

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed till 8 April 2009

An Unbroken Line: The Wu Guanzhong Donation Collection 风筝不断线: 吴冠中捐赠作品展

9 April to 16 August 2009
2009年4月9日至8月16日



Wu Guanzhong
Zhangjiajie 张家界
1997
Ink and colour on paper
145 x 368cm
Gift of Wu Guanzhong
Singapore Art Museum Collection

(8 April 2009) Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is proud to present *An Unbroken Line*, a showcase of 114 works by internationally acclaimed artist, Wu Guanzhong. Valued at SGD\$73.7 million, Wu Guanzhong's donation of 113 works to the Singapore Art Museum in 2008 is the highest valued donation presented to a public museum in Singapore. This exhibition will showcase the complete set of donated works representing five decades of the artist's creative oeuvre. In addition, the artist had donated an artwork to Singapore in February 1988, when he participated in the *Wu Guanzhong Art Exhibition* jointly organised by Singapore National Museum and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts then. The donated work was a piece Wu completed in 1981, entitled *Roots*.

The exhibition opening will be officiated by Guest of Honour, RADM (NS) Lui Tuck Yew, Acting Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts on 8 April 2009, Wednesday, 7pm, at the Glass Hall,

Singapore Art Museum. Media preview led by Director of Singapore Art Museum, Mr. Kwok Kian Chow and Exhibition Curator, Ms Patricia Ong will be held on 8 April 2009, 11:00 am at the Singapore Art Museum.

A key significance of Wu Guanzhong's art is the crossing and synthesising of the two art forms of ink and oil which represent art historical and aesthetic contexts of traditional Chinese and Western art. Wu started painting in ink only in 1974, when he was aged 55, but his earlier oil works were predicated on ink aesthetics as with his subsequent inks on oil foundation. A prolific writer of essays and art theory, his *Formal Beauty of Painting* foreshadowed a revolution in art in the immediate post-Cultural Revolution period when it was published in 1978.

To Wu, the feelings of the individual were supreme. Equally important, however, was the individual's emotional link with the community, hence his famed line, the "*Unbroken Kite String*", which expounds the connection between formal abstraction and everyday life, and acknowledges its source in the community. A strong advocate of developing culture and the arts, and a man who holds deep respect for intercultural values, Wu's broad brushstroke gesture of presenting his largest donation to the Singapore Art Museum will be celebrated jointly by the art community as well as the Singapore public.

Says Director, Singapore Art Museum, Mr Kwok Kian Chow, "Wu Guanzhong epitomises a 20th century respect for individualism, celebration of beauty and concern for community and history. Wu Guanzhong shows that the above are not contradictory aspirations and he has synthesised them beautifully through his paintings."

Given Wu Guanzhong's magnanimity and deep respect for intercultural values, his broad brushstroke gesture of presenting his largest donation to Singapore is not entirely a surprise. Says the artist in his usual perspective way, "Singapore is a country I respect, it is positioned between the east and the west with regards to ethics and quality of life; it is close to China, as it is close to the west; the virtues of both sides are concentrated in you." Jane Ittogi, chair of Singapore Art Museum aptly responded that Wu

Annex A

Biography of Wu Guanzhong

Born on August 29th, 1919 in Yixing, Jiangsu Province, Wu Guanzhong is a leading Chinese painter, art educator and essayist in the 20th century.

In 1936 he enrolled at the National Arts Academy of Hangzhou, studying both Chinese and Western painting under Pan Tianshou (1897-1971) and Lin Fengmian (1900-1991). In 1938, he adopted the pen name "Tu", which he uses on all his paintings to indicate a great intensity of character, half happy and half sad life and creations loaded with meaning. In 1946, Wu was offered a place at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts in Paris on a government scholarship. During the time in Paris, Wu mainly studied modern art and formed his own ideas about modern western art. He appreciated its novel forms, acute perceptions of the world, diverse techniques of expression and its popular use of abstract form.

