



PRESS RELEASE

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SINGAPORE'S PERANAKAN ARTEFACTS TO BE EXHIBITED AT RENOWNED MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY IN FRANCE

[8 MAY 2009] The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) and Musée du Quai Branly (MQB) will today sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to intensify cultural cooperation and exchanges. Following the cultural agreement inked by France and Singapore on 20 January 2009 and the MOU between Réunion des Musées Nationaux and the National Heritage Board (NHB), the signing of the MOU marks an important milestone in the partnership between the two museums.

The MOU will be signed by Dr Kenson Kwok, Director of ACM and Mr Stéphane Martin, President of MQB. Ms Priscylla Shaw, Chairman of ACM and H. E. Pierre Buhler, Ambassador of France to Singapore will witness the signing. For programme of the MOU signing ceremony, please refer to [Annex A](#).

Said Dr Kwok: "The MOU signifies the commitment and determination of both museums to pave the way for future cooperative activities in arts and culture. Through the signing, we hope to facilitate greater curatorial exchanges such as co-curation of exhibitions and joint research opportunities between both museums. We will also bring internationally renowned exhibitions from MQB to the doorsteps of Singaporeans. Concurrently, our friends in France can experience the Peranakan heritage in 2010/11 and deepen their understanding of Singapore's unique culture."

Exporting Singapore's Cultural Capital

One important objective of the MOU is to bring ACM's Peranakan treasures to France. In 2010/11, ACM will send to MQB a travelling exhibition entitled *Between Multiple Worlds – The Chinese Peranakans of Southeast Asia* for three months. The exhibition will take up a 1500 sq metre gallery space and will gather over 300 artefacts. This is the first time that the MQB, a national museum of France with a world-renowned collection of artefacts from the non-western cultures of the world, is presenting a showcase of Peranakan culture. It is also the first time that the ACM is presenting an exhibition in one of the major museums in Europe.

Featuring some of the Peranakan Museum's iconic artefacts such as a superb beaded tablecloth, a monumental Glided Teak Altar Sideboard converted into a catholic altar, and from recent donations of Peranakan artefacts, the exhibition will be conceptualised and curated by MQB in collaboration with ACM. For details of the Peranakan artefacts, please refer to [Annex B](#).

African Art at the Asian Civilisations Museum

Fans of African art and culture rejoice! In 2011, MQB will loan to ACM an exhibition on African Tribal Art for three months. In collaboration with ACM, MQB will present the exhibition and provide information and materials from their superlative African collection. MQB's collection of African Tribal Art is one of the most important in the world and will open up a new world for Singaporeans to experience.

Both museums will interpret the travelling exhibitions according to the profile and preferences of their audiences and devise cultural and marketing programmes to complement the shows.

For bio of Mr Stéphane Martin, President of Musée du Quai Branly, please refer to [Annex C](#).

About National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) champions the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. It makes heritage enriching, relevant and accessible to all through staging innovative programmes and forging collaborative partnerships with both private and people sector counterparts. NHB leverages on state-of-the-art technology and refreshing new approaches to make heritage more dynamic, alive and exciting for different audiences. It also manages both national and public museums, the National Archives of Singapore, and the Heritage Conservation Centre. NHB was formed on 1 August 1993 as a statutory board under the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA).

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Asian Civilisations Museum - Musée du Quai Branly
Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony

Date: 8 May 2009 (Friday)
Time: 11.30am to 1.30pm
Venue: Ixora Room, Peranakan Museum

PROGRAMME

11.30am Arrival of Media at Ixora Room, Peranakan Museum
12.05pm MOU signing and photo-opportunity with Ms Priscylla Shaw, H. E. Pierre Buhler, Mr Michael Koh, Dr Kenson Kwok and Mