

**IN THE EYE OF THE RED DOT**  
BY YEO CHEE KIONG

Next week, look out for a new sculpture at the National Museum of Singapore's Fort Canning entrance. Award-winning sculptor Yeo Chee Kiong's *In The Eye Of The Red Dot* finds a space next to the unmissable large red pepper, Pedas-Pedas by Kumari Nahappan.

Yeo's work was picked from an open call that received 48 submissions. The commissioning partners for the piece are real estate developer City Developments Limited (CDL) and the museum.

Made of stainless steel, the sculpture resembles a blossoming flower meant to symbolise Singapore's achievements over the past 50 years.

The artist tells *Life* it "represents the unique and forward-looking vision of our country".

Once it is up, look out for the day-to-night transformation of the piece, a nod to how different the island looks at both times. In the day, you will see the silvery effect of stainless steel. At night, a red beam which will light up the piece will bounce off it, showing dramatic patterns on the metal surface.

Work on the piece has taken Yeo a "a very intense three months". During this production period, he has been pulling in 16-hour days, seven days a week, to get it finished on time.

The "eye" in the title refers to the kaleidoscopic triangle in the middle of the flower that will create fascinating and infinite refractions with the play of light, and it will look different during the day and night.

In 2008, Yeo, 45, won one of the biggest art prizes in South-east Asia. His piece, *A Day Without A Tree*, a strong comment on global warming, won the inaugural



Artist Yeo Chee Kiong with a model of *In The Eye Of The Red Dot*, his sculpture resembling a blossoming flower. It will be unveiled next week at the National Museum of Singapore's Fort Canning entrance. PHOTO: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

Asia-Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize.

His new piece is strongly rooted in Singapore's past and future possibilities.

National Museum director Angelita Teo says: "There is no better way to begin a journey exploring Singapore's history and culture in the museum than by thinking about how far we have come and what the future holds. I am glad the artwork makes use of our stunning location surrounded by Fort Can-

ning and across the bustling city to create this platform for reflection."

As a developer and building owner, CDL has been incorporating sculptural art in many of its spaces and the support for this work is an extension of that. Since the 1990s, it has commissioned numerous local and international artworks for commercial and residential developments. For instance, the St Regis Singapore has more than 80 original artworks, including pieces by international masters such as Pablo

Picasso and Fernando Botero and key Singapore artists such as George Chen and Cheong Soo Pieng.

It has also supported local artists through the biennial CDL Singapore Sculpture Award, which was first held in 2003. Yeo won this award in 2005.

On CDL's support, Ms Esther An, chief sustainability officer of the group, says: "Sculptural art, given its strong presence, is able to connect people to spaces visually and emotionally."

**FIFTY WINGS**  
BY JAMES SURLS

A bronze-and-stainless-steel work is the newest addition to the outdoor sculptures dotting the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

The 3m-high sculpture by acclaimed American artist and sculptor James Surls, titled *Fifty Wings*, was commissioned for SG50 and made possible by a donation by Dr Helmut Sohmen, chairman of shipping company BW Group, and his wife Anna.

In a telephone interview with *Life*, Surls, who has a home in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, says his art is inspired by nature and natural settings.

*Fifty Wings* is no different. It draws its artistic inspiration from the dipterocarp seed. Dipterocarps are among the tallest trees in the rainforest and can be found at the Botanic Gardens. The piece has been installed at a major artery of the Gardens, opposite the National Orchid Garden and next to the Giant Cola heritage tree.

The public art commission is the result of a collaboration between Singapore's Platform Projects, National Parks Board and BW Group.

The sculpture's 50 wings "represent each year of achievement. It is like Singapore – not only inherently strong, but also natural, green and dynamic in spirit", says the 72-year-old artist.



PHOTO: JOEL BOH FOR PLATFORM PROJECTS

**It is like Singapore – not only inherently strong, but also natural, green and dynamic in spirit.**



**AMERICAN ARTIST JAMES SURLS** (left) on his sculpture, with 50 wings, representing each year of achievement

# Sculptures for SG50

## Three new works in public spaces to mark Golden Jubilee

**Deepika Shetty**  
Arts Correspondent

To commemorate Singapore's Golden Jubilee, new sculptures have been commissioned for several public spaces.

At the Esplanade concourse, Han Sai Por's installation *Harvest* fills the space with a sea of birds, fish and fruit as the Cultural Medallion recipient celebrates the harmony of nature in all its forms.

Over at the Fort Canning entrance to the National Museum of Singapore, award-winning Singapore artist Yeo Chee Kiong's public sculpture *In The Eye Of The Red Dot* cuts a striking presence. Made of stainless steel, it resembles a blossoming flower, which symbolises the nation's achievements over the last 50 years.

Finally, American sculptor and artist James Surls' *Fifty Wings*, a 3m-tall sculpture of a cluster of floral forms, has been unveiled at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Art industry insiders say the Government's initiatives to support public art commissions this year have been a "significant impetus" for the creation of these new works.