Wu returned to China in 1950 and dedicated his whole life to art in his home country. He encouraged his students at the Central Academy of Art in Beijing to draw on both western and Chinese art. However this idea went against the contemporary prevailing Soviet- inspired social realism and Wu was heavily criticized. In 1953, he was expelled from the Central Academy of Fine Arts but was offered a position at the Architecture Department of Tsinghua University, a gesture he still appreciates today.

At the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, he was banned from painting, writing and teaching, and in 1970 was sent to Hebei province for hard labour. Later, travelling all over China, he found inspiration in the beauty of nature. Wu worked on a series of paintings of northern villages, in focusing on the beauty of form. Wu found a new way to satisfy the social need, gain political approval and fulfill his dream as well -he changed from drawing figures to landscapes.

Believing that art creation is one's pursuit of beauty and form, Wu's emphasis on formal beauty found acceptance only when Chinese culture took on a new outlook after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Wu is considered to be one of the most serious upholders of formal language amongst the artists of China. Wu's pro-form theory drove China's art to free itself from the mire of subject-centricism. By the

early 1980s, his own artistic style had reached the acme of perfection, establishing a painterly language that is unique and truly his own. Wu's artistic principles has a balance between the individual and society, as well as between formal beauty (even formalism) and the receptivity of the masses.

Annex B

Public Programmes in conjunction with the exhibition

1. InterACT

A Speech and Drama workshop

Engage with the artworks by Wu Guanzhong in this gallery-based speech and drama workshop. Kids will pick up simple art appreciation skills and have fun creating stories in this delightful show-and-tell session.

Date	31 May 2009
Venue	SAM Glass Hall
Time	3:30 pm to 5:00 pm
Fees	Free Admission



2. Wu Guanzhong Curatour

Appreciate the art of Wu Guanzhong and the evolution of his painting style over the span of his artistic career in this curatour by Ms. Patricia Ong, Curator of "*An Unbroken Line: The Wu Guanzhong Donation Collection*".

Date	17 April and 12 June 2009
Venue	SAM Lobby
Time	7:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Fees	Free Admission

3. Artist Led tour on Wu Guanzhong (In Mandarin)

Find out more about the stories behind his art works of prolific artist Wu Guanzhong in this artist led tour by Mr Tan Khim Ser, President of the Life Art Society. Tan Khim Ser is considered one of Singapore's foremost brush painting artists. He has received numerous awards for his contribution to furthering the arts scene in Singapore.

Date	31 May 2009
Venue	SAM Lobby
Time	2:30 pm
Fees	Free Admission

4. Strokes – A Chinese Ink Painting Workshop (In Mandarin)

A refreshing experience for the senses! Learn basic brush techniques in Chinese Ink Paintings and bring home your unique masterpieces in this workshop conducted by the Life Art Society.



Founded in 1972, the Singapore Life Art Society aims to create greater awareness in local art and developing talent through conducting courses, exhibitions, competitions, forums and publications of art magazines.

Date	31 May 2009
Venue	SAM Glass Hall
Time	1:00 to 5:00pm
Fees	Free Admission

5. Workshop Series: Learning from the Great Master

Immerse your child in a series of Art Workshops inspired by the great works of Wu Guanzhong. Students will be exposed to various mediums used in the master's works and will be encouraged to re-create their interpretations based on various themes.

The workshop series will happen every Sunday on the following days.

12 April and 14 June: **Ink and Color**

Have fun with ink and color on Hand-made paper

19 April and 21 June: **Animal Series 1**

Drawing different animals with acrylic paint on canvas.

26 April and 28 June: **Abstracts!**

Explore abstract painting through lines, dots and various forms.

3 May: **Garden and Nature Series 1**

Looking at nature and reproducing it through Mono-Prints

10 May: **Ink and Color**

Have fun with ink and color on hand-made paper

17 May: **Garden and Nature Series 2**

Engage in Observational Studies of flowers and create an abstract piece of work with experimental mediums.



24 May: **Abstracts Again the Unusual way!**

Create Abstract painting through unconventional methods.

