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# Rethink paper and labour at new shows at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark



An artwork by Li Hongbo named 'Land of Fairy Tales', at the 'Superfluous Things: Paper' exhibition. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

Shannon Ling

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SINGAPORE - Ubiquitous but often overlooked, paper acts as an agent through which ideas are conveyed.

A new exhibition, Superfluous Things: Paper, seeks to examine whether the unassuming material is still relevant in an increasingly digital world.

The show at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) at Tanjong Pagar Distripark explores the creative manipulation of paper through five installations by six artists.

Dr Lim Chye Hong, who leads the show's curatorial team, says the works invite visitors to look at paper "with fresh eyes".

She gives the example of artist Nabilah Said's work 100ish Meaningless Statements, a collection of a hundred sentences that reimagines the role of paper in people's lives.

"Superfluous Things ignites curiosity and exploration through play," adds Dr Lim.

There is also an activity corner, where visitors can assemble their own paper sculpture. The activity follows Cheryl Teo's installation - Just A Little At A Time - which showcases intricate paper sculptures about as big as a matchbox.

Superfluous Things: Paper is one of the exhibitions that SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark will house. It started on May 28 and will run until Aug 14.

Another exhibition, from June 3 to Sept 4, is Lonely Vectors, which focuses on the flow of bodies and labour that characterises our world.

The installations take inspiration from Tanjong Pagar Distripark's proximity to the port. One such work is H For Humidity, by Singaporean contemporary artist Ho Tzu Nyen, 46. Drawing from the intense rainfall and humidity in South-east Asia, the work are also inspired by water cycles and water infrastructures.

"When we think about infrastructures, they are so large that we do not see them. But we live and operate in them, and they shape the way we live and feel."

His virtual reality installation allows visitors to transform into states of liquid and gas and ask, "What does it mean for us to 'be like water'?"

"Through art, I wish to create a situation that can give the audience the maximum amount of possibilities to feel, imagine and sense," Ho adds.

Another work is Loading/Unloading, a performance by dance collective P7:1SMA that explores the theme of labour. Performers rhythmically interact with pieces of metal, showcasing the unseen labour behind the structures around us.

Lonely Vectors, an exhibition which focuses on the flow of bodies and labour that characterises our world. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

"Art is the best medium to inform people of these social issues in a beautiful way," says Mr Norhaizad Adam, 34, the collective's artistic director and choreographer.

Also on offer at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark is Epigram Coffee Bookshop, which offers locally roasted coffee, small bites and local book titles. It is operated by independent local publisher Epigram Bookshop and Balestier Market Collective.

Asked about updates on the museum's plans, Dr Eugene Tan, 50, director of SAM, says its Bras Basah site is still looking to reopen in 2026, as previously reported.

In the meantime, the museum will launch other initiatives to further its strategy of becoming "a disappearing museum" - with a focus on artworks rather than the institution itself - by expanding to different parts of Singapore.

Adds Dr Tan: "We are going to continue developing the Tanjong Pagar Distripark into an arts destination. Hopefully it will become more well known among the public who are not as familiar with the arts as well."

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