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NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD APPOINTS A NEW DIRECTOR FOR THE SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

SINGAPORE – 1 July 2009 The National Heritage Board (NHB) continues to grow Singapore's arts and heritage sector with the appointment of Mr Tan Boon Hui as Director of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM). He takes over from Mr Kwok Kian Chow as Director SAM with effect 1 August 2009.

The dynamic team at SAM under the guidance of Mr Kwok has built a strong foundation in historical, modern and contemporary art appreciation and scholarship. There are now opportunities to grow the appreciation of these visual art forms and add even more vibrancy to the visual art scene in Singapore, with the formation of The National Art Gallery, Singapore (TNAGS).

Since 1 April 2009, Mr Kwok was appointed as Director of The National Art Gallery, Singapore (TNAGS) where he is leading the museological team. He will be responsible for the development of historical and modern art tracts. This will include exhibitions and programming in the TNAGS "incubator" galleries at SAM. These TNAGS "incubator" galleries will give the public a preview of what they can anticipate when TNAGS is completed. We are grateful to Mr Kwok who has been concurrently handling the posts of D/TNAGS and D/SAM since 1 April 2009.

Mr Tan will oversee the development of the contemporary art tract, which will be presented at both SAM as well as its new galleries at 8Q SAM. Currently the Deputy Director of Programmes at the National Museum of Singapore (NMS), Mr Tan brings with him 13 years of experience in the arts and heritage industry. His focus at the helm of SAM will be to:

- Build on the strong foundations of SAM and facilitate a better understanding of contemporary art by the public
- Bring new contemporary talent to the fore by giving emerging artists opportunities to develop their work further, nurturing mid-career artists to raise their public profile in Singapore and across the world through museum shows, and honouring our trail blazers who have done much in building our local arts scene
- Create contemporary programmes for the young in a fully fledged Children's Season to encourage a museum going culture

Ms Jane Ittogi, Chairman of SAM, said: "Boon Hui's wonderful track record in museum programming will add richly to SAM. As Director SAM he will build on Kian Chow's multi-layered and long-lasting contributions to SAM. The Singapore Art Museum will lead the field in contemporary art – continuing to build a collection of the best contemporary Singapore and Southeast Asian artworks that capture the concerns and spirit of the times. Through programmes, SAM will work assiduously to provide a forum that connects with artists and is

accessible to the public, layering its outreach to ensure all levels of society can engage in the life and work of the leading institution of contemporary art.”

Two senior SAM staff will be joining TNAGS with effect 1 August 2009. They are:

- Mr Low Sze Wee, Deputy Director, Curation & Collections, TNAGS

Mr Low is currently the Deputy Director, Curation & Collections at the Singapore Art Museum. He has been with SAM since July 2001 and has contributed greatly to the success of many exhibitions held at SAM including the *Chen Wei Hsi, Xu Beihong* and 8Qrate shows. He has also published a number of articles on local artists as well as Asian art historical topics including Xu Beihong and early modern art development in Thailand.

- Ms Suenne Megan Tan
Deputy Director, Programmes, Education and Outreach, TNAGS

Ms Tan, currently the Deputy Director, Communications, Programmes and Partnership Development at the Singapore Art Museum, will take on the new role at TNAGS to head the Programmes, Education and Outreach division of TNAGS. Ms Tan joined SAM in August 1998 and has done well securing high-profile international and local media coverage for SAM's exhibitions as well as enhancing international relations between the museum and its counterparts overseas. She has also published extensively upon completion of her thesis on art policies and funding at the New York University.

Said Mr Michael Koh, CEO of NHB: “We have been looking for a suitable successor for Kian Chow since he was appointed Director of The National Arts Gallery, Singapore (TNAGS) in April 2009. The breadth of his understanding and appreciation of the local and international art scene are indeed rare attributes. Under his stewardship, SAM has earned a coveted reputation of having the world's largest and most comprehensive museum collection of Southeast Asian modern and contemporary art. We are very grateful to Kian Chow for all his contributions and are confident that Boon Hui will bring new ideas to SAM and take it to new heights of world excellence. We can expect him to bring new excitement and zest to our growing visual art scene. NHB will also be recruiting more fresh talent to keep up this momentum in our quest for museum excellence.”

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About National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) champions the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. It makes heritage enriching, relevant and accessible to all through staging innovative programmes and forging collaborative partnerships with both private and people sector counterparts. NHB leverages on state-of-the-art technology and refreshing new approaches to make heritage more dynamic, alive and exciting for different audiences. It also manages both national and public museums, the National Archives of Singapore, and the Heritage Conservation Centre. NHB was formed on 1 August 1993 as a statutory board under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA).

Background on Mr Tan Boon Hui

Mr Tan, 41, joined NHB in 1997 and currently holds the post of Deputy Director of Programmes at the National Museum of Singapore (NMS). Over the past four years, he has been responsible for the organisation of the widely successful Night Festival as well as other specialised festivals such as the Children's Season integrated programme of interactive art, film and performance for young audiences.

He also conceived and curated the 'Art-On-Site', a unique public art programme which invites artists to create large scale, complex installations in the museum's public spaces. The programme has since become one of the most important public art platforms for local young creative talent and Asian artists. Notable successes include local sculptor Yeo Chee Kiong, whose work 'A Day Without a Tree', commissioned under 'Art-On-Site' won the first Asian Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize recently.

Mr Tan was also actively involved in the commissioning of artists' works across various genres, including multidisciplinary works such as the installation-performance *120* by Ong Keng Sen and TheatreWorks; the dance-film *Old Sounds* by Kuik Swee Boon; and musical film *Sin Sai Hong* by Royston Tan.