

Singapore Arts Guide (July 29 to Nov 16): Tan Lip Seng's vivid photos capture country over 60 years

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Objectifs is presenting a retrospective exhibition of pioneer photographer Tan Lip Seng's works. PHOTO: TAN LIP SENG



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Published Jul 29, 2026, 01:42 PM

Updated Jul 29, 2026, 02:21 PM



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Tan Lip Seng: A Life In Colour

For more than 60 years, Singaporean photographer Tan Lip Seng captured Singapore's changing landscapes in brilliant colour. The Cultural Medallion recipient, who died in 2025 aged 82 from gall bladder cancer, gets a retrospective at Objectifs just in time [for National Day](#).

The dedicated professional, whose day job was being a medical photographer at the National University of Singapore, first picked up the camera at age 12 and kept shooting till his last days.

The exhibition features not just works from his early years, but also unseen works from late in his life, when he would wake before dawn to capture glorious sunrises at reservoirs near his home.

From black-and-white street scenes to the distinctively vivid shades of images developed in his colour-derivation photomontage technique, his photographs document Singapore's peoples and scenery from young nation to urbanised modernity.

The exhibition also marks the launch of a new photography book collated with the collaboration of Tan's sons, Tan Eng Loy and Tan Eng Kien, which brings together works made in his final years. The 128-page hardcover is available at Objectifs at \$50 during the exhibition and priced at \$68 thereafter.

There will also be free public talks on the pioneer

photographer's life and time. Artist-curator Zhuang Wubin will talk about photography clubs and salon culture in Singapore and South-east Asia on Aug 22, while photograph conservator Esther Ng will speak on his colour derivation and slide photography on Sept 26.

Where: Objectifs – Centre for Photography and Film, 155 Middle Road

When: Aug 8 to Sept 27, Tuesdays to Saturdays, noon to 7pm; Sundays, noon to 4pm; closed on Mondays and public holidays

MRT: Bras Basah/Bencoolen

Admission: Free

Info: objectifs.com.sg/tan-lip-seng-colour/

Islands In The Net: Southeast Asian Futures In The Age Of AI





Ho Rui An's A History Of Intelligence In ((South)(East)) Asia in the foreground and Grace Quek's Art In The Age Of Human Cloning: A Lecture By Dr Eng Olsen in the background. PHOTO: NG WU GANG

This ongoing show at Padimai Art & Tech Studio presents a mixed bag of projects from artists and researchers wrestling with digital media and the monster that is artificial intelligence.

There are intriguing contributions from home-grown practitioners, including an oddball pseudo-academic lecture from Grace Quek, whose former porn-star persona Annabel Chong is being rehabilitated at the National Gallery Singapore's Passion Is Volcanic exhibition.

Four cardboard standees of Quek include a QR code that leads to a 23-minute YouTube video of the artist in the guise of an art history professor. Art In The Age Of Human Cloning: A Lecture By Dr Eng Olsen turns out to be a rather rambling, sometimes engaging, occasionally sparky, piece that combines a speculative fiction narrative with AI-generated images and music while taking detours through everything from Leonardo da Vinci to traditional Chinese ink painting to Dolly the cloned sheep.

Heman Chong's Safe Entry (Version 2.0-2.7) is a painting of a QR code, a deliberately analogue execution of a digital artefact. The working code takes the viewer to Chong's YouTube video of a long walk through Changi Airport Terminal 2 during the Covid-19 shutdown, a reminder of a key moment that accelerated the world's pivot to digital.

Like Chong, Ho Rui An presents an analogue riposte to the data-hungry, large language model mode of learning. A History Of Intelligence In ((South)(East)) Asia is a curated chronology that maps geopolitical developments in the region from the 1940s to the present. Densely textual, it challenges the viewer with information overload and contextual scarcity at the same time.

Those who like their art interactive can generate an aged doppelganger with Future You, by the Cyborg Psychology research group and the Advancing Humans with AI research programme at the MIT Media Lab, or request readings from Weiwei Hsu's ICHING HEXAGRAM. These are more tech gimmicks than artworks.

Where: Padimai Art & Tech Studio, 03-02

Tanjong Pagar Distripark, 39 Keppel Road

When: Till Nov 16, 10am to 7pm daily

MRT: Cantonment

Admission: Free

Info: padimai.net

Musical Mosaics: Singapore Unsung



Dedric Wong De Li (left) and Adrian Chiang, music directors of Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra. PHOTOS: NATHANIEL LIM

Celebrate National Day early with the Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra, which is presenting an all-Singapore programme on Aug 1.

Led by music directors Adrian Chiang and Dedric Wong De Li, it will premiere two new commissions by home-grown composers.

Syafiqah 'Adha Sallehin's *Everyday Guardians: Three Portraits Of Service* is inspired by nurses, firefighters and teachers, while Germaine Goh's *Pillars Of Strength* celebrates migrant domestic workers. There will also be a new arrangement for symphony orchestra of jazz musician and Cultural Medallion recipient Jeremy Monteiro's *Fortitude*, dedicated to late Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

Rounding out the programme are Wang Chenwei's *Samsui Woman*, Terrence Wong's *Fortitude* for solo saxophone and orchestra and

Darius Lim's *Between Heaven And Earth*, a concerto for piano, treble chorus and orchestra featuring the Voices of Singapore (VOS) Ladies Choir.

The grand finale is Ralph Emmanuel Lim's *Singapura Tapestries*, which offers the chance of a singalong as it features the familiar tunes *Bunga Sayang* and *Singai Naadu*.

The concert also marks the orchestra's 10th anniversary.

Where: Victoria Concert Hall, 11 Empress Place

When: Aug 1, 4.30pm

MRT: Raffles Place

Admission: \$38 and \$88, eligible for SG Culture Pass credits

Info: acso.sg

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