

PRESS RELEASE

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Latiff Mohidin: The Journey to Wetlands, and Beyond

Book Launch

5 May 2009



Wetlands [3], 2000
Ink on hand-made Tibetan paper
76 x 51cm

The Singapore Art Museum is proud to launch the book *Latiff Mohidin: Journey to Wetlands and Beyond* at 11:00 am, 5 May 2009. The book represents over 4 decades of the artist's works and presents a selection of 120 drawings as a retrospective of Latiff Mohidin's works from 1962 to 2006.

Latiff Mohidin: Journey to Wetlands and Beyond is the first detailed study of Latiff Mohidin's drawings. For Latiff, the practice of drawing is fundamental; it is an everyday experience, a formative aspect of

his practice throughout his entire life, which has not received deserving critical attention. This routine has led to a collection of sketchbooks and drawings that constitute Latiff's diary, his notes, and his memory. To the artist, sketching outside of a studio is an emotional, spiritual and intellectual experience as he soaks in the atmosphere and the surrounding environment. It is not about seizing the moment, but experiencing the overall ambience. The works executed on site are not about a particular place or time, but rather depict Latiff's feelings, and what a city or a scenery is expressing to him.

The Book examines the status of the earliest acknowledged picture as a drawing in the 1950s and traces the development of Latiff's practice of his medium until the present. Latiff Mohidin held his first exhibition in Singapore at the age of ten, to which he earned the nickname, "*the magical boy with the gift in his hands*". In 1960, the artist went to Berlin, Germany to study art. During this time, Latiff perfected various techniques of pen, ink, charcoal, pencil and etching for drawing portraits, still life and landscapes. Back from Europe in 1964, Latiff Mohidin travelled widely in Southeast Asia where he re-discovered and continually reinvented landscapes from Southeast Asia with the aim of developing fresh visual languages.

Latiff's approach to the formal properties of drawing, his choice and treatment of surfaces, his ways of seeing and representation (Professor T.K. Sabapathy 's essay in the book), his provision of symbolic content are examined in great detail. In all these respects, this publication provides insights into processes of creative thinking and methods of realization. It enables appreciating drawing in its own right. The book also includes an interview of the artist, as well as his series of works, from his earlier periods, namely *Pago-Pago*, *Mindscape*, *Langkawi*, *Gelombang* and *Rimba*, to the latest works, a number of which have not been exhibited before such as *Guilin*, *Isfahan*, *Samarkhan* and *Bukhara*. Addition to these series, *Voyages*, *the Wells*, and *Wetlands* originate from the artist's inner vision and are re-interpretation of the world and nature are completing the picture of the artist's career until today.

Says Latiff Mohidin, "A sketch is not really to catch the floating moment, but the atmosphere. Not only what is there but also what isn't there." His drawings are not about replicating what he sees, but

FREE Admission on Friday from 6pm to 9pm

Singapore Art Museum is located at 71 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189555.

8Q sam is located at 8 Queen Street, Singapore 188535.

For general enquiries, please contact Front desk at 6332 3222.

For more information, visit www.singart.com

Annex A

Biography of Latiff Mohidin

Latiff Mohidin's passion for painting and drawings was evident in 1951, when he held his first exhibition at Kota Raja Malay School in Singapore, to which he earned the nickname, "the magical boy with the gift in his hands", at a tender age of ten. From 1960 to 1964, Latiff studied art in Berlin, and did further residencies in Paris and New York. During this time, Latiff perfected the various techniques of pen, ink, charcoal, pencil and etching for drawing portraits, still life and landscapes. Back to Southeast Asia in 1964, Latiff started to explore a new visual language, getting inspiration from the places he visited such as Bangkok and Angkor. Latiff's drawings, which range from sketches to works on paper, document a significant development in the artist's career from 1962 to 2006. Showcased both locally and internationally, Latiff Mohidin's works are appraised as both distinctive and significant in the history of art in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Latiff Mohidin is also a poet and a writer who has received honours and awards such as the Malaysia's National Literary Prize and the Southeast Asian's Writer's Award in 1984 in Bangkok.

	Biography
1941	Birth the 20 August, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
1947	Malay School Lenggeng, Negeri Sembilan
1950	Malay School Kota Raja, Singapore
1951	English School Mercantile Institution, Singapore Singapore First exhibition, Malay School Kota Raja, Singapore
1953	Joined the exhibition of the Malayan AgriHorticulture association, Kuala Lumpur 1 st Price and Special Prize in oil painting, Malaysian AgriHorticulture association, Kuala Lumpur
1954	English School King George V, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
1955	Joined the Federation Arts Exhibition, Teochew Association Hall, Kuala Lumpur
1956	Joined the Third Annual Malayan Artists Exhibition, Arts Council, Kuala Lumpur
1957	Third Price in Art and Photography, Malayan Independence (Merdeka) Trade Fair, Kuala Lumpur
1958	Honourable mention, 2 nd Young artist Exhibition, British Council, Kuala Lumpur
1960	Hochschule fur Bildende Kunste, Berlin, Germany DADD, German Academy Student Exchange Scholarship, Boon
1963	Frankfurter Kunstkabinett, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany
1964	Beginning of The Pago-Pago series Exhibition at Ladengalerie, Berlin, Germany Exhibition at Bangkokapi Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
1966	Exhibition at Balai Ampang, Kuala Lumpur
1967	Exhibition at National Library Singapore
1968	Exhibition at British Council, Singapore 2 nd price graphic, Honourable Mention in other Media, Salon Malaysia, National art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur Exhibition at Trio Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
1969	Exhibition at Galeri 11, Kuala Lumpur Printmaking, Atelier La Courriere, Paris, France