For instance, under the Public Art Trust, corporate and individual patrons of the arts get a 300 per cent tax rebate on the cost of commissioning, installing and maintaining the works. An initiative by the National Arts Council, this aims to make art a part of urban spaces.

The Trust was established by the council last year with \$10 million seed funding from the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

Non-profit arts organisation Platform Projects is behind Surls' sculpture. Its director Shaheen Khattar, 44, tells *Life*: "Patrons are drawn to sculpture because Singapore, with its juxtaposition of cutting-edge architecture with heritage buildings and lush green parks, offers many iconic spaces amid its urban and garden landscapes to present public art."

The Surls sculpture was made possible by a donation from a shipping magnate and his wife, while property developer City Developments Limited is behind Yeo's work at the National Museum.

Platform Projects' directors, says public sculpture is a form of long-term outreach for patrons: "The inherent durability of outdoor sculpture means it has a lasting impact of enriching public spaces for many years to come."

Ms Christine Pillsbury, 41, one of Platform Projects' directors, says public sculpture is a form of long-term outreach for patrons: "The inherent durability of outdoor sculpture means it has a lasting impact of enriching public spaces for many years to come."

Sculptural installations also offer many possibilities for their creators and viewers, says Esplanade's head of visual arts, Ms Tames Goh, 40.

"The beauty of still sculptures lies in the fact that they can be viewed and appreciated from different angles, giving us a different view each time," she says.

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**HARVEST**  
BY HAN SAI POR

A dramatic mixed-media artwork takes pride of place in the Esplanade concourse.

Made primarily of stainless steel and stainless steel wire mesh, *Harvest*, by award-winning Singapore sculptor Han Sai Por, is a sprawling sculptural installation comprising 200 birds, 500 fish as well as other fruit and plant forms existing harmoniously together.

The arts centre approached the artist about a year ago to create a special work.

Han tells *Life* that "conceptualising the work was a little challenging because there is a lot going on at the Concourse, where the work is situated". Performances are held every evening in this area, the open space between the Esplanade Concert Hall and Theatre fronting the main entrance to the centre.

Her concept was to create a monochromatic installation. "I chose silver because it gives off a subtle sheen, yet it stands out from the surroundings."

The artist, who has created works for the Esplanade before, wanted her new sculpture to take on a lighter and more celebratory note. In 2011, she had presented paintings of scorched trees and razed forests which were displayed alongside a carpet of charcoal at the centre's Jendela visual arts space.

Her latest work is a lot more joyous.

The idea, the artist says, was to gather a fruitful harvest to mark Singapore's Golden Jubilee and the beginning of the next 50 years to come.

In the use of material, this is a departure from her signature stone sculptures that exude a feeling of intensity. Her work has long been centred around man's rapid destruction of the natural, indigenous environment. An example is her *Seeds* series of sculptures, installed permanently along the Esplanade waterfront.

Han, who is 72 and single, acknowledges that this new piece allows her to work with a different medium.

"Many people are familiar with my stone sculptures, but this time I wanted to do something different to convey how I feel. This is the first time I am using stainless steel as a

raw material and I feel it is very suitable for the work because it has the ability to appear soft on the outside, yet it has great resilience."

While the title *Harvest* sounds like a celebration of material achievements, she stresses that the work is primarily "about our environment. For us to have a positive future, we must take care of the environment so it is comfortable and safe for everyone. If our environment is polluted, there is not much hope for our future."

Ms Tames Goh, 40, head of visual arts at the Esplanade, says it commissioned Han because it wanted to "find aspects of Singapore, its environment, the community and its past and present".

She hopes *Harvest* and *Seeds* will call for reflection on the past and the future.

And if you like interactivity in art, do not leave the Esplanade without giving Singapore artist Lee Wen's popular doughnut-shaped ping pong table a shot. This interactive piece, titled *Ping Pong Go-Round*, has been to Hong Kong and Istanbul and is now at the centre's revamped Forecourt Garden, allowing viewers to pick up the paddle and play a game or two.

PHOTOS: ESPLANADE – THEATRES ON THE BAY, TRIBUTES SG, AN INITIATIVE BY ESPLANADE

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**SCULPTOR HAN SAI POR** (left) on her installation *Harvest* (above), which marks Singapore's Golden Jubilee and the beginning of the next 50 years to come

## Concerts celebrating Golden Jubilee

**Richard Neo**

National Day may be over, but that does not mean the SG50 celebrations are stopping any time soon.

There will be five concerts this month and the next premiering new compositions in celebration of the nation's Golden Jubilee.

On Thursday, the year-old Addo Chamber Orchestra will begin the second iteration of the Piano Concerto Festival, with a concert titled *piano++*.

It features the world premiere of three new works by local composer Robert Casteels, 57. They are *Rakhamnia*, inspired by Russian composer Rachmaninov's *Grosse Sonate*, inspired by Beethoven; and an original work, *Tintinabulum*.

