

MCCY Committee of Supply 2014
CULTURAL CITY, SPORTING NATION, ENDEARING HOME

11 March 2014

Factsheet

**\$35 million revamp of National Museum of Singapore
and Asian Civilisations Museum**

“Sharing our Singapore Story Better”

The National Heritage Board will embark on the revamp of the National Museum of Singapore and the Asian Civilisations Museum from 2014 to 2015, which will cost about \$35 million.

1) Revamp of National Museum of Singapore

a) Background and Objectives of revamp

Originally built as the former Raffles Library and Museum in 1887, Singapore’s oldest museum was expanded in 1906, 1914 and 1916. It underwent its largest and latest redevelopment from 2003 to 2006. A new purpose-built extension was built to complement the refurbished building, which now houses the Singapore History Gallery. The museum re-opened in 2006 as the National Museum of Singapore.

In the lead up to Singapore’s 50th anniversary celebrations in 2015, the National Museum will be undergoing another timely revamp so as to better share our Singapore Story, and to celebrate the multiple voices in the nation’s historical narrative and the many facets of our multicultural “everyday heritage”.

The refreshed National Museum aims to be a museum for the people – a civic space which Singaporeans will enjoy visiting, allowing for reflection on what Singapore has achieved in the past, and inspiring confidence in our future. It therefore aims to connect well with visitors through greater interactive and participatory experiences as well as enhanced coherence and integration of its narratives and displays.

b) Areas of enhancements from 2014-2015

The revamp will present a more comprehensive overview of Singapore’s history and development as a country in its galleries and spaces, which includes developing the nation’s post-1965 chapters that many Singaporeans can personally relate to. The galleries to be revamped will close from the last quarter of 2014, and will be

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expected to re-open in the second half of 2015. While the galleries and parts of the museums are closed for revamp, visitors can still continue to enjoy several interesting exhibitions and programmes held at the museums' available spaces (*please refer to Annex A for the list of programmes and exhibitions*).

The existing office space on Level 3 of National Museum will be converted into a new Wing, called PLAY@NMS, which stands for "National Museum Singapore". It will be a multi-sensory environment dedicated to children, with interactive exhibitions that encourage learning through play. Programmes thoughtfully curated based on the collections in the National Museum's permanent galleries will be made available, to stimulate the young visitors' natural curiosity and creativity. PLAY@NMS will be a multi-purpose space for interactive exhibitions, workshops as well as educational-play.

2) Revamp of Asian Civilisations Museum

a) Background and objectives of revamp

The Asian Civilisations Museum was first opened at Empress Place in 2003. From the third quarter of 2014, the Museum will undergo a revamp in phases to better promote greater cultural understanding among different communities. By exploring Asia's heritage and its interconnections with the world, the Museum also aims to foster a deeper understanding of the diverse heritage cultures of Singapore and our neighbours.

b) Areas of enhancements from 2014–2015

The Asian Civilisations Museum will focus on enhancing its building to increase its accessibility to the general public, especially drawing in crowds from the Empress Place and Singapore River precincts.

(i) Re-conceptualisation of ACM Waterfront

NHB is exploring the conversion of the ACM waterfront area into a new entrance lobby cum gallery space opening onto the Singapore River. The new space would link ACM more closely with the River – the historic heart of Singapore. NHB is working with URA on its design and construction.

(ii) Expansion of Gallery Spaces

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The expansion of the China Gallery into a 3-level space, which covers approximately 900sqm, will add a new modern wing to the otherwise classical frontage of the ACM. Aside from injecting this new aesthetic element, it will also yield more gallery space to allow for a particular focus on ACM's Fujian collection. This project is supported by donations from the Hong Leong Foundation.

The revamp will also add additional exhibition spaces within the main wings of the ACM over the next few years for new collections and acquisitions, such as the Tang Collection, to be prominently displayed. Like the revamp of the National Museum of Singapore, the aim is to enhance visitor experiences through elements such as aesthetics, lighting, technology features and signages to facilitate traffic flow.

The permanent galleries of ACM will be closed for upgrading works in phases from early 2014. The last phase of work is expected to be completed by third quarter of 2015.

(iii) Revamped lobby, Family Gallery & shop spaces

Another new gallery will be created at the main entrance of the ACM to provide a welcoming and interactive introduction to its visitors for experiencing the museum. The specific regions of Asia will be introduced here, to provide an initial level of familiarity with the galleries.

New retail spaces will also be integrated with the galleries. They will increase accessibility to the Museum and improve the visitor experience by providing popular, relevant and affordable shopping and dining choices.

The revamp of ACM's main entrance area is slated to take place from the second quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015. While the galleries and parts of the museums are closed for revamp, visitors can still continue to enjoy several interesting exhibitions and programmes held at the museums' available spaces (*please refer to Annex A for the list of programmes and exhibitions*).

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Annex A

Ongoing exhibitions and programmes in 2014

While the galleries and parts of the museums are closed for revamp, visitors can still continue to enjoy several interesting exhibitions and programmes held at the museums' available spaces.

National Museum of Singapore

1) *Defining Moments*

April – July 2014

This exhibition will present the defining moments of Singapore's history since the post-war years through photojournalistic images. Using a thematic approach, the images will explore news and events that have captured Singaporeans' attentions over the decades, portraying different views of Singapore as well as the lives of Singaporeans.

2) *Genesis by Sebastião Salgado*

April – August 2014

A parallel exhibition to "Defining Moments", "Genesis by Sebastiao Salgado" features the latest and largest project to date by one of the most well-known photo-journalists of our time—Sebastiao Salgado. A photographic journey into the planet – an expedition to rediscover the mountains, deserts and oceans, the animals and peoples that have so far escaped the imprint of modern society – this exhibition explores the urgent and global issue of preserving our precious ecosystem.

3) *From Kampong to HDB [Working Title]*

September 2014 – March 2015

This experiential exhibition showcase traces the development of Singapore through uncovering the narratives behind various significant chapters of our history. The exhibition's concept and themes are based on MOE's history syllabus for Secondary 1 and 2 for 2014 and 2015. The visitor will be encouraged to adopt an investigative approach towards history, gathering evidence and information to form their own conclusions and analysis.

4) *Children's Season*

May – June 2014

The popular and fun Children's Season will be back at NMS for both the young and the young at heart!

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5) Singapore Night Festival 2014
22 & 23 and 29 & 30 August 2014
Bras Basah.Bugis Precinct

The seventh installation of the familiar and iconic night-time extravaganza of culture, revelry and fun returns to the Bras Basah.Bugis Precinct with an exciting lineup of local and international acts, spectacular performances, light art and interactive activities, offering a unique night event for all to enjoy.

6) Singapore Short Cuts
September 2014

Singapore Short Cuts returns for its 11th season as one of the most popular and widely anticipated showcases of local short films in Singapore. Audiences can look forward to a diverse selection of Singapore short films of different genres and styles. Some of the filmmakers whose films have been featured in Singapore Short Cuts include Anthony Chen, Victric Thng, Eva Tang, Boo Junfeng, Wee Li Lin, Tan Pin Pin and Eric Khoo.

Asian Civilisations Museum

1) *Secrets of the Fallen Pagoda: Treasures from Famen Temple and the Tang Court*

January – May 2014

The exhibition will explore the richness of Tang culture through a range of artefacts from the Famen Temple Museum and other Shaanxi museums. Artefacts featured are physical manifestation of the openness and diversity in Tang culture, and excellent examples of Tang aesthetics and craftsmanship.

2) *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*

June – October 2014

This exhibition will feature ancient Chinese bronzes, comprising ritual vessels and ornaments from the Shang to the Han dynasty, and explore beauty and significance of bronze vessels in Chinese culture.

3) *Saturdays@ACM*

Every first Saturday of the month

Spend an afternoon at the museum and create works of art inspired by the cultures of Asia. Go on a looking journey and touch, feel and explore through crafts or the handling collection. A range of different activities await ACM's visitors on the first Saturday each month – discover, create, and wonder!

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4) Lunchtime Concerts at ACM

March – April, October – November 2014

Featuring talented young musicians from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, the popular lunchtime concerts return in March with exciting classical and jazz music from winds, strings, brass, and woodwinds.

5) Children's Season

May – June 2014

Explore the tales of Asia in this exciting and interactive programme celebrating children at play across time and space.

6) *River Festival [Working Title]*

July 2014

Experience the river under the stars with performances, plays, arts and crafts at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

7) ACM After Dark

October 2014 and 2015

The Asian Civilisation Museum's annual festival on Asian supernatural will thrill its visitors with activities and performances inspired by Asian beliefs in the supernatural and the fantastic.