

# Art After Dark makes works accessible to younger crowd

The event may not generate many sales, but it is a good way to expose people to art in a less intimidating setting

Toh Wen Li

Art After Dark at Gillman Barracks, a one-night fiesta where galleries stay open from 7pm till late, is back tomorrow to celebrate the area's sixth anniversary.

The event usually draws thousands of people to the usually quiet arts cluster off Alexandra Road.

Nearly 9,000 people attended Art After Dark's previous edition during Singapore Art Week on Jan 26. This was more than 10 times the average daily number of 800 people who visited the enclave the first half of this year.

Crowds are expected to throng the grounds amid a party atmosphere of live music, drinks, special programmes and artworks, from a 30m-long outdoor installation by Singapore artist Robert Zhao to photography exhibitions to outdoor sculptures.

Art After Dark, which was launched in 2014, takes place twice a year. It is a step towards making artworks more accessible to a wider crowd and raising the enclave's profile.

Mizuma Gallery, which sees about 20 visitors on a regular weekday, had more than 3,200 visitors over four hours at the last edition of Art After Dark.

"Some of them signed up for our mailing list and returned to our gallery from time to time to see our subsequent exhibitions," says gallery manager Theresia Irma.

Galleries at Gillman Barracks – which also plays host to the daytime open house event Art Day Out! – sell very few, if any, artworks at Art After Dark. Clients tend to visit on quieter days or acquire art through different platforms.

"For us, we don't always expect sales of artworks to happen on the spot, so that is okay," adds Ms Irma.

"Throughout the years, we've encountered a number of people who started out as gallerygoers, but as they've seen more artworks, learnt more about contemporary art and the artists they liked, they started buying smaller artworks," she says, noting that it takes time for new collectors to have the knowledge and confidence to acquire bigger artworks, and visiting galleries is the first step towards cultivating this interest.

Element Art Space's director Aniela Rahardja says the gallery tends to sell works at international art fairs or before show openings and this is often arranged through e-mail messages or calls. Art After Dark, she adds, has been a good way to expose younger people to art in a less intimidating setting.

ShanghART Singapore's director Lilian Wu sees Art After Dark as a chance for galleries to elevate the



Indonesian artist Entang Wiharso will have his works, such as *Recalling Home* (background) and *Nothing Left* (foreground), featured in his solo exhibition *Hybrid Brain* at Mizuma Gallery, one of the galleries at Gillman Barracks that will open till late as part of Art After Dark. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG

tastes of a young audience and develop art lovers. Not many serious collectors will visit during Art After Dark, she says, since it is "too crowded".

Yeo Workshop's founder Audrey Yeo, who describes the event as "a crazy party", says the event is also a good opportunity to meet new people and develop a long sales relationship. The few works the gallery has sold at the event tend to be in the lower price range of \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Some galleries and artists see the evening as a chance to network.

Photographer Zhao, previously an artist-in-residence at the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, opened his studio to the public during January's edition of Art After

Dark. "I met a lot of artists from different countries and practices during my time there," he says.

Previous editions of Art After Dark, says Chan + Hori Contemporary's business development manager Bradley Foisset, have led to collaborations with international curators who attended the event.

The hype it generates allows them to engage with millennials and new collectors. "If it appears to be energetic and lively, collectors are more prone to visit at other times throughout the week."

Ms Linda de Mello, the National Arts Council's Director for Sector Development (Visual Arts), says Art After Dark "provides a taster of everything Gillman Barracks has to offer all year round".

She adds: "We have also seen more Singaporeans getting interested in art collecting and hope to groom new collectors through our ongoing outreach programmes".

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## VIEW IT / ART AFTER DARK X 6TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

WHERE: Gillman Barracks, 9 Lock Road  
 WHEN: Tomorrow 7pm till late  
 ADMISSION: Free  
 INFO: <http://bit.ly/AAD6thAnni>

## Event highlights

### ROBERT ZHAO'S OUTDOOR INSTALLATION

Singapore artist Robert Zhao is showcasing 14 nearly life-size photos of a large tree near his house that fell in a storm and was promptly chopped up and removed. City trees, Zhao says, are treated as having a utilitarian value rather than an ecological one.

Trying To Remember A Tree (iii) – The World Will Surely Collapse, comprising 14 lightboxes stretching over 30m, made its international debut at the Jakarta Biennale last year. It is presented by ShanghART Singapore.

Where: Carpark B

### PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITIONS

The Singapore International Photography Festival will feature Singapore artist Nguan's Singapore series, which spans a decade and evokes the complexity of daily life through his iconic dreamy palette.

The festival will also present Entropy of Spatial Existence, which was put together by South Korean curator Yoon Suok-won and showcases the works of six artists from South Korea, Europe and South Africa.

Where: 02-21, Block 9 Lock Road (Singapore); 01-26, Block 47 Malan Road (Entropy of Spatial Existence)

### NTU CCA Singapore

The NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore's Stagings.

Soundings, Readings, Free Jazz II will feature a series of performances and new installations. Meanwhile, the main exhibition hall will showcase Trees Of Life – Knowledge In Material, where international artists explore indigo, lacquer, rattan and mulberry.

Other highlights are Journey Of A Yellow Man, Selected Materials From The Independent Archive, and Residencies: Open, where visitors can explore the studios of the centre's artists-in-residence Falke Pisano (The Netherlands), Luca Lum (Singapore), Susie Wong (Singapore), Takuji Kogo (Japan), Wu Mali (Taiwan), and Zai Tang (Singapore).

Where: Block 43 Malan Road (Stagings, Soundings, Readings, Free Jazz II, Trees Of Life – Knowledge In Material, Journey Of A Yellow Man); Blocks 37 and 38 Malan Road (Residencies: Open)

### SUPERMAMA PORCELAIN & CRAFT FESTIVAL

Head down to the Supermama Porcelain and Craft Festival to view porcelain works by Singapore and Japanese makers and take part in craft workshops. The Singapore-based crafts store is also organising DesignArt Festa, an art market where you can pick up statement pieces for your home or office.

Where: 01-13, Block 7 Lock Road (Supermama Porcelain and Craft Fair); 01-26, Block 47 Malan Road (DesignArt Festa)