

# curatingLAB: PHASE 03

Exhibition duration:  
9 January – 8 February 2015  
NUS Museum

**SINGAPORE, 12 January 2015 – Curating Lab’s eleven aspiring curators present exhibitions exploring the diverse practices, working conditions and curatorial strategies surrounding six artists.**

***Curating Lab: Phase 03***, a group of three exhibitions, is the final phase of Curating Lab 2014, an eight-month curatorial programme presented by NUS Museum and supported by the National Arts Council. Guided by mentors from NUS Museum, the Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore and the National Arts Council’s Venice Biennale Secretariat, as well as programme lead facilitator Singaporean artist-writer-curator Heman Chong, the exhibition-making process involved intensive research and conceptualisation across a six-month period within and across three exhibition groups.

## **The Curating Lab programme**

In its third edition organised by the NUS Museum, *Curating Lab* has developed into a cornerstone of the museum’s developmental programmes for students alongside the NUS Museum Internship Programme and the *Writing Lab* programme. Similar to how the *prep-room*, a site for the exploration of curatorial methods leading up to exhibitionary projects at the Museum, was conceived, *Curating Lab* was envisioned to provide participants with an introduction to curatorial work and the space to explore curatorial methods and concepts through the various phases of the programme. Underlying the programme was also the recognition that guidance and support are crucial ingredients in the development of a young curator, leading to the enlistment of a wide range of practicing curators and arts administrators to act as facilitators and mentors, including Heman Chong, Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna (Latitudes), Anca Rujoiu and Vera Mey (CCA), Ning Chong, Sophia Loke and Shabbir Hussain Mustafa (NAC – Venice Biennale Secretariat) and Kenneth Tay (NUS Museum).

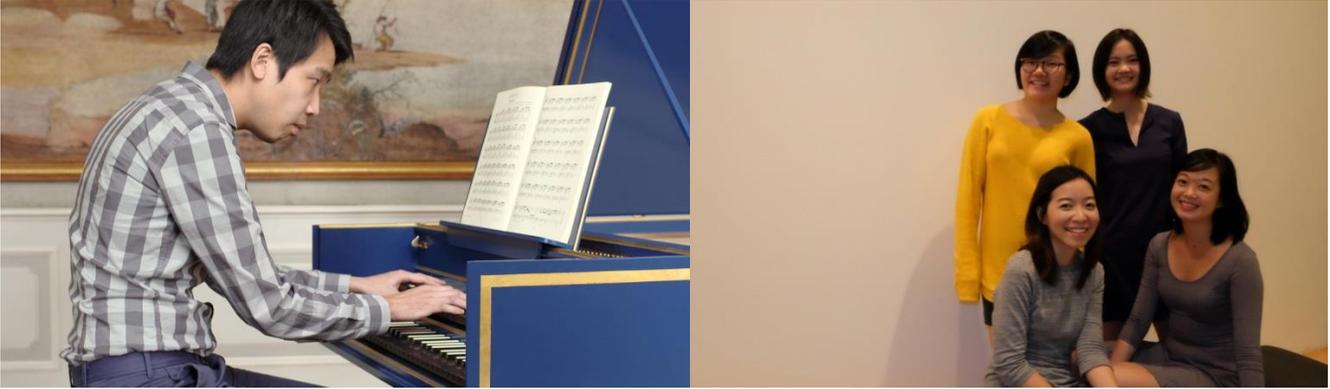
“The *Curating Lab* programme is organised collaboratively across the participating institutions and of course, with the support of the National Arts Council. In a way this is indicative of the very contexts, if not conditions, within which curatorial practices take place, where ideas are conceived, negotiated, tested and actualised; and further received and evaluated. The *Curating Lab* as such functions as a programme that immerses the participants within situations and environs in a modest way prompting reflections into the nature of curatorial practice as they attempt to develop projects that will necessitate discussions, involving individual, group and institutional dynamics, not to mention the artists involved. In this regard, the exhibitions developed by the participants should not be strictly seen as a kind of finality but rather as ways to access the participants’ learning experiences and processes,” says Ahmad Mashadi, Head, NUS Museum.

## **Curating Lab: Phase 03**

Building on a series of closed-door talks with featured artists, discussions with programme mentors and facilitators and research visits to local and international spaces, participants negotiated the varying possibilities of accessing the diverse practice and works of six artists: Song-Ming Ang, Chun Kaifeng, Amanda Heng, Kim Lim, Matthew Ngui and Shubigi Rao. The exhibitions feature new artworks by Chun and Heng.