31May: **Animal Series 2**

Explore the second installment of our animal series through painting with silkscreen

7 June: **Hometown**

Create abstract painting through shapes, colors and lines

Age Group	6 to 12 years
Venue	Art Q, 8Q sam
Time	1.00 to 3.00 pm
Fees	\$40 per child per session

Annex C

Merchandise for An Unbroken Line: The Wu Guanzhong Donation Collection

Specially designed by The Singapore Shawl – 3 Shawls inspired by Wu's works



Springs and Autumns in the Lotus Pond, 2003, Wu Guanzhong
Donation from Wu Guanzhong, Singapore Art



A Fishing Harbour, 1991, Wu Guanzhong,



The Wu Village, 1993, Wu Guanzhong,
Donation from Wu Guanzhong, Singapore Art Museum Collection



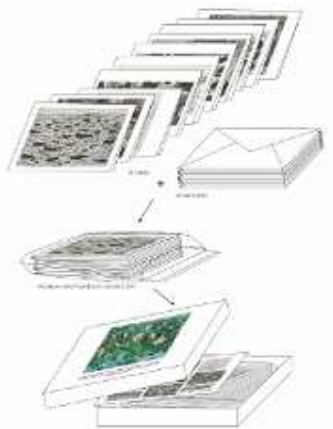
Art-to-Go Prints – Featuring 15 Wu Guanzhong Images



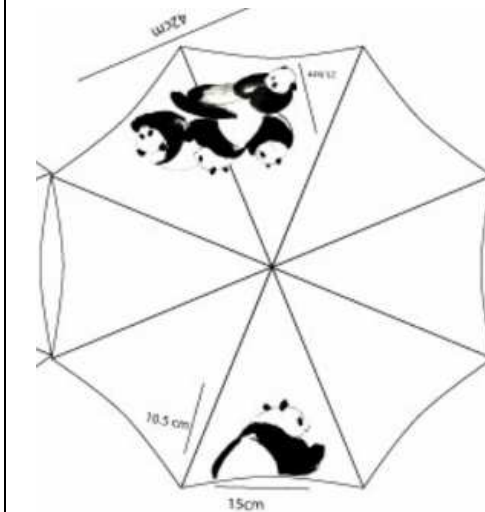
Springs and Autumns in the Lotus Pond, 2003
Wu Guanzhong, Donation from Wu Guanzhong, Singapore Art Museum Collection

Bringing home a piece of artwork is now made possible with the Singapore Art Museum's Art-to-Go programme. Specially selected images from SAM's permanent collection can now be printed on canvas with the use of the new powerful Hewlett Packard Z3100 printer. Now available for sale in A1 (60x83cm) size canvas prints

Wu Guanzhong Cards in Set of 10 per Box



'Pandas' Umbrella



'Pandas' Sketchbook



Annex D

About Singapore Art Museum

Opened in January 1996, the mission of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is to preserve and present the art histories and contemporary art practices of Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. To date, SAM has amassed the world's largest public collection of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian artworks with a growing component in international contemporary art. The museum has presented shows covering both local and international art practices, traditional and cutting edge art expressions.

Through strategic alliances with international arts and cultural institutions, SAM has been facilitating visual arts education, exchange, research and development within the region and internationally. Through forging collaborative partnerships and staging innovative programmes to engage different audiences, SAM aims to contribute to an enlarged role in the regional visual arts community and Asian art museology, as well as facilitating developments in art as well as the art sector in Singapore.

Opened in August 2008, 8Q sam is a contemporary art space with fresh, multi-disciplinary, interactive and community oriented programming; a place where the public can directly experience the work and ideas of living artists, and in relation to its aesthetic and social context. 8Q sam will support experimental art forms and is envisioned to become a crossroad of new ideas and expressions. 8Q sam aspires to engage a broad and diverse audience, create a sense of community and be a place for contemplation, stimulation, and discussion about contemporary art and culture, and serves as a forum especially for the students. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience the diversity of contemporary art practices ranging from painting and sculpture, to installation, film & video, photography, new media, performance art and sound art.