asia. She has held fellowships at the University of Hong Kong, the National University of Singapore, the University of California at Berkeley and the Tate Asia Pacific Research Centre. She has written widely on East and Southeast Asian art for such publications as *Artforum*, *Art Bulletin*, *Art History*, *Art Margins*, *Archives of Asian Art*, and *Oxford Art Journal*.

including editing a special issue on contemporary Asian art for *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* (2004) and co-editing an issue of *Third Text* on contemporary Southeast Asian Art (2011).

JAY KOH

Jay Koh was born in Singapore and identifies himself as a Southeast Asian artist-curator and researcher. He has a critical art praxis that seeks responsive, dialogical and critical engagements with others. Koh has created diverse public participatory art projects across Europe and Asia, directed art spaces in Cologne and Yangon and run the Open Academy learner-driven capacity-building programmes in Hanoi, Hue, Ulaanbaatar and Yangon in collaboration with Malaysian/Singapore-based artist Chu Chu Yuan. He takes on additional roles as evaluator and mentor in art-related and resource development activities, and has attained a Doctor of Fine Arts in cross-disciplinary artistic research with the University of the Arts, Helsinki. With a forthcoming book on art-led participative processes, he continues to research on the ecological validation and answerability of publicly engaged art praxis.

KUO PAO KUN

Kuo Pao Kun was one of the most significant dramatists in Singapore and a pioneer of Singapore theatre. Most of his works are in English and Chinese, and have also been translated into many languages and performed by theatre companies in Singapore and abroad. The three arts institutions that Kuo founded—the Practice Performing Arts School, The Theatre Practice and The Substation—became major arts institutions in Singapore. Kuo won the Singapore Cultural Medallion award in 1989 for his contributions to Singapore theatre. He died in 2002.

KWOK KIAN-WOON

Kwok Kian-Woon is a faculty member at the Division of Sociology, Nanyang Technological University. His teaching and research interests include the sociology of the arts. He is actively involved in issues related to heritage and the arts in both civil society and the public sector, as honorary chairman of the National Archives of Singapore, the past president of the Singapore Heritage Society, and co-chairman of the Steering Committee for the Singapore Biennale 2006 and as a member of the National Heritage Board, the Singapore Art Museum Board, the Steering Committee for the National

Art Gallery, the National Arts Council since 2013 and the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore Governing Council since March 2014.

RAY LANGENBACH

Ray Langenbach creates conceptual performances. He curates exhibitions and performance festivals, convenes dialogues, and video-documents all varieties of performance. He writes on cultural theory, visual art, performance and queer culture in Asia, Europe and Australia. He currently serves as Professor of Performance Art and Theory at the University of the Arts, Helsinki, and is principal researcher of the Asian Art and Performance Consortium at the Finnish Academy of Fine Art. Originally from Boston, USA, his home is in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

LEE WEN

Lee Wen explores different media and strategies of time-based and performance art, often using life experiences and personal dilemmas as initial entries into an artistic journey, recovering memories and remaking mythologies. He contributed to The Artists Village alternative art group in Singapore and actively worked in the Black Market international performance collective. He initiated and co-organised *Future of Imagination* (2003), an international performance art event, and *R.I.T.E.S.—Rooted in the Ephemeral Speak* (2009), a platform to support and develop performance art practices, discourse, infrastructure and audiences in Singapore. In 2012 he initiated the Independent Archive and Resource Centre, focussing on art practices and research that benefit from archival support. Lee was awarded Singapore's Cultural Medallion in 2005 and the Performance Studies international (PSi) Artist/Scholar/Activist Award in 2014.

LEE WENG CHOY

Lee Weng Choy is resident of the Singapore Section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). From 2000 to 2009, he was the artistic co-director of The Substation in Singapore. He has lectured on art theory, cultural studies and policy internationally, including at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sotheby's Institute of Art, Singapore, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and has published widely on contemporary art in Singapore.

LIM KOK BOON

Lim Kok Boon is an educator, artist and art critic. He has curated exhibitions, written exhibition catalogue essays, and art reviews for now defunct Singapore art magazine, *Vehicle*. Having been awarded a Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Fine Art by Goldsmiths College and a Master of Philosophy (Arts, Culture and Education) by the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, he enjoys thinking about the intersection of art education and art practice within an ecosystem. He is writing art reviews as part of a 10-year art history experiment, with his 2013 book *Not in Any Order: Writings on Singapore Art 2006-2010* serving as proof of concept. He writes to understand art and hopes to contribute to art education in Singapore.

WILLIAM SW LIM

William SW Lim graduated from the Architectural Association (AA) London and continued his graduate study at the Department of City and Regional Planning, Harvard University. His professional work involves architecture, planning and development economics. He was principal architect at Malayan Architects Co-Partnership from 1960 to 1967, Design Partnership (presently DP Architects) from 1967 to 1981 and William Lim Associates from 1981 to 2002. Lim is president of AA Asia and chairman of Asian Urban Lab. He was also president of the Singapore Heritage Society from 1988 to 1997, and of the Singapore Planning and Research Group (SPUR) from 1966 to 1968. Lim was conferred a Doctor of Architecture *Honoris Causa* by RMIT University in 2002 and Honorary Professor of LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts (Singapore) in 2005. Currently, he writes and lectures on a wide range of subjects relating to architecture, urbanism and culture in Asia as well as on current issues relating to the postmodern, glocality and social justice.

