

Celebrating Singapore's green spaces

An art and photo exhibition of the country's favourite nature spots. **BY TAY SUAN CHIANG**

RETIRED principal Kok Heng Yee has always loved nature and painting. Her work kept her busy, leaving little time to pursue her hobby, but when she retired about 20 years ago, she picked up her paint brushes again.

Her paintings of parks and other nature spots in Singapore are now on display at the Singapore City Gallery in an exhibition titled *Where Our Memories Are Parked*.

Apart from her acrylic paintings, there are photos of wildlife and people enjoying their time outdoors, taken by a group of National University of Singapore (NUS) environmental studies students passionate about creating awareness about wildlife in Singapore.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority says the exhibition is a chance for their volunteers to express their thoughts and ideas about urban spaces in Singapore.

Kok's paintings were mostly done before the pandemic and are part of her personal collection. She paints spaces that are of significance to her, such as Labrador Park, which she used to visit as a child.

But the one of the Rail Corridor was specially painted for the exhibition. She says her paintings are not replicas of reality, because a photograph would capture that better.

"Instead, they depict the essence of what I like about the place," she says.

For example, trees or specific flowers are added in: "I always include people in my paintings, because these places should be enjoyed."

Kok hopes that visitors will be inspired to check out the 5 nature enclaves that are featured, such as the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and the Southern Ridges Park, after seeing the exhibition.

NUS undergraduate Teo Ning Ginn has always liked animals, especially birds. Since she



Above left: The exhibition also features photos of wildlife and people enjoying their time outdoors, taken by a group of NUS students. Right: Kok Heng Yee's paintings of Rail Corridor (above) and Labrador Park (below). PHOTOS: TAY SUAN CHIANG

joined the School of Environmental Studies, she has been on bird-watching adventures with her course mates and has also picked up wildlife photography.

Her wildlife photos, together with those by her course mates, Joy Foo and Evangelista Wan, are on show at the exhibition.

Teo usually heads to Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve to shoot shore birds and Jurong Lake Gardens for terrestrial birds.

"But Singapore has an abundance of wildlife, so I shoot anything that catches my eye

from the charismatic otters to the unassuming greenery in our city," she says.

She adds: "I hope that visitors feel and share our passion for Singapore's green spaces and the plants and animals that live in them."

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Where Our Memories Are Parked is on till Apr 30, at Singapore City Gallery, Level 3 City Canvas, The URA Centre, 45 Maxwell Road.



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