Ms Kathy Lai, Chief Executive Officer, National Arts Council, says, “*Curating Lab* is a unique incubation ground for aspiring curators to gain knowledge and hands-on experience directly from industry practitioners, cutting across disciplines and institutional lines. This final exhibition is a culmination of the insights and knowledge these participants have gleaned from this past eight months of active learning. I congratulate these eleven participants on

a wonderful first showcase, and I hope to see more of their work in the years to come.”



L: *Backwards Bach*, Song-Ming Ang, 2013.

R: (clockwise from top left) Wong Yeang Cherng, Cheng Jia Yun, Euginia Tan, Selene Yap

*Pictureshow* endeavours to return the viewer to ‘looking’ as a primal means of encountering art, bringing forth various nodes and stratum of perception alongside Singaporean artistic practices. The exhibition convenes both the artistic works and remnants of four artists, Song-Ming Ang; Chun Kaifeng; Kim Lim and Matthew Ngui. A public symposium has been planned to foster continued ways of ‘looking’ at and beyond the exhibition space. “With *Pictureshow*, it was an opportunity for us as a team to experiment with curating; of art but correspondingly with knowledge as a field. We took seemingly a humble conceptual thrust — looking — and explored its potential for creative expression through the consumption and production of art,” commented Wong Yeang Cherng, a member of the curatorial team.



L: *History and Lies*, Shubigi Rao, 2012.

R: (from left) Raksha Mahtani, Luca Lum, Chua Ying Qing

*Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse*, through a broad selection of Shubigi Rao’s artistic corpus, forms its central provocation around ideas of waste, creation and destruction. Through destroyed books, installations centred on marginal and ambiguous histories, and previously unexhibited material from Rao’s personal library, the exhibition invites audiences to engage in the artist’s premise of intertextuality and excess as well as recursive processes of creation and destruction. *Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse* is accompanied by a reader and a series of programmes, including a presentation by the artist. Raksha Mahtani, one of three curators for the exhibition, said, “In piecing together this exhibition, we realised several things: to write waste, to exhibit waste, is to enact a funerary rite. But things are not only departing, they are arriving, returning. When we mourn the loss of an object, the object steps out of its fiction into another. This exhibition is one of mourning a death long before it occurs.”



L: *Twenty Years Later*, Amanda Heng, 2014.

R: (clockwise from top left) Melvin Tan, Kenneth Loe, Bernice Ong, Samantha Yap

*Conditions of Production*, which examines the practices of Amanda Heng, Chun Kaifeng and Matthew Ngui, considers objects and process within the complexities of artistic production and reception. Emulating the pluralities of creating artistic discourse, the project adopts multiple platforms besides the exhibition, including dialogue sessions and an online repository of interviews and essays. The curatorial team behind the exhibition commented, “We were keen for *Conditions of Production* to extend beyond the exhibition format and encompass other sites where artistic discourse often occur, especially since the project seeks to examine the contexts and spaces in which artistic production operates within the broader networks of culture and society.”

*Pictureshow*, Shubigi Rao: *Exquisite Corpse* and *Conditions of Production* will each make use of extensive documentation materials to cross-examine process and practice across artists, time, and space, thus collectively delving into the labours of artistic production, probing the concept of the spectator and exploring the tensions between critical excess and curatorial control.

Earlier phases of the Curating Lab 2014 programme included a curatorial-intensive comprising of lectures, workshops, local field trips and a public symposium, an overseas field trip to Hong Kong and six-month institutional attachments. The eleven participants, selected in June 2014, include tertiary students and recent graduates as well as young professionals working across the arts, culture and heritage industries.

# curatingLAB: PHASE 03

**Exhibition period**

9 January – 8 February 2015

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- Annex C – Public programmes
- Annex D – Exhibition curators

For more information about the exhibition, media interviews, gallery tours or high resolution images, please contact:

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# curatingLAB:

curatorial-intensive &  
internship programme

## About Curating Lab 2014

Curating Lab 2014 offers final year tertiary students, recent graduates and young curators exposure into contemporary curatorial perspectives and practices. Organised by NUS Museum with support from the National Arts Council, this eight-month programme will see participants embarking on a curatorial-intensive designed as a workshop, an overseas field trip, internship assignments to contemporary art spaces in Singapore, while being guided by the programme's facilitators and their internship mentors to work towards a final exhibition project.

