

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Have Your Say at 13 Steps

Esplanade invites the public to vote for their favourite artwork

SINGAPORE, 18 January 2012 – Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay invites everyone to have a say on their choice of visual art to be displayed at the centre’s Concourse Steps from October to December this year. Named for the number of steps at the exhibition space, *13 Steps* is organised as part of Esplanade’s 10th Anniversary and will feature proposals for thoughtful, site-specific works from four local artists. In its 10th year of service to the community, Esplanade hopes to inspire everyone to reflect on the important things in life through activities centred on the theme *Celebrating Life – The best of the Human Spirit through the Arts*. *13 Steps* presents an opportunity for the community to be even more engaged in the arts by letting them decide what goes on display at the centre.

Located at the heart of the centre, Esplanade’s Concourse Steps have become a familiar spot for the community to enjoy commissioned public artworks by local, regional and international artists over the years. For the first time, through *13 Steps*, the public and the arts community is invited to be a part of the commissioning process by sharing their thoughts on their favourite proposal out of four shortlisted proposals by local artists Han Sai Por, Chua Boon Kee, Sai Hua Kuan and Tang Ling Nah. The overall favourite artwork will be displayed at the Concourse Steps from October to December 2012. Owing to the unconventional nature of the exhibition space at the Concourse Steps, the four artists invited to submit their proposals for *13 Steps* were those with strong portfolios in creating sculptural, site-specific artworks.

Tamara Goh, Programming Officer, The Esplanade Co Ltd, says: “Esplanade is a performing arts centre for everyone and our 10th Anniversary in 2012 presents the right opportunity for the



community to be a part of the centre's visual arts exhibitions. We are excited to be able to invite the public to play a part in the curation process of selecting artworks for display. Through it, we also hope to continue to challenge and inspire our local artists to create exciting works and to offer the community a platform for reflection through the artworks."

The initiative is supported by property developer City Developments Limited (CDL), which has been promoting the sculptural art form in Singapore through its biennial CDL Singapore Sculpture Award since 2003.

"*13 Steps* is a unique visual arts initiative which focuses on community engagement in the curatorial process and adds a new dimension to artwork creation. This community-driven arts project is synergistic with CDL's commitment to promoting the arts and engaging the community in art appreciation," said Esther An, CDL's Head of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and General Manager of Corporate Affairs.

Voting opens on 12 January 2012 and closes on 15 April 2012. During this period, the public can visit the centre to view the miniatures of each artist's proposed artwork and vote on-site or go online to the *13 Steps* microsite [www.esplanade.com/13steps] to learn more about the proposals and to vote.

About the artists

Chua Boon Kee has committed his career to sculpture-making since 1996. His works have been exhibited since 2000. Working with a wide range of materials including wood, stone, and metal, he constantly explores new themes and artistic realms that are influenced by culture and traditions.

Han Sai Por is one of Singapore's most accomplished artists and has clinched numerous accolades including the winning title in the sculpture and painting section of the 11th Triennale held in India. She was also conferred the Cultural Medallion by Singapore's Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts in 1995.

Sai Hua Kuan is known for his unique visual language as his artworks are realised through a variety of media including installation, sculpture, film and performance. He graduated from the prestigious Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, in 2007 and has participated in many group exhibitions internationally, spanning countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

Armed with a Diploma in Fine Art (Painting) from LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore, and a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) with Distinction from the Royal Melbourne Institute of

Technology in Australia, **Tang Li Nah** has represented Singapore at several international arts events including Philip Morris Singapore-ASEAN Art Awards 2003. She received the National Arts Council's prestigious Young Artist Award (Art) in 2004.

For information about the artwork proposals from the artists, please refer to the Annex.

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is one of the world's busiest arts centres, officially opened on 12 October 2002. This architectural icon with its distinctive twin shells is sited within Singapore's civic district, just by Marina Bay at the mouth of the Singapore River.

Esplanade aims to be a performing arts centre for everyone, and its programmes cater to its diverse audiences. Its programme line-up spans all genres to encompass music, dance, theatre and visual arts, with a special focus on Asian culture.

Esplanade houses world-class performance spaces, supported by a comprehensive range of professional support facilities and services. Its two main venues are the 1,600-seat Concert Hall, with acoustics by the late Russell Johnson of ARTEC Consultants, and a theatre with a capacity of 2,000 adapted from the traditional European opera houses in horseshoe form. In the past year, Esplanade welcomed over seven million visitors and hosted about 3,000 performances.

In 2012, Esplanade commemorates its 10th Anniversary in service to the community with the theme *Celebrating Life – The best of the Human Spirit through the Arts*. Through the year, the centre will be celebrating and paying tribute to key values through 17 arts festivals and series presented by Esplanade. For more information, please visit www.celebratinglife.com.sg

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Annex

Artists' proposals for 13 Steps

The Black Rain

by Han Sai Por

The Black Rain is an extension of Han Sai Por's *The Black Forest* – an exhibition held at Esplanade's Jendela (Visual Arts Space) in 2011. Using contrasting natural materials such as wood and charcoal, Han further explores the theme of man's continuous ambivalence, habits and actions that lead towards the inevitable degradation of the environment. This installation resonates strongly with her immense love for nature and at the same time, quietly relates her concerns on environmental issues to viewers.

Ling Ting

by Sai Hua Kuan

Multidisciplinary artist Sai Hua Kuan has envisioned his installation to be a gigantic speaker to be placed at the Concourse steps. Through theatrical arrangement, *Ling Ting* puts together a physical piece of work that requires public interaction—an immaterial element that is crucial to the installation. Shaped like a curved horn that ends adjacent to the mouthpiece, participants are able to hear themselves speak—even whisper—as their voices are diverted and amplified along the bend. This piece seeks to provide a quiet space for listening and self-reflection.

In the Affairs of Cats and Dogs, the Government's involved and so Shall We

by Chua Boon Kee

In a light-hearted anecdote to encourage Singaporeans to be more proactive, Minister Lee Hsien Loong – in his National Day Rally speech last year – said that ministers should not be doing everything, including culling cats and saving dogs. Chua playfully recalls this notion by initiating a movement, via an installation, to promote the proactive spirit in the community. Working around the theme animal welfare, the artist hopes to heighten public awareness of pet abandonment and the growing stray population. Chua presents a series of life-sized models of dogs and cats made of cast resins and painted in white and red. These animal sculptures are then open for public adoption. Upon review of the caretaker's suitability, a signed adoption agreement will attest to and encourage commitment and responsibility of pet owners while reinforcing the public's proactive spirit.

Step On!!

by Tang Ling Nah

Tang Ling Nah's site-specific and interactive installation, *Step On!!* invites viewers to be a part of the Concourse stairway. Aside from being a space that frequently showcases sprawling pieces of art, Esplanade's prominent flight of stairs is also a thoroughfare leading visitors from the front entrance to the art centre's mall. The installation provides access for visitors to walk through it and on the Concourse Steps simultaneously. In this way, they are encouraged to think about the presence and functions of the space in relation to their own identities and how they interpret things.