

# ART & MUSEUM



Spring Issue 2018

**NATIONAL GALLERY  
OF IRELAND  
EMIL NOLDE  
EXHIBITION**

**ICE AGE ART:  
AN  
EXTRAORDINARY  
LEGACY**



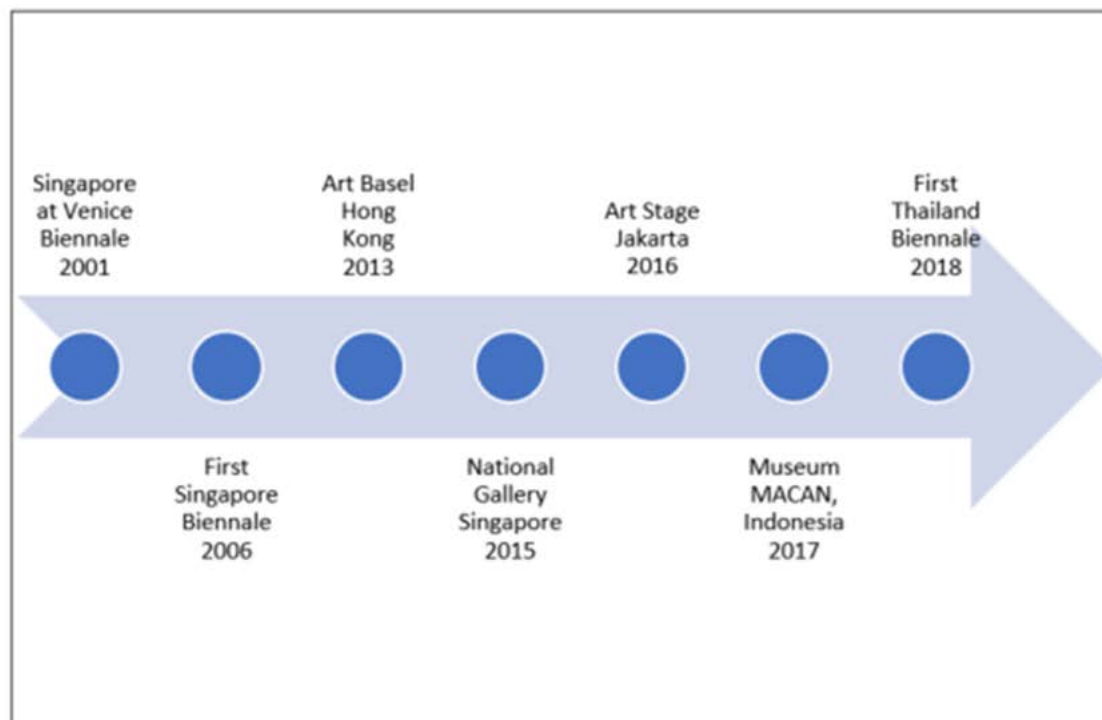
# “Collecting Art” Spotlight on Southeast Asia

Contemporary art began to emerge strongly in Southeast Asia in the 1990s and, alongside Hong Kong and China, continues to strengthen in size, quality and global reach. All the elements needed for a growing art market have come together in the past 15-20 years creating an unmatched dynamism. Each national scene is unique, whilst together they capture a convergence of great cultures over the past 200 years. It will continue to grow and now is the time to get involved.



by Tolla Duke Sloane

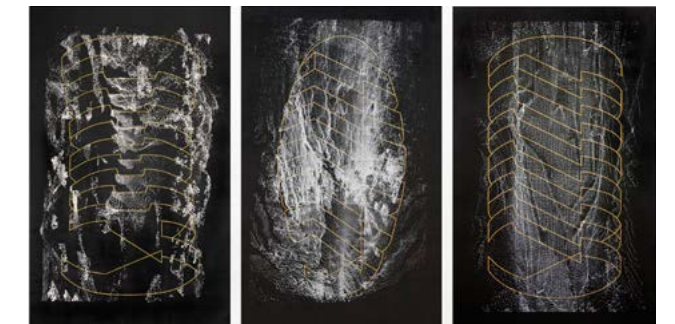
## Timeline of important developments in Museums, Biennales and Art Fairs in the past 15+ years