Organised by **NUS MUSEUM**

Institutional Partner **NTU CENTRE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY  
ART SINGAPORE**

Supported by



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## NUS MUSEUM

University Cultural Centre  
50 Kent Ridge Crescent  
National University of Singapore  
Singapore 119279

10am–7.30pm (Tuesdays–Fridays)  
10am–6pm (Saturdays & Sundays)  
Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays  
Free Admission

### About NUS Museum

NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 8,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The Lee Kong Chian Collection consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the South and Southeast Asian Collection holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the Ng Eng Teng Collection is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the Straits Chinese Collection, is located at NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road. NUS Museum is an institution of NUS Centre For the Arts.

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B: [nusmuseum.blogspot.com](http://nusmuseum.blogspot.com)  
F: [facebook.com/nusmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/nusmuseum)  
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## Annex A – Exhibition synopses

### ***Conditions of Production***

Curated by: Kenneth Loe, Bernice Ong, Melvin Tan & Samantha Yap

Mentored by: Anca Rujoiu & Vera Mey (Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore)

*Conditions of Production* is an ongoing project that seeks to pursue a field of enquiry situating objects and process within the complexities of artistic production and reception. To emulate the plurality of situations where artistic discourse may arise, this project calls attention to less tangible structures immanent in the creation of an artwork by adopting the multiple platforms of an exhibition, dialogue sessions, and an online repository of interviews and essays. The exhibition, as one part of a greater whole, examines these conditions by looking at the practice of three artists – Amanda Heng, Chun Kaifeng and Matthew Ngui.

<http://conditionsofproduction.com>

### ***Pictureshow***

Curated by: Cheng Jia Yun, Euginia Tan, Wong Yeang Cherng & Selene Yap

Mentored by: Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, Sophia Loke & Ning Chong  
(National Arts Council – Venice Biennale Secretariat)

*Pictureshow* seeks to spotlight the act of *looking* as the primal means of perception and knowledge acquisition. Assembling works and materials which have since grown distant from the stability of the canvas, the painting, and the two-dimensional that the word *picture* is so comfortably associated with, this exhibition asks: How has the relationship between artistic expression and the pictorial mode evolved over time? By unhinging the habitual mode of seeing a *picture* with works and materials that generate their own definitions about representation, *Pictureshow* contemplates the image as mediator in the relationship between artistic production and consumption. The exhibition features the works and materials of Chun Kaifeng, Kim Lim, Matthew Ngui and Song-Ming Ang.

### ***Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse***

Curated by: Chua Ying Qing, Luca Lum & Raksha Mahtani

Mentored by: Kenneth Tay (NUS Museum) & Heman Chong

*Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse* combines a selection of Shubigi Rao's work with items from her personal library, as well as material that has never been exhibited publicly. "Waste", in Rao's work — as a material presence, underlying poetic logic, and anxiety — becomes a way of framing her oeuvre and process, and forms the exhibition's curatorial provocation. It appears in her literal use of junk materials in her early work, her inclination to the fictive, the improbable, and impossible, to her relationships with her work and library. At once a kind of monologue and dialogue, a coded silence, and a cacophonous game of *cadavre exquis*, *Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse* invites the entanglement of old and new voices as audiences engage in the exhibition's premise of intertextuality, spectrality, hidden layers, and remainders.

## Annex B – Participating artists

**Song-Ming Ang** focuses on music as a subject-matter in his art practice. In his work, material such as school songs, mix-tapes, and record covers are often remade with an internal logic or narrative.

In *Backwards Bach* (2013), Ang – as an untrained harpsichordist – formulated a backwards version of the C Major Prelude from Book I of J. S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, eventually filming a performance of it in a baroque-era mansion in Germany.

Ang graduated with an MA in Aural & Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College (London) in 2009. His work has been presented at Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Berlin), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney), and the 3rd Singapore Biennale.

[www.circadiansongs.com](http://www.circadiansongs.com)

**Chun Kaifeng** is an emerging artist based in Singapore. He received his MFA from Glasgow School of Art in 2010. His practice is embedded in concerns related to waiting, boredom and the situation. The knowledge from his research, imbued with a sense of melancholy and longing, is articulated through sculptural works and installations.

