



Media Release

The *Chua Ek Kay* exhibition, **A Long Way from Home** 近觀遠濤

Singapore, 19 October 2018 (Friday) – Singapore Management University (SMU) today officially opened the Chua Ek Kay exhibition, **A Long Way from Home / 近觀遠濤** at the de Suantio Gallery, School of Social Sciences. Mr Ong Yew Huat, Chairman, Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) graced the opening.

SMU develops and hosts exhibitions and enrichment programmes with the aim that the SMU campus experience for its students and the general public will be enhanced and enlivened by aesthetics and creativity.

A Long Way from Home / 近觀遠濤 presents two dozen works of artist Chua Ek Kay (1947-2008) – many never previously seen - from the perspectives of family, collectors, along with some fresh insights from the students in the current [SMU-X¹](#) Arts and Culture Management course on [Exhibitions and Curating](#).

Having students involved in this exhibition, is what makes this exhibition extra special. The class, comprising 31 students, is multidisciplinary (students come from almost all schools in SMU), multicultural and the diversity is further enriched by international students from Seoul, Mumbai and Toronto. The students participated in the final stages of the exhibition project, including artwork movement, installation, publicity, the official opening and public programmes.

Said Associate Professor of Arts and Culture Management, Kwok Kian Chow, who teaches the SMU-X course, “I am very happy to be able to work with students as well as former and current colleagues to realise a professionally presented exhibition. With the exhibition fully sponsored, this is an excellent opportunity for SMU students to work experientially on an industry-linked project and learn from the museum experts.”

Sakqtheeshwaran Ramakrishnan, Year 4 student from the School of Economics, said “This exhibition not only showcases the beautiful artworks of Mr Chua Ek Kay but also shows that people from many different walks of life can come together and put together something meaningful to everyone involved. This SMU-X Course has given me the opportunity to be lost in the world of the arts and to meet with people in the industry that mirror my own passions.”

Presented in association with the SMU’s Chua Ek Kay Collection (Street Scene Series, 1986-2006) which is on display at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, the exhibition invites the public to engage the works as a conversation about Ek Kay’s artistic journey. It also features many unpublished works of Chua Ek Kay.

¹ SMU-X is an experiential project-based learning curriculum that allows students from different disciplines to tackle real-world challenges by taking on projects from corporate, non-profit and government sector organisations.

Students came up with the exhibition's English title, which evokes the multifaceted and contradictory dimensions of "home"—a sense of belonging in identity, expression, and tradition nonetheless refracted through one's dynamic contemporaneity and individual distance—that characterised Chua Ek Kay's relentless innovations in experimental ink art.

The Chinese title, which translates to "close view and distant waves," references Ek Kay's pen name 遠濤 (yuantao), a homage to the 17th-century art theorist and painter Shitao whom Ek Kay admired.

Said Wang Zineng, Curator of the exhibition, "The exhibition project, along with its publication, was initiated to share personal perspectives on Chua Ek Kay, his life and works. Parallel to the SMU Chua Ek Kay Collection which focuses on the Street Scenes, we chose to exhibit artworks of Chua Ek Kay of broader breadth, spanning styles and periods, to help paint a fuller picture of the artist's oeuvre. That said, instead of an art historical presentation, we wanted the exhibition to emphasise the recollections and the insights by the people closest to the artist, as well as fresh perspectives by the millennial, making the exhibition space 'polyvocal' where text of different voices, the artworks, and audience response form a new conversation. *A Long Way From Home* is essentially thought of as a sanctuary of reflection and sharing of Chua Ek Kay's life and work, by those passionately studying his works and most intimately aware of his life, and new encounters that the exhibition may bring about."

The exhibition runs from 20 October to 20 December 2018. Opening Hours are from 12 to 8pm, Tuesday to Sunday (closed on Mondays). Venue: de Suantio Gallery, School of Social Sciences, SMU.

- End -

Enclosures:

- Annex A: Fact sheet on [SMU-X](#)
- Annex B: Fact Sheet on Arts and Culture Management Course (ACM304 – Exhibitions and curating)

About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning

Home to over 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and post-graduate research programmes, SMU, is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

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Fact Sheet – What is SMU-X?

SMU-X is about changing mindset and encouraging collaboration and is made up of the following 3 components:

Mindset

SMU-X aims to get the SMU community to collaborate and step out of their silos. Students, faculty and community-partners bring their expertise and industry-specific viewpoints into SMU-X and collaborate radically using both disciplinary knowledge and multi-perspective approaches. SMU-X will inculcate in participants the understanding that there are various ways to tackle an issue and by focusing on human values complemented by disciplinary knowledge, our students and partners will be better equipped to take on new unknown challenges in the workplace.