The advent of Biennales and art fairs from 2001 helped to generate interest from a commercial and curatorial perspective. In the past five years, world class modern and contemporary art museums have opened; the National Gallery Singapore in 2015, MAIIM Museum of Contemporary Art in Thailand and Museum MACAN, passion project of collector Haryanto Adikoesoemo, Indonesia’s first museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art, in 2017. Since Hong Kong Art Fair became Art Basel in 2013, international blue-chip galleries have swept into Hong Kong and Singapore, increasingly adding Southeast Asian artists to their roster as they come. The pace is accelerating with the awakening of contemporary art in Southeast Asia backed by abundant wealth. According to GapGemini’s 2017 report, Asia-Pacific remains the global HNWI market leader.

During this period of rapid growth, the local collector base has grown in strength and depth as the millennial diaspora return and support their art scenes. The scene is driven by artists and patrons with Singapore providing the only significant state support. Indonesian collector Tom Tandio launched online platform Indo Art Now to provide an educational resource whilst Singaporean collectors, Talenia Phua Gajardo and Mike Tay launched the MT Collection and online gallery of galleries, The Artling.

globally. Well-researched, in-depth collections focused on Southeast Asia include the Marc and Esmeralda Bollansee and the Trioche DeLeon collections. The former began in the 1990s and the later in 2011 aiming to share Southeast Asian art with new audiences. Both include Cambodian Sopheap Pich. Trioche DeLeon covers a wide range including established painters Ronald Ventura and Nyoman Masriadi plus younger artists Genevieve Chua, Robert Zhao and Donna Ong. The works are loaned to institutions and galleries around the world.



Genevieve Chua  
*Helix Rain (2016)*  
170 x 278 cm each – Triptych  
Courtesy of the artist



Sopheap Pich, *The Raft (2009)*  
226 x 450 x 132 cm  
Courtesy of the Marc and Esmeralda Bollansee Collection, Belgium/Germany

As private collectors further afield take an interest, Southeast Asian art receives increasing attention



Heman Chong  
*Installation View: An Arm, A Leg and Other Stories (2015)* South London Gallery  
Photo by Andy Keate  
Courtesy of the artist and Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

Institutional support in the West continues to grow. 2018 sees an exhibition of Malaysian Modern artist, Latiff Mohidin, at the Pompidou. The Asia Society in New York curated “After Darkness; Southeast Asian art in the wake of history” featuring FX Harsono who had a concurrent show at Tyler Rollins. Singaporean, Heman Chong, had a solo show at the South



London Gallery in 2015. Biennales in Australia are particularly strong on Southeast Asian artists - Sydney Biennale has just opened with Thai artist, Mit Jai Inn, Filipino Maria Taniguci and Tiffany Chung of Vietnam.

Corporate Art Programmes and prizes are increasingly drawing Southeast Asia into their fold; the Hugo Boss Asia Art Award included Southeast Asia from 2015. The Benesse Prize was awarded at Venice Biennale from 1995 to 2013, switching affiliation to the Singapore Biennale in 2016.



*Nyoman Masriadi  
Installation View: Great Daddy (2014)  
at Art Stage Singapore 2018  
Courtesy of the Trioche DeLeon Collection*

2015 saw Southeast Asian Modern artists reaching record highs at auction, some breaching the magic \$1 million. The market has levelled out since with the Spring 2018 auctions in Hong Kong holding interesting prospects. Le Pho, Cheong Soo Pieng, Latiff Mohidin and HR Ocampo were exhibited alongside Picasso, Matisse and Kandinsky in Singapore recently, yet Mohidin works appear at auction from \$60,000+. When compared to the Europeans in the exhibition, his work provides a completely different entry point for collecting Modern art.

Sotheby's Hong Kong evening sale historically sold blue-chip global names and Modern art; it now includes Southeast Asia's contemporary auction stars Nyoman Masriadi, Christine Ay Tjoe, Ronald Ventura and Jane Lee. Indonesia dominates with 54% of market share based on total sales at Sotheby's and Christie's in Hong Kong.



