



GILLMAN
BARRACKS

Gillman Barracks is the first precinct in Singapore dedicated to contemporary art. Often compared to fine art clusters like 798 in Beijing and New York art districts Chelsea and Soho, it hosts eleven galleries: *ARNDT, FOST, Mizuma, Ota Fine Arts, Partners & Mucciaccia, Pearl Lam, ShanghART, Sullivan + Strumpf* (as of June 2016), *Sundaram Tagore, Yavuz* and *Yeo Workshop*; the *NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore*; and educational organizations *Art Outreach* and *Playeum*. Since its inauguration in 2012, it has provided a platform for artists, curators and collectors from Singapore and around the world to share new work, research and exhibitions.

We asked five of its tenants to consider the development of Gillman Barracks to date, and to share highlights from recent and upcoming programmes. These include gallerist Matthias Arndt's experience of presenting the first exhibition by Gilbert & George in Singapore, and Prof Ute Meta Bauer's view on the achievements and challenges of the Residencies Programme at the NTU CCA Singapore. These reflections are accompanied by contributions from four Singapore-based arts professionals that explain the significance of the precinct internationally and locally, and its possible future.

—*Melanie Pocock* KALEIDOSCOPE ASIA Editor-at-Large



MATTHIAS ARNDT
DIRECTOR, ARNDT FINE ART

Gillman Barracks hosts galleries from Europe, Australia and Singapore, a geographical mix that immediately makes it an international arts destination. The cluster also has energetic programme of openings, activities and talks. Singapore's art landscape is rapidly developing through the individual and entrepreneurial efforts of galleries and various platforms like Art Galleries Association Singapore, Art Stage Singapore and the Singapore Biennale. To bring our own example, for Singapore Art Week 2015 we produced an extensive exhibition of twenty-six new works by Gilbert & George, titled "Utopian Pictures." The artists attended all major events during the week and their talk at LASALLE College of the Arts sold out in record time.

In terms of our future program, we have just finished a book titled *WASAK! Filipino Art Today* with German publishers DISTANZ. To support the book we produced an exhibition of eighteen influential artists in the Philippines at our new space in Berlin that will tour internationally. In Singapore we will present works on paper by celebrated Philippine artist Jigger Cruz in August, and an exhibition by FX Harsono in October during the Singapore Biennale. ■

AUDREY YEO
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR,
YEO WORKSHOP

Gillman Barracks still has work to do in terms of reaching a wider general public, but is a treasure trove of artworks and ideas. At Yeo Workshop we try to develop new perspectives and experiences. One such project was in September 2015, when we brought elements of artist Mike HJ Chang's studio to the gallery, which raised issues related to artist studios, production and space constraints in Singapore. In April we will present a group exhibition including Maryanto (Indonesia),

TENANTS OF GILLMAN BARRACKS INCLUDE 11 ART GALLERIES (ARNDT, FOST, MIZUMA, OTA FINE ARTS, PARTNERS & MUCCIACCIA, PEARL LAM, SHANGHART, SUNDARAM TAGORE, YAVUZ, YEO WORKSHOP, AND SOON SULLIVAN + STRUMPF); 3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE NTU CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, ART OUTREACH AND PLAYEUM—CHILDREN'S CENTRE FOR CREATIVITY; AND 7 RESTAURANTS AND CAFES.

Quynh Dong (Vietnam), Santi Wangchuan (Thailand) and Zul Mahmod (Singapore). We will also be launching a printmaking residency programme in Yogyakarta to connect with our neighbours in Southeast Asia. ■

STEPHANIE FONG
DIRECTOR, FOST GALLERY

Prior to Gillman Barracks we did not have a cluster of international contemporary art galleries with an art institute on the same site. As the Western art world moves its attention towards Southeast Asia, Gillman Barracks will likely become one of the key entry points to seeing art of the region. Likewise, the galleries in Gillman Barracks have brought in wonderful exhibitions from outside of the region: Prof Ute Meta Bauer, Director of the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, has programmed exhibitions by

artists like Tomás Saraceno and Joan Jonas. One of our recent highlights would have to be Donna Ong's solo exhibition "My Forest Has No Name" in January 2016. More time was needed to install the exhibition because the ►



► gallery space had to be transformed extensively: many of the works could only be completed on site. Of course, the schedule was thwarted at every turn by unexpected circumstances, but there was a great sense of accomplishment for

everyone when we heard the gasps of wonderment from visitors who entered the gallery! Most recently, we have commissioned respected art historian and curator T.K. Sabapathy to write a book on Jimmy Ong's

history drawings. Currently we are trying to track down some of the works that have been acquired at auction to be shown in the accompanying exhibition. I am excited to be launching the book in June 2016. ■





PROF UTE META BAUER
FOUNDING DIRECTOR, NTU
CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY
ART SINGAPORE

The establishment of Gillman Barracks as an arts precinct for the presentation and production of

international contemporary art was a significant expansion in the local art ecosystem. It also acts as a hub for creating synergies in the dissemination of art to a wider public, and for addressing a growing market for the arts.

NTU CCA Singapore is a platform for experimenting with varied ways of presenting contemporary art, not only through its exhibitions, but also through its residencies that include artists, curators and writers. ►

► Its Public Resource Centre, a library specialized in contemporary art with a focus on the Southeast Asian region, and Artist Resource Platform, an archive of audio and visual material from over 90 artists from Singapore, serve as other entry points to the region. The Residencies Programme allows for a diverse network of artists, curators and researchers from Singapore and beyond to meet and to engage with each other's practices. One example is London-based Singaporean artist Erika Tan's project, *Halimah-the-Empire-Exhibition-weaver-who-died-whilst-performing-her-craft* (2015).