Curriculum

An SMU-X course has the following characteristics. It combines academic with experiential learning through the heavy use of projects. It challenges talented students to use their disciplinary knowledge and skills and tackle real world problems and issues through interdisciplinary approaches and activities. We partner with corporate, non-profit and government-sector organisations. Our partners and our faculty are involved in active mentoring so that the students benefit most out of this deep relationship.

An SMU-X course becomes a learning loop for the tripartite: our students get a better understanding of what it means to use theory learnt outside the classroom, our faculty learns how real world adapts theory and our partners deepen their own learning. This inculcates in our students and our partners the value of continuous learning which is imperative going forward given our rapidly changing economic conditions.

Space

Physical space is still relevant and important even as we move towards an increasingly virtual world. What's more, SMU students are heavily involved in projects and spend most of their time out-of-classroom. We saw a need to cater to the changing study, learning and social habits of our millennial students. Therefore, SMU-X, as a facility, is a co-working learning hub that is opened 24/7 to allow 'after-work hours' meetings, bonding or just hanging out.

SMU Labs is one of the prototype spaces on our city campus that supports the SMU-X mindset and curriculum, and facilitates the coming together of individuals and groups around an identified project.

For more information, please visit – <https://x.smu.edu.sg>

Fact Sheet – ACM304 on Exhibitions and Curating

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course covers both theoretical and practical aspects of art exhibition making, primarily through discourses in curating and museum exhibition respectively. It is conducted in conjunction with the actual implementation of an exhibition project on the works of Chua Ek Kay, one of Singapore's most celebrated artists. The exhibition will open in the SMU De Suantio Gallery on 19 October 2018. The students will participate in the final stages of the exhibition project, including artwork movement, installation, publicity, official opening, and public programmes. The exhibition in turn serves as a case study for the course to examine critical issues and components of an exhibition, from research, design, programming to audience engagement, and in the context of the scholarship on Singapore art history and curatorial studies.

The students will acquire knowledge on exhibition planning by observing and participating in the Chua Ek Kay exhibition, as well as critical knowledge on current curatorial theories and trends. Apart from exhibition content text on Chua Ek Kay (see Bibliography on Chua Ek Kay), selected articles from two key texts form the basis of the course: O'Neill, Paul; Mick Wilson & Lucy Steeds (eds), *The Curatorial Conundrum*, LUMA Foundation and the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 2016; and Bauer, Ute Meta & Brigitte Oetker (eds), *Southeast Asia Spaces of the Curatorial*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2016.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

- Combines theoretical and practical knowledge in curatorial studies alongside an actual exhibition on the works of Chua Ek Kay, supported by a professional exhibition team.
- Substantial industrial involvement, featuring leading curators, arts scholars and exhibition professionals as resource persons.
- Curatorship is further considered in relation to related topics in social sciences, cultural and media studies, through the facilitation of the key texts, *The Curatorial Conundrum* and *Southeast Asia Spaces of the Curatorial*.
- Course participants expected from several schools in SMU will contribute to the interdisciplinary nature of curatorial studies and specific scholarship pertaining to the exhibition project.
- The exhibition is also a commemorative event of the tenth anniversary of Chua Ek Kay's passing.
- A sponsorship of \$60,000 has been confirmed to support the course and the exhibition.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Acquisition of practical knowledge in the curatorial, components, and execution of an exhibition. Students will choose to focus on one aspect such as artwork management, marketing/communication, installation and lighting, public programmes, and response analysis for their project involvement. This is so as to have an overview of exhibition making, as well as in-depth knowledge inquiry of one aspect of exhibition which may be linked to their broader research interest, such as experiential communication, and collection management.

Acquisition of critical knowledge in curatorial studies through the key texts, along with focused understanding of the art historical and biography of one artist – Chua Ek Kay. The coupling of curatorial concerns and the concrete context of one historical artist will allow the students to examine general curatorial theories in conjunction with one specific exhibition content. The students should develop an inquiry into curatorial and exhibitionary practice in the main essay of the course.

At the end of the course, the students will be able to participate and engage in exhibition projects both at the theoretical-critical level and practical project execution level, either as a furthering of

knowledge in exhibitions (events) and curating (public cultural discourse) in relation to their education focus (any school in SMU), or as an integral component of the Arts and Culture Management Programme, particularly if visual arts/museum studies focus is chosen.

Course instructor: [Kwok Kian Chow](#), Associate Professor of Arts and Culture Management, School of Social Sciences