	French Ministry of Culture Scholarship, Paris
	John D.Rockfeller 3rd Fund Scholarship, New York, USA
	Printmaking, Pratt Graphic Centre, New York, USA
1971	Exhibition at British Council Kuala Lumpur
	1 st Open Air Art exhibition, Taman Jaya, Petaling Jaya
	Exhibition at the Alpha Gallery, Singapore
	Publication of Sungai Mekong (Mekong River)
1972	Literary Award 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, Government of Malaysia.
	Formation of "Anak Alam" (Child of nature)
	Exhibition at Commonwealth Institute Art Gallery, London
1973	Beginning of the Mindscapes series
	Retrospective Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
1974	Kembara Malam (Night Travel)
1976	Beginning of the Langkawi series
1976	Exhibition at the Dewan Tunku Cancellor, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
1977	Exhibition at 215 Jalan MacAlister, Penang
	Creative Fellow, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang
	Publication of Wayang Pak Dalang (Puppeteer's Wayang)
1979	Exhibition at the Library Gallery, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang
	Serpihan Dari Pendalaman (Fragments of Interior)
1980	Exhibition at Dewan Tun Abdul Razak, Universiti Kebangsaan, Bangi
	Guest artist, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi
1981	Publication of Pesisir Waktu (Edge of Time)
1983	Exhibition Wooden Structures & Metal Sculptures, Universiti Kebangsaan, Bangi
	Exhibition at Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur
1984	S.E.A. Write Awards, Bangkok, Thailand
	Literary Award 1982/83
1985	Beginning of the Gelombang Series
1986	Literary Award 1984/85
1988	Exhibition at Maybank Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
	Guest Writer, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur
1989	Exhibition at MAS Building, Kuala Lumpur
1990	Exhibition at Museum Art Gallery, Penang
1992	Publication of Rawa-Rawa (Marshland)
1994	Exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum
1995	Beginning of the Rimba series
1996	Publication of Sajak-sajak Dinihari (midnight Poems).
1998	Exhibition at the Galeri Petronas Kuala Lumpur
2004	Exhibition Garis, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Malaysia.
2007	Voyages, Gallery Petronas, Kuala Lumpur

Annex B

Public Programmes in conjunction with the exhibition

Abstractions in Motion: A bite-sized art talk

Gain insight into the art of one of Malaysia's foremost artist, Latiff Mohidin in this Curatour by Ms Patricia Levasseur de la Motte, Curator of the *Latiff Mohidin: The Journey to Wetlands, and Beyond* exhibition.

Date	Friday, 3 April and 15 May 2009
Venue	SAM Lobby
Time	7:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Fees	Free Admission

Looking at Latiff: A Collector's Perspective

Join collector Yeap Lam Yang in a special walkthrough of the *Latiff Mohidin: The Journey to Wetlands, and Beyond* exhibition where he will share anecdotes about the paintings from his 18 years of friendship with this prolific artist.

Date	Saturday, 11 April 2009
Venue	SAM Lobby
Time	3:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Fees	Free Admission

Annex C

About Singapore Art Museum

Opened in January 1996, the mission of the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is to preserve and present the art histories and contemporary art practices of Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. To date, SAM has amassed the world's largest public collection of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian artworks with a growing component in international contemporary art. The museum has presented shows covering both local and international art practices, traditional and cutting edge art expressions. Through strategic alliances with international arts and cultural institutions, SAM has been facilitating visual arts education, exchange, research and development within the region and internationally. Through forging collaborative partnerships and staging innovative programmes to engage different audiences, SAM aims to contribute to an enlarged role in the regional visual arts community and Asian art museology, as well as facilitating developments in art as well as the art sector in Singapore.

About 8Q sam, the contemporary art wing of Singapore Art Museum

Opened in August 2008, 8Q sam is a contemporary art space with fresh, multi-disciplinary, interactive and community oriented programming; a place where the public can directly experience the work and ideas of living artists, and in relation to its aesthetic and social context. 8Q sam will support experimental art forms and is envisioned to become a crossroad of new ideas and expressions. 8Q sam aspires to engage a broad and diverse audience, create a sense of community and be a place for contemplation, stimulation, and discussion about contemporary art and culture, and serves as a forum especially for the students. Visitors will have the opportunity to experience the diversity of contemporary art practices ranging from painting and sculpture, to installation, film and video, photography, new media, performance art and sound art.