KENNY LECK
CO-FOUNDER, BOOKS-
ACTUALLY AND SINGAPORE
ART BOOK FAIR

As a bookseller and publisher, I organized the Singapore Art Book Fair, a challenging but invigorating experience whose first two editions were hosted by the NTU CCA. I think the presence of Gillman Barracks has highlighted a need for more well-thought-out and better-operated art spaces. I see varying opinions about the role and development of the precinct as a healthy discourse, which shows that people are beginning to think more about how orga-

STEPPING OUTSIDE OF GILLMAN BARRACKS, SINGAPORE'S VIBRANT ART SCENE IS DISTINGUISHED BY INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM, INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS (ICA) SINGAPORE AND ARTSCIENCE MUSEUM, AND PROMINENT EVENTS SUCH AS THE SINGAPORE BIENNALE AND THE SINGAPORE ART BOOK FAIR.

The NTU CCA Singapore recently announced its third cycle of artists-in-residence for 2016–2017 with twenty artists and collectives from Singapore, Asia, and for the first time, artists from Africa and South America. ■

nizations can come together to support the arts. I think galleries and organizations at Gillman Barracks should continue to do what they have been doing. I believe the content being developed by the galleries is growing in strength and maturity. ■

MIZUMA SUEO
DIRECTOR, MIZUMA
GALLERY

In the context of the wider East Asian region, the art scene in Singapore has not yet fully entered the international stage. Yet I have seen several Singaporean artists whose work possesses qualities comparable to those of some of the best artists working globally. These artists are not very well known in Europe or America, but only because there have not yet been opportunities to reach an international audience. Speaking from our own experience, I think one of our most interesting projects to date was Angki Purbandono's *Prison Art Programs*. The project, held at the Class IIA Narcotics Penitentiary in Yogyakarta in May 2013, explored how prisoners can be rehabilitated through art. Heri Dono's solo exhibition, which we presented in Singapore until January this year, was another highlight: his works confront various contradictions within contemporary society incorporating influences from traditional Indonesian cultural forms such as wayang shadow puppetry, to produce works that resonate internationally. Looking forward—Ken+ Julia Yonetani will have a solo exhibition with us in June this year, following the success of their presentation at the Singapore Biennale in 2013. ■



BALA STARR
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
SINGAPORE – LASALLE
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

The art scene in Asia is becoming more and more plural. With local scenes opening outward, Asia-based artists can increasingly expect better opportunities for their work and Gillman Barracks is one of the engines behind this changing environment. In the last year I've particularly enjoyed the large number of programmes by visiting artists undertaking residencies. It is so important to introduce artists and curators to Singapore. There are many good exhibitions at ARNDT, Ota Fine Arts, FOST and Yeo Workshop among others, that make the art scene in Singapore unique. The NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore too is a world-class contemporary art centre the envy of any city in Asia. I don't hold the view that commercial galleries need to focus on a single city: I'd like to see the galleries at Gillman realize their own programming interests enabling the visual arts community to achieve a wider reach and building complexity and diversity. The best kind of future is one that sees a growth in audience for the diverse artists and projects each gallery presents: in Asia, we each play a role in this audience-building endeavour. ■

SENG YU JIN,
SENIOR CURATOR, NATIONAL
GALLERY SINGAPORE

Gillman Barracks brings together galleries with diverse strengths: FOST Gallery features Singaporean artists like Chun Kaifeng and Song-Ming Ang; Yavuz Gallery has presented works by Po Po from Myanmar; and Mizuma Gallery has pursued its interest in Indonesian artists. These galleries produce an exhibitionary dialogue that maps contemporary art practices in Southeast Asia. The exhibitions at NTU CCA allow the art world in Singapore to experience contemporary art from around the world.

MICHAEL LEE
ARTIST AND CURATOR

International art all year round is, for me, Gillman Barracks' key contribution to Singapore's art scene. You no longer need to wait for specific periods when the biennales or art fairs are on to see quality contemporary art from around the world. While recent cases of galleries discontinuing leases may be discouraging for some—I miss both Philippine galleries, Silverlens and The Drawing Room, amongst others—change should be seen as part and parcel of the art business ecology. Speaking proactively, I

WHAT'S NEXT

19/03 ART DAY OUT! AT GILLMAN BARRACKS

30/04–10/07 CHARLES LIM YI YONG: SEA STATE
AT NTU CCA SINGAPORE

14/05 ART DAY OUT! AT GILLMAN BARRACKS
X SINGAPORE HERITAGE FEST

MID 2016 OPENING OF SULLIVAN + STRUMPF
GALLERY AND SUPERMAMA RETAIL

23–25/09 4TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

I would like to see Gillman Barracks work on a shared research focus—for example, looking at performative traditions in Southeast Asia. Cultural exchange as productive force in art making could be another interesting area of research. ■

think the next step would be to identify what's missing in its retail mix—a coffee shop with drinks at affordable prices, a bookshop or a furniture store—that would attract regulars who might, after settling their immediate needs, ►

► venture to discover the art around. With its level of government initiatives and support, Gillman Barracks has become quite an object of envy for artistic peers around the world. The NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore

has contributed significantly to the local arts scene, presenting quality international exhibitions and facilitating in-depth discussions around art. My wish for Gillman Barracks: do your own thing while developing new audi-

ences. Yeo Workshop has been exemplary in this regard, with its experimental programming of new media art and forgotten pioneers. Educating, and cultivating an openness to new ideas, remains key to developing the art scene here. ■



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ment Board (EDB), and the
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