



STUDENT-LED TOURS

PUBLIC TEMPORALITIES

Memory in/and Movement

by VIOLA CHEE

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Public Temporalities: Memory in/and Movement explores the public sculptures across the NUS campus. As the University marks its 120th anniversary in 2025, these works serve as markers of institutional history, collective memory, and the evolving relationship between art and its environment.

Public sculptures exist in dialogue with their surroundings. Unlike artworks in a museum, they are shaped by and, in turn, shape the spaces they inhabit. Over time, shifting landscapes, new perspectives, and changing institutional narratives add layers of meaning to these works. Memory, too, is fluid—shaped through movement, context, and interaction.

Memory is often selective and at NUS, institutional memory is embedded in commemorative plaques, sculptures, and buildings, capturing specific moments yet continuing to exist in the present. This booklet offers a way to engage with these sculptures, considering their histories, artistic intentions, and continued resonance. As you make your way through the campus, take a moment to pause, observe, and reflect on how public art shapes our understanding of space, history, and belonging.

On Cover:
Ng Eng Teng, ***Movement***, 1999; *Ciment fondu*,
230 x 50 x 50 cm. Collection of NUS Faculty of
Arts and Social Sciences.

NUS Campus Map

START

1

2

3

4

5

6

SHAW FOUNDATION ALUMNI HOUSE

Head up the flight of stairs and ramps starting from the drop-off point.

Chong Fah Cheong, *The Faculty Square*, 2007.

SHAW FOUNDATION ALUMNI HOUSE

Entrance.

Chong Fah Cheong, *Our Heritage*, 2007.

AS7 SHAW FOUNDATION BUILDING

Drop-off point.

Ng Eng Teng, *Movement*, 1999.

NUS ENGINEERING, E4, LT6

Wall outside LT6.

Debbie Ding, *Microcosm*, 2024.

UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE (UCC)

Outside UCC, near drop-off point.

Francis Ng, *I WAS HERE*, 2004.

NUS MUSEUM

Top floor. In Ng Eng Teng: 1+1=1

Ng Eng Teng, *The Last Masterpiece*, Undated.

Legend

1

Artwork

Stairs

Suggested Route

Lift

Alternative Route

|||||

Pedestrian Crossing



THE FACULTY SQUARE 1

The Faculty Square is a space showcasing 13 marble sculptures, each symbolising an NUS faculty in 2007. While unified in material and height, the sculptures vary in form, composition, and design, representing the distinct academic identities of each faculty. Commissioned in 2007 as a collaboration between alumni, staff, and students, the sculptures are placed in the Alumni Terrace, which is a “place conducive for each faculty and school to engage with our alumni, students, staff and friends.”¹ As NUS undergoes faculty mergers, these sculptures serve as reminders of the University’s evolving identity and the enduring contributions of past academic communities.

What does it mean to commemorate a legacy in a place that is constantly in flux?

At Shaw Foundation Alumni House,
Alumni Terrace

Chong Fah Cheong, ***The Faculty Square***, 2007;
Marble, 13 pieces, 100 x 50 x 70 cm each.
Collection of NUS Office of Alumni Relations.

1. Integration
2. The Shoulders of Giants
3. In Harmony
4. Windows of Opportunities
5. TTti:me the inspiration : my environment
6. Learning the Law
7. Synergy in Motion
8. Simplicity
9. The Healing Art
10. Horizons
11. ALCHEMY—The Process of Transformation
12. The Baroque Scroll
13. The Twist

¹Text extracted from artwork’s plaque.



OUR HERITAGE

2

Our Heritage is the first in Chong Fah Cheong's series of three sculptures—*Our Heritage*, *Confluence* and *Forest of Talents*—representing NUS' past, present, and future respectively. *Our Heritage* traces the history of NUS in tandem with the development of tertiary education in Singapore. This installation of six boulders represents the evolution of the University's previous iterations as King Edward VII College of Medicine (1905), Raffles College (1929), the University of Malaya (1949), Nanyang University (1956), and the University of Singapore (1962).

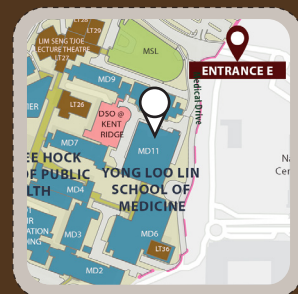
At Shaw Foundation Alumni House, Entrance.

Chong Fah Cheong, *Our Heritage*, 2007; Stone with copper plates, variable dimensions.
Collection of NUS Office of Alumni Relations.



At NUS Medicine MD11, Clinical Imaging Research Centre.

Aurthur Lim, *Happy Owl*, 1999; Bronze, 155 x 126 x 85 cm.
Collection of NUS Museum.



HAPPY OWL

OFF-TRAIL

Casted in bronze, *Happy Owl* embodies wisdom, vigilance, and quiet strength—qualities associated with both owls and Dr. Arthur Lim's distinguished career in ophthalmology. Perched on a concrete pedestal at the Clinical Imaging Research Centre, the sculpture metaphorically represents Dr Lim's pioneering contributions to eye care in Singapore. A passionate art patron, Dr Lim donated over 800 artworks, including 12 to NUS Museum. Through this piece, his dual legacy as a medical innovator and art enthusiast is preserved, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between art, science, and education.