Then on Sept 3, the orchestra will play various local and national songs, including Chan Mali Chan and *Together*. The songs have been incorporated into a medley, called *Symphonic Suite On A Set Of Local Tunes*, by Cultural Medallion recipient Kelly Tang, 53, dean of arts and special projects at the School of the Arts.

He said: "The medley was composed in 2004 and captures a dynamic and exciting time in our cultural history."

The orchestra, led by conductor

Clarence Tan, 39, is usually made up of 30 musicians. However, for the SG50-themed concert, it will have 50, including guest musicians from countries such as Japan and Australia.

The Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Nafa) will stage two concerts featuring five new works.

The first concert, called *g3nerations*, will be held on Aug 27 and will feature new works by Nafa alumni. It celebrates both SG50 and Nafa's 30th anniversary and will be performed by the Nafa Chorus, Chinese Ensemble, Wind Ensemble and New Music Ensemble.

The second, *Apotheosis Of The Dance*, will be held on Sept 3.

Composer Zechariah Goh's new composition, *Iridescence*, will be performed, along with Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*.

The 45-year-old senior lecturer and head of composition studies at Nafa says: "Iridescence is about the brilliance of light refractions representing Singapore's rapid development into a metropolis."

"I used a single sustained tone in the orchestra to portray a beam of light shining through; as it passes through uneven surfaces or spaces, it turns into a beautiful array of colours. It's a metaphor for Singapore's journey from a small fishing village to a lush garden city today and our hope for the future."



The Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra will premiere *Dreams*, the newest composition by twin pianist-composers Low Shao Ying (left) and Low Shao Suan, this Sunday. PHOTO: LOW SHAO YING AND LOW SHAO SUAN

Composers Americ Goh, 33, and Terrence Wong, 26, will also have their works played at *g3nerations*.

Meanwhile, this Sunday, the Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra will be premiering the newest composition by twin pianist-composers Low Shao Ying and Low Shao Suan, who are in their 30s and also full-time piano accompanists at the Yong Siew To Conservatory of Music at the National University of Singapore.

*Dreams* is a seven-minute piece with two movements, *In The Horizon* and *Just Do It*.

The sisters were tasked to work around an SG50 theme by the orchestra and took inspiration from late founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew's relentless attitude in developing Singapore.

Shao Suan says: "We wrote the piece around February, before Mr Lee passed away. However, we don't want audience members to

<b>BOOK IT/PIANO++</b> <b>WHERE:</b> Esplanade Recital Studio, 1 Esplanade Drive <b>WHEN:</b> Thursday, 7.30pm <b>ADMISSION:</b> \$25 for one, \$40 for two from tickets@greaterperformances.com.sg <b>INFO:</b> www.facebook.com/pianoconcertofestival	<b>INFO:</b> Call 6512-4179 or e-mail music@naf.edu.sg to reserve
<b>BOOK IT/DREAMS</b> <b>WHERE:</b> Sota Concert Hall, 12 Bukit Sidi Drive <b>WHEN:</b> Sunday, 5pm <b>ADMISSION:</b> \$15 to \$27 from Sistic (excludes booking fee) <b>INFO:</b> www.bhso.org/concerts/season2015/dreams	<b>BOOK IT/APOTHEOSIS OF THE DANCE</b> <b>WHERE:</b> Lee Foundation Theatre, Nafa Campus 3, 151 Bencoolen Street <b>ADMISSION:</b> Free (with reservation) <b>WHEN:</b> Sept 3, 7.30pm <b>INFO:</b> Call 6512-4179 or e-mail music@naf.edu.sg to reserve
<b>BOOK IT/G3NERATIONS</b> <b>WHERE:</b> Lee Foundation Theatre, Nafa Campus 3, 151 Bencoolen Street <b>WHEN:</b> Aug 27, 7.30pm <b>ADMISSION:</b> Free (with reservation)	<b>BOOK IT/PIANO CONCERTO FESTIVAL: IN CELEBRATION OF SINGAPORE'S 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE</b> <b>WHERE:</b> Victoria Concert Hall, 9 Empress Place <b>WHEN:</b> Sept 3, 7.30pm <b>ADMISSION:</b> \$25 to \$70 from Sistic (excludes booking fee) <b>INFO:</b> www.facebook.com/pianoconcertofestival

think of our work as a tribute piece. Instead, since it's SG50, we should be celebrating the progress we've made these past 50 years."

Mr Adrian Tan, 38, music director and conductor of the orchestra, says: "As a community orchestra, we should be supporting our local music more and play more local compositions. We commission at

least one new work a year and it's a pity that we don't revisit them more often.

"Just because it's a classical music concert doesn't mean we have to keep playing the greats like Mozart and Beethoven. Hopefully, one day we'll be able to see a Singaporean that appreciates good local compositions more."