

# Singapore Art Week: The Last Word – Paul Carter Robinson

 [artlyst.com/features/singapore-art-week-last-word-paul-carter-robinson/](https://artlyst.com/features/singapore-art-week-last-word-paul-carter-robinson/)

**Singapore is a vibrant hub at the best of times, but it doubles up as a key global centre for contemporary art, as the world focuses on Singapore Art Week. Over the period of seven days the city hosts a major international art fair, Art Stage Singapore as well the many public and commercial art displays. The city welcomes both fine and Urban art, showcasing some of the best art in the region.**

Singapore is polite and welcoming. It is a thoroughly safe place to visit with true multi-cultural harmony – PCR

Day one: I visited the Esplanade a massive complex like London's Southbank which features everything from opera, theatre to art exhibitions. This year the stylishly designed centre exhibited art by the Vietnamese artist UuDam Tran Nguyen. The work consists of a large-scale (forgive the pun) inflated installation titled 'Serpent's Tails'. The work was accompanied by a video in the carpark, which was an adventure to discover.



Mash-Up Collective Gillman Barracks Singapore Art Week

Day two: we visited the fantastic Gillman Barracks a former British military outpost from the colonial era. This is a massive 'art park' with galleries, studios and outdoor art installations. Of special note, the D/SINI commissioned Gillman Pavillion by the Mash-Up Collective, an

art and fashion merger and 'Catch Yourself If You Can, Lugas Syllabus', 2017, a fibreglass dragon creature which plays with iconography from pop culture. Pearl Lam was exhibiting young Singapore artist Luke Heng. Watch for our international artist profile in February.

Singapore has many private museums, and we visited several. The Parkview Museum had a display curated from their first-rate collection of international contemporary art. It included works by Marina Abramovic, Gilbert & George, Dennis Oppenheim and Bill Viola.

We also visited the STPI a gallery and print studio which produces large-scale prints by creatives in their artist in residence programme. It has run successfully for 15 years and has included the likes of Turner Prize winner Richard Deacon, Do Ho Suh and Ryan Gander. Their feature exhibition was a stunning show of Kim Lim (1937–1997) titled 'Sculpting Light'. This London trained Singapore born artist is known internationally having exhibited in New York and at the Camden Arts Centre, London. (Factoid) Kim was also the wife of the Modern British artist William Turnbull.

In the evening I attended the Private View of Bali/Indonesian artist Wayan Novi at Art Porters, Singapore, an intimate space fashioned from a local heritage building. Novi's work has an Aboriginal feel to it, but it also evokes Paul Klee and Yayoi Kusama. Gallerist Guillaume Levy-Lambert has a highly developed connoisseurs' eye with several artists of note on his roster including the French sculptor Arnaud Nazare-Aga and painter Douglas Diaz.

Day three: Off to a David LaChapelle exhibition at Pearl Lam Gallery in yet another converted barracks. This time the spaces have been converted to art galleries, design centres, antique shops and a variety of delectable restaurants. Pearl Lam is a world-class international gallery with branches in Hong Kong and Shanghai. The LaChapelle exhibition is an excellent survey covering work from 1995 to the present.



Teo Seng Hong and Mandy Wee Tree & Me

Next off the gala opening of Art Stage Singapore. This is the big fair that pumps lifeblood into the rest of the week's cultural phenomenon. The fair is impressive with several international galleries exhibiting, but more importantly, galleries from all over South East Asia bring their best artists to showcase new and bluechip works. Of special note the public artwork by Thailand artist Kamin Lertchaiprasert, *The Timeless Present Moment 2012-2016* presented by Numthong Gallery. Tada Hengsapkul's work on Nova Contemporary, Otis Jones work on Marc Straus New York, Douglas Diaz on Art Porters stand, *Tree & Me* Johor| Malaysia showed large-scale wood sculptures a bit like David Nash and Wang Du implanted hair on unexpected inanimate objects. There were also impressive international works by Anselm Kiefer from Sundaram Tagore, An iconic Anish Kapoor wall mirror on Opera, numerous Alexander Calder on Omer Tiroche, London and an inspiring array of vintage paintings on Art Agenda, S.E.A. who created a midcentury period room setting to display their 20th-century work and finally Flowers Gallery had work by Patrick Hughes and Glen Baxter. The fair was followed by a glamorous after-party on the roof of the Marina BayExpo Centre.

Day Four: Took in 'From The Streets' an Urban Art exhibition at the Science Museum. This was a survey exhibition of international work by many of the original founding figures of Street Art. It was enjoyable but had noticeable gaps such as Samo (Basquiat) Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf. The one Banksy was a small canvas from 2017, but there were impressive large pieces by Shepard Fairey. I was much more impressed by the local M.A.T.A.S. 'Make Terrific Art Someday' an interactive installation at the Aliwal Arts Centre where 'Big Brother watched over as you created your own graffiti on walls in the display.

Day Five: Morning spent at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre and Art Outreach which



presented the IMPART Collectors' Show, featuring international and local art from the private collections of prominent Singaporean collectors. This was an excellent collection of 20th and 21st-century painting beautifully displayed in a bespoke gallery space, in a gleaming new building.



Rirkrit Tiravanija bamboo maze untitled 2018

Onto the National Gallery Singapore for the 'Century of Light Exhibition' consisting of over 60 borrowed Impressionistic works from the Musée d'Orsay. A very good selection of paintings from Manet to Cezanne. One of the highpoints of my trip was the installation on the roof of the museum by Rirkrit Tiravanija a bamboo maze with a Japanese tea house at the centre. The maze references traditional hand-built bamboo scaffolding found across Asia, while the Japanese tea house evokes the rich culture of tea with its centuries-old ceremonies. Do not miss this if you are in Singapore. I also recommend the superb David Medalla interactive work 'A Stitch In Time' which I saw in Venice last year also on display at the National Gallery Singapore.

Round-Up: The emerging art in Singapore can be quite edgy and original both in figuration and abstraction. I visited Lasalle College of the Arts and can confirm it is a hotbed for creativity, reminding me a bit of Central Saint Martins with an eastern vibe. The basement gallery housed the video-performance installation by Jesse Jones that was at the Venice Biennale. The second VB piece I found on display in the city.

Tips: The people of Singapore are polite and welcoming. It is a thoroughly safe place to visit with multi-cultural harmony. The temperature was hot, and wet ( in late January) carry an umbrella! I stayed at the Hotel Vagabond a beautifully renovated heritage building in Little India. Room was cool, comfortable and funky with lots of extras like Etro toiletries. Staff

were friendly. Ambience oozed from lobby to room decor. Just the place for the creatively minded. There are deals to be had, book before you travel. There are lots of good places to eat in all price ranges. My favourite was the street food in Lau Pa Sat (Chinese: 老巴剎), also known as Telok Ayer Market. I recommend Stall 7 Best Satay. I also loved Blue Ginger, a traditional Peranakan neighbourhood restaurant in Chinatown. The Song of India in Scotts Road 9/10 yes it had a Michelin Star, but was affordable.

**Words/Photos © Paul Carter Robinson Artlyst 2018**

**Don't miss the full SAW slide show below © Artlyst 2018**

---

---