SUSIE LINGHAM

Susie Lingham is a multidisciplinary thinker, writer and artist, whose work synthesises ideas relating to the nature of the mind across different fields, from the humanities to the sciences. Susie was director of the Singapore Art Museum from August 2013 to March 2016. In her various and diverse roles, she engages with the creative process intimately. Much of her work is to actively bridge different audiences and contexts. Susie holds an MA (Honours) in Writing from the University of Western Sydney, a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching Higher Education from NIE/NTU,

Singapore, and a PhD in Literature, Religion and Philosophy from the University of Sussex, UK.

JOHN LOW

John Low is an installation-based visual arts practitioner whose primary interest centres on the subject of landscape representations of the rural-urban city. For the last decade, this interest has shifted to a concern with the nature of contemporary writings on art history and contemporary art practices in Singapore and Southeast Asia as part of his PhD research programme at Curtin University, Perth. He explores cross-cultural, trans-cultural, or transnational references in these writings and practices, especially the formulations of theoretical and practice-based methodologies between Euro-American and Southeast Asian critical writers, art historians and practitioners, and attempts to map their linkages, fissures and openings.

GUNALAN NADARAJAN

Gunalan Nadarajan is an art theorist and curator who has authored, edited and co-edited five books and over 100 academic articles, book chapters and catalogue essays that have been translated into 16 languages. He has curated many international exhibitions including in Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, New Zealand, Germany, Korea, Mexico, China and the United States. He is currently Dean and Professor at the Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, USA.

LINDY POH

Lindy Poh is a writer, consultant and intellectual property lawyer. A former curator at the Singapore Art Museum from 1996 to 2000, Poh was also adjunct senior curator at the National Gallery of Singapore from 2009 to 2011 and has been appointed to art committees of museums and organisations. She has an MA in visual culture and art theory from Middlesex University, London, and a Bachelor of Laws from the National University of Singapore. Writing on art, heritage, culture and artist copyrights, she has authored *A Heritage of Maki-e Pens—The Briggs Collection* (2014); *Celebrating the Source: Water Festivities of Southeast Asia* (2009) as well as numerous essays on corporate art, photography, film and the visual arts.

VENKA PURUSHOTHAMAN

Venka Purushothaman is an art writer, academic, and arts and cultural manager. He is currently Vice-President (Academic) and Provost at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. He has researched and written extensively on visual arts, performing arts and arts management. His latest book is *The Art of Sukumar Bose*, published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Purushothaman is a member of the International Association of Art Critics, France (AICA), and a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts, UK (RSA).

TK SABAPATHY

TK Sabapathy has published extensively on art and artists in Southeast Asia. His writing has inaugurated important art historical trajectories for appreciating the modern and the contemporary in Southeast Asia. His monographic studies of artists, especially in Singapore and Malaysia, have established significant benchmarks in developing the critical literature on art and artists. He is currently an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore and consultant lecturer in the School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University, where he teaches the history of art.

SALLEH JAPAR

Salleh Japar, together with Goh Ee Choo and S Chandrasekaran, participated in the ground-breaking exhibition *Trimurti* in 1988 which was the first exhibition of contemporary art in Singapore that involved multimedia modes of art-making such as painting, sculpture, installation and performance. A recipient of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the Visual Art Award (1996) and the Singapore Youth Award (Art and Culture) from the National Youth Council (1998), Salleh represented Singapore in 2001 at the 49th Venice Biennale and participated in numerous exhibitions in Singapore and internationally. A former assistant curator at the National Museum Art Gallery (presently Singapore Art Museum), Salleh is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Fine Arts at LASALLE College of the Arts.

JEFFREY SAY

Jeffrey Say is an art historian who has undertaken extensive study on the history of sculpture in pre- and post-war Singapore, for which he

has written several essays and participated in forums on the subject. He has also curated visual arts exhibitions and contributed essays to both local and overseas exhibition catalogues (Brother Joseph McNally's *East, West, North, South*, USA, 2001; Karl Duldig *Sculptures/Drawings*, Jewish Museum, Vienna, 2003; and *The Big Picture Show*, Singapore Art Museum, 2007). Say is a frequent public speaker on art history at museums and art galleries. In addition, he gives lectures on art history to museum docents, schools and universities, and conducts art history enrichment courses for working professionals. In 2009, Say designed the first taught master's programme to focus on Asian modern and contemporary art histories at LASALLE College of the Arts and is currently its programme leader.

SENG YU JIN

Seng Yu Jin is a senior curator at the National Gallery Singapore. He had previously taught at LASALLE College of the Arts in the MA Asian Art Histories and BA Fine Arts programmes. Seng's research interests cover regional art histories focusing on Southeast Asian art in relation to studies on diaspora, migration, and cultural transfers. He is currently researching on artistic activities and its histories, focusing on the history of exhibitions and artist collectives in Southeast Asia. His curatorial research extends to exploring "relationality", conceptualism, socially-engaged artistic practices, as well as unfinished, rejected and unrealised artworks as a productive field of enquiry. His curated exhibitions include *From Words to Pictures: Art During the Emergency* (2006) and he also co-curated *The Artists Village: 20 Years On* (2008), *FX Harsono: Testimonies* (2009), *Cheong Soo Pieng: Bridging Worlds* (2009) and *Sudjojono: Lives of Pictures* (2014). Seng is currently a PhD candidate at the Asia Institute, University of Melbourne.

RUSSELL STORER

Russell Storer is a senior curator at the National Gallery Singapore. He was previously Head of Asian and Pacific Art (2010-14) and Curator, Contemporary Asian Art (2008-10) at the Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia, where he was on the curatorial teams of the 6th, 7th and 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art and the curator of *Cai Guo-Qiang: Falling Back to Earth*. As a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, from 2001 to 2008, his exhibitions included *Situation*, featuring The Artists Village, as well as solo projects with Matthew

Ngui, Simryn Gill, and Juan Davila. He was a co-curator of the 3rd Singapore Biennale, a curatorial comrade for the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, and a visiting curator at documenta 12. He has written widely on contemporary Asian and Australian art.

TAN BOON HUI

Tan Boon Hui is Vice President for Global Arts and Cultural Programs, and Director, Asia Society Museum, New York, where he leads the organization's global arts and cultural activities spanning visual arts, performing arts and film. As museum director, he oversees Asia Society Museum's exhibition programmes and collections. Prior to this, Tan was Assistant Chief Executive (Museum & Programs) at the National Heritage Board (NHB) in Singapore overseeing exhibitions, programmes and outreach events across the Board's museums, institutions and divisions. As a curator and programmer, his research and writing focus on the contemporary artistic expressions of Southeast Asia and Asia and the remaking of traditions among artists of today. Tan is a founding board member of the International Biennial Association. He was director of the Singapore Art Museum from 2009 to 2013, where he led the transformation of the museum into a contemporary art institution focused on Southeast Asia, and assembled the largest public collection of contemporary art from the region.

TAY SWEE LIN

Tay Swee Lin is an independent art consultant based in Singapore. From 1995 to 2001, she worked as a curator at the Singapore Art Museum. She headed and directed Sculpture Square Limited from 2001 to 2008. Tay was the curator for public art at the National Museum of Singapore in 2004 and the public art programme at Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 3 in 2006. She has served on the Art Acquisition Committee as a member since 2010, on the Public Art Appraisal Committee as deputy chairperson from 2010 to 2013 at the Singapore Art Museum, and on the Public Art Tax Incentive Scheme (PATIS) since 2013 at the National Heritage Board. Tay was a member of the curatorial selection committee and an artist mentor of the *President's Young Talents Exhibition* 2012, Singapore Art Museum, and a curator for the Singapore Biennale 2013. She has also lectured at LASALLE College of the Arts in its Master of Arts in Asian Art Histories programme.

CJ W-L WEE

CJ W-L Wee is Professor of English at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He has held visiting fellowships at, among other institutions, the Society for the Humanities, Cornell University, and the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and the Humanities, University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Culture, Empire, and the Question of Being Modern* (2003) and *The Asian Modern: Culture, Capitalist Development, Singapore* (2007). Most recently, he co-edited *Contesting Performance: Global Sites of Research* (2010). His present research interest is the formation of and the relationship between contemporary visual art, theatre, film, literature and urban culture in Singapore and in East Asia.

SUSIE WONG

Susie Wong is an art writer, curator and artist. Besides the numerous exhibitions in which she has participated as an artist or curator, she was a regular art reviewer in the 1990s for *The Straits Times Life!*, and is a feature writer for magazines such as *The Arts Magazine* (now defunct), *ID* and *d+a*. She has also written artist monographs and has contributed to publications such as *Southeast Asian Art Today* (published by Roeder) and *Liu Kang: Colourful Modernist* (published by The National Art Gallery, Singapore). She has been a member of AICA (International Association of Art Critics—Singapore Section) since its inception in 2006.

WU MALI

Wu Mali is a Taiwanese visual conceptual artist. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf, and returned to Taiwan in 1985. Wu expanded her understanding of art with practical social engagement and closely connects her art works with a historical perspective. She thus developed her work *Art as Environment—A Cultural Action on Tropic of Cancer* (2006) with the aid of over 30 artists; it offers a critical perspective on the consequences of chaotic urbanisation, and provides didactic alternatives for urban development. In her work, she thematises the role of the artist in society, among other things, and frequently works closely with local communities in this connection. Wu lives in Kaoshiung and Taipei, Taiwan.