*Ronald Ventura  
Carne Carnivale (2014)  
Courtesy of the Trioche DeLeon Collection*

Similarly, Contemporary Southeast Asian works by auction favourites such as Natee Utarit have generally lower estimates (\$100-400,000) when compared with Chinese contemporary painters such as Zheng Fanzhi, Japanese contemporary artists such as Yayoi Kusama and Western artists. In this context, the region is a relatively affordable and exciting entry point or new direction for art collectors.



*Natee Utarit  
Theatre of the Absurd (2014)  
Courtesy of the Richard Koh Fine Art and the artist*

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# Power, Politics and Philanthropy

The authoritative power held by museums in the field of contemporary art has recently been challenged by the expanding role of the commercial and private sector. A number of commercial galleries, particularly in Europe and the US, have gradually modified their structures, becoming increasingly more similar to large institutions, melding functions of the museum, academia and the market, and promoting the idea of a specific lifestyle. Their venues have augmented in number as well as in scale, with buildings encompassing a range of different art and recreational facilities. This is the case of, for instance, Hauser & Wirth (in particular the Los Angeles and Somerset venues), or Galleria Continua (in particular Les Moulins), moving the boundaries between a private venue and a collective gathering space for different audiences.

With this in mind, public museums experience the encroachment of private institutions, which are expanding their remit while attracting large numbers of visitors, and of the traditional commercial sector, which is progressively performing the same function. Arguably, it is not in the interest of commercial galleries to convert into museums, as their objective is chiefly geared towards profit and sales. This tendency may be due to a number of different factors. It is contended that audiences in the 21st century have moved on from being simply viewers to participants and interactors. This suggests that they have a greater stake in the experience of art as well as becoming consumers of the services offered around it. Thus, by turning themselves into latter-day agoras, these expanded galleries become recognisable as cultural brands, attracting potential clients and targeting new opportunities for business.

For publically funded institutions, a productive engagement with communities and sustained visitor numbers are essential requirements for eligibility of governmental funding and other grant-giving bodies. Distributors of public funding give priority to projects that combine artistic excellence with the development of new audiences and the potential of a lasting social impact. Due to the pressure on public monies, competition for funding is becoming increasingly fierce; thus peripheral, smaller scale institutions, which cannot raise additional funds and lack critical audience mass, run the risk of becoming unsustainable.

The idea of achieving sustainability regarding business structure is now an imperative for any institution aiming to ensure the endurance of its vision and programmes. This applies to different kinds of organisations, therefore stressing the influence of the private and commercial sector into the configuration of public institutions.

Furthermore, in this increasingly privatised environment, the notion of political power is determining. Politics, which might appear completely withdrawn from the discourse around the transition between public and private, has an important role to play. It should indeed aim to concretely support public organisations, not only through funding schemes but also by negotiating deals with the private sector.

There is significant evidence that founders of private institutions are willing to return something to their birthplace or where they have been long-term residents; among these individuals, 59% have founded a museum in their hometown or region. Therefore, should governments encourage a fruitful dialogue between individuals intending to invest capital in the development of cultural projects and institutions in need of support? Such a process, identifiable by the term 'philanthropy', can be activated by offering tax relief to wealthy individuals interested in supporting the arts and culture and, above all, by guiding and coordinating these exchanges.

The risk deriving from the complete privatisation of culture in the 21st century is, in fact, linked to accessibility as much as institutional goals. If private collectors and patrons were to exclusively follow their own personal mores on contemporary art, what would the outcome be? Would the field become populated by a series of highly commercial and speculative ventures, where the growth of capital precedes that of knowledge? Or, contrariwise, unfettered by the strictures and timescales of public accountability and bureaucracy, would there be a proliferation of more creative and dynamic initiatives and partnerships?

Ultimately, the productive aligning of objectives between public and private institutions as well as the fostering of networks and collaborations between like-minded organisations and individuals will surely benefit audiences and the art ecosystem as a whole. With this in mind, the real challenge of the art institution of the 21st century is not whether to be public or private, collecting or non-collecting, online or offline, but to effectively provide evidence of art's vitality and relevance to today's audiences.

Extract from the report Art Institutions in Transition, published by Alaska Editions. The Foundation focuses on the importance of stable art institutions in a changing and challenging political, economic, and aesthetic climate; the foundation undertakes research and promotes education to provide art professionals with the tools to face current challenges. [www.artinstitutions.org](http://www.artinstitutions.org)