Outside AS7; at drop-off point.
NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Ng Eng Teng, ***Movement***,
1999; *Ciment fondu*, 230 x 50 x 50 cm.
Collection of NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

MOVEMENT

3

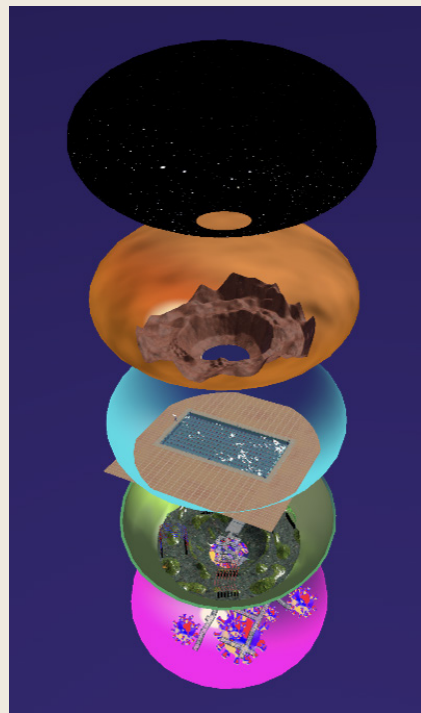
This abstract sculpture by Ng Eng Teng, who is known as the “Grandfather of Singapore Sculpture,” captures human movement through its fluid *ciment fondu* form. Originally titled *Dancers*, the piece suggests intertwined figures in motion, emphasising themes of connection and transformation. Donated to NUS as a gift, *Movement* is located at the drop-off point of AS7, Shaw Foundation Building which houses the Social Service Research Centre. The piece aligns with its mission of social development. Ng, a longtime NUS contributor, believed in fostering creativity in students, and this sculpture’s dynamic form invites interaction—viewers can circle around it, mirroring the continuous movement it represents.

MICROCOSM

4

A virtual reality gameplay projected on a wall, *Microcosm* explores scales of engineering research, from human anatomy to microscopic structures. Commissioned by NUS College of Design and Engineering (CDE), the piece integrates 3D-rendered environments inspired by real research projects, creating an immersive space for dialogue. Installed outside a lecture theatre, it functions as both an online and physical landmark, reflecting Debbie Ding’s interest in unconventional media. As a former NUS Public Art Initiative Artist-in-Residence with CDE, Ding’s work bridges art and technology, inviting students to reconsider the visual and conceptual possibilities of digital art.

How does the use of technology extend, enhance, or obscure our perception of the world?



NUS Engineering E4;
wall outside LT6.

Debbie Ding,
Microcosm,
2024; Video, 16:9
(1920 x 1080px),
colour, sound, 6 min
26 sec.
Collection of NUS
College of Design and
Engineering.

Artwork was
commissioned by
College of Design and
Engineering as part
of the NUS Public Art
Initiative.



I WAS HERE

5

The life-sized concrete sculpture, *I WAS HERE*, explores themes of presence, memory, and identity. Created by mixed-media artist Francis Ng, the work has travelled across Singapore before settling at the University Cultural Centre, where it has become a staple of NUS commencement photographs. Its neutral, stark concrete

Outside University Cultural Centre.

Francis Ng, *I WAS HERE*,
2004; Cast concrete, 1200 x 30 x 171 cm.
On loan to NUS Museum.

form contrasts with the fluidity of personal memories, prompting viewers to question how identity is captured and commemorated. By transitioning from memorialising an event to memorialising the memory of it, the sculpture invites reflection on how we mark our presence in ever-changing landscapes.



THE LAST MASTERPIECE

6

Ng Eng Teng's final artwork, *The Last Masterpiece*, is a deeply personal departure from his sculptural practice. Comprising of a medical syringe, tubes, and bloodstained cotton swabs, the piece reflects his final days of illness. Unlike his earlier figurative sculptures, this work directly integrates the artist's body, blurring the lines between

In NUS Museum, Top Floor; Ng Eng Teng: 1+1=1.

Ng Eng Teng, *The Last Masterpiece*,
Undated; Cotton swabs, 113.5 x 88 cm.
Collection of NUS Museum.

self-portraiture and materiality. Donated posthumously to NUS Museum, it challenges conventional representations of artistic legacy, offering a raw, intimate portrayal of mortality. This visceral piece starkly contrasts with traditional memorials, prompting reflection on bodily presence and artistic remembrance.

NUS Public Art Initiative

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As a university museum, NUS Museum's mission is to actively facilitate intellectual and cultural life within and beyond the University. With a distinct focus on Asia, the Museum contributes to and facilitates the production, reception, and preservation of knowledge through collections development and curatorial practice. The Museum is a cultural hub, developing partnerships within NUS, the culture and heritage industry, and the global knowledge community. Located at the University Cultural Centre, NUS Museum comprises nine galleries and additional ancillary spaces which host a wide range of exhibitions, module collaborations and supporting programmes that contribute to the cultural and interdisciplinary conversation within NUS and beyond.



Museum

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OPENING HOURS:
Monday: By appointment (for schools/faculties)
Tuesday to Saturday: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm
Sunday and Public Holidays: Closed