He is a recipient of the National Arts Council Overseas Bursary (2009) and the Singapore Art Exhibition Prize (2009). His work has been presented in exhibitions including *Singapore Art Exhibition* at Singapore Art Museum (2009), *Beyond LKY* at Valentine Willie Fine Art, Singapore (2010), *It's Now or Never Part II* at Singapore Art Museum (2011) and *The Singapore Show: Future Proof* at 8Q, Singapore Art Museum (2012).

In January 2013, he presented his first gallery solo exhibition at FOST Gallery (Gillman Barracks, Singapore).

**Amanda Heng** is a full-time art practitioner. Adopting an inter-disciplinary approach to her art practice, she deals with the clashing of eastern and western values, and traditions and gender roles in the context of a multi-cultural and fast-changing society of Singapore. Recently, she is focusing on the issues of history, memory, communication and human relationships in urban conditions. She often works in collaboration with people of different cultural backgrounds and from art as well as non-art fields. She has been invited to many residency programmes and has produced performances, collaborative interventions and installations and exhibited in major galleries, festivals and artist-run projects in Singapore and the wider international scene including the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, the Havana Biennial, the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, Werkleitz Biennale in Germany, the inaugural Singapore Biennale, the Tachikawa International Art Festival, and performance art festivals in Spain, USA and Japan.

Amanda was involved in the founding of two artist initiatives in Singapore, The Artists' Village in 1988, and Wita (Women In the Arts) in 1999. She is also actively involved in conceptualising, curating, organising and participating in exhibitions, public art events, workshops and forums such as *Women And Their Arts* (1991), *The Space* (1992), *Memories of Sense* (1994), *Part of The Whole* (1994), *The 1st Asian Film Appreciation Workshop* (1994), *Women About Women* (1997), *The Friday Event* (2000), *Performance Art Project* (2000), *Open Ends* (2000), *House WORK* (2004) and *Exchange 05* (2005). Her other art activities include co-directing theatre production *Bernard's Story* (2001), and performing in the theatre production *A Woman On the Tree in the Hill* (2001) directed by Ivan Heng of The Wild Rice Theatre Company.

Amanda has lectured in Nanyang Technological University and the National Institute of Education. She also supervises MA students in LASALLE College of the Arts. She sat on the selection and curatorial committee for the President's Young Talents Exhibition 2009 in Singapore.

Amanda has received the Cultural Medallion Award in 2010, and was featured in the Singapore Contemporary Artists Series presented by the Singapore Art Museum in a solo exhibition entitled *Speak To Me, Walk With Me* in 2011. A book in the same title was also launched at the opening of the exhibition.

Amanda's works have been collected by the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, the Singapore Art Museum, the Okinawa Prefectural Art Museum and other private collectors.

**Kim Lim** (1936-1997) was born in Singapore and spent much of her early childhood in Penang and Malacca. After her schooling in Singapore, Lim knew that she wanted to become an artist, and at 18, she enrolled at St. Martin's in London, where she spent two years concentrating mainly on wood carving. She then transferred to the Slade, where taught by the etcher Anthony Gross and lithographer Stanley Jones, she developed a strong commitment to print making.

On journeys back to Singapore she stopped off in Europe and India, soaking up the art 'like a sponge'. These were the experiences that confirmed in her a lifelong predilection for things archaic and for the flow and rhythm of Indian and South East Asian sculpture: "I found that I always responded to things that were done in earlier civilisations that seemed to have less elaboration and more strength." In Greece she was entranced by Cycladic sculpture. Of Chinese art she was moved most by early Shang bronzes, Han sculpture, Sung pottery: things characterised by formal and decorative simplicity.

Kim Lim exhibited widely after leaving the Slade in 1960. From 1980, she turned to stone-carving, whilst continuing to make prints and fill sketchbooks with drawings from nature. With her husband, the sculptor and painter William Turnbull, she made journeys to China, Indonesia, Cambodia, Egypt, Malaysia and Turkey, always alert to art and nature alike, and with a sharp eye to human diversity.

**Matthew Ngui** is a visual artist, trained in sculpture and working in the areas of installation, video, performance, site-specific works and public art. Since the late 80s, his multi-disciplinary art practice has largely involved investigations into perception through sculpture, image and performance. This enquiry into "perception" extends not only to the physical nature of vision but also to how individuals and societies view other cultures in a world predicated on difference. Undetermined by medium or a view to producing an end product, his artistic process almost always involves in-situ research. Throughout the last two decades and more, Ngui has travelled extensively, creating site-specific work for international biennales, artist-in-residence and museum projects and public art commissions. Currently on sabbatical, his career includes lecturing at various art schools internationally, being on various boards of art institutes, galleries and councils and working with the Singapore Biennale, being its Artistic Director for SB2011. He is Director of Art In Public Pte Ltd, a company whose purpose is to engage the general public through art.

**Shubigi Rao** is a visual artist and writer whose interests range from archaeology, neuroscience, 13th century 'science', language, libraries, historical acts of cultural genocide, contemporary art theory and natural history. Her work involves complex layered installations comprising handmade books, text, drawings, etchings, pseudo-science machinery and archives, and has been exhibited and collected in Singapore, Indonesia, Iran, Hong Kong, China, the Netherlands and India. Notable exhibitions include the solo *The Retrospectacle of S. Raoul* (2013), group shows *Still Building* (2012), *Beyond LKY* (2010), *Found and Lost* (2009), *The Tuning Fork of the Mind*, commissioned for the second Singapore Biennale (2008), *Singapore Art Show* at the Singapore Art Museum (2007), *Second Dance Song* (2006), *Appetites for Litter: the 8th emerging artist show at PKW* (2006), and *New Contemporaries* (2005). She lectures part-time in Art Theory at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore.

## **Annex C – Public programmes**

\*Details accurate as of press time. For further updates, please refer to [curating-lab.blogspot.com](http://curating-lab.blogspot.com) or [facebook.com/curatinglab2014](https://www.facebook.com/curatinglab2014).

### **Pictureshow: Nodes of Looking**

Symposium in conjunction with *Pictureshow*

**Date:** Saturday, 31 January 2015

**Time:** 10am – 2.30pm

**Venue:** NUS Museum

**Speakers:** Stefano Harney (Ground Provisions collective), A/P Stuart Derbyshire (Dept of Psychology, NUS), A/P Maurizio Peleggi (Dept of History, NUS), Shubigi Rao (artist) and Kannan Chandran (publisher)

### ***Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book***

Artist's presentation in conjunction with *Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse*

**Date:** Saturday, 31 January 2015

**Time:** 3 – 3.45pm

**Venue:** NUS Museum

### ***Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse***

Talk in conjunction with *Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse*

**Date:** Saturday, 31 January 2015

**Time:** 4 – 6.30pm

**Venue:** NUS Museum

**Speakers:** A/P Farish A Noor (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, NTU), A/P John Miksic (Dept of Southeast Asian Studies, NUS), Koh Nguang How (archivist and artist) and Yu-Mei Balasingamchow (writer and independent curator)

### **Shifting Representations**

Dialogue session in conjunction with *Conditions of Production*

**Date:** Sunday, 1 February 2015

**Time:** 2 – 4pm

**Venue:** Telok Kurau Studios

**Speakers:** Lina Adam (artist), Wang Ruobing (artist and independent curator) and Dr Margaret Tan (Tembusu College, NUS)

### **Traversing Spaces**

Dialogue session in conjunction with *Conditions of Production*

**Date:** Sunday, 1 February 2015

**Time:** 4.30 – 6.30pm

**Venue:** Telok Kurau Studios

**Speakers:** Tan Liting (artist), Chu Chu Yuan (artist) and Raksha Mahtani (freelance copyeditor and theatre director)

## Annex D – Exhibition curators

Exhibition	Curators	Age	Position / Organisation
<i>Conditions of Production</i>	Kenneth LOE	25	Assistant Gallery Manager, Ikkan Art International
	Bernice ONG	26	Artist and freelance production technician
	Melvin TAN	26	Graduand, Visual Communications, School of Art, Design & Media, Nanyang Technological University
	Samantha YAP	21	Gallery Assistant, Silverlens Gallery
<i>Shubigi Rao: Exquisite Corpse</i>	CHUA Ying Qing	25	Associate (Arts & Culture), Library@Esplanade, National Library Board
	Luca LUM	23	Honours student, English Literature, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore
	Raksha Kirpal MAHTANI	25	Freelance copyeditor / theatre director
<i>Pictureshow</i>	CHENG Jia Yun	24	Curatorial Assistant, National Gallery Singapore
	Eugenia TAN	23	MA candidate, Contemporary Counselling, University of Hertfordshire
	WONG Yeang Cherng	25	Graduand, History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore
	Selene YAP	26	Associate (Arts & Culture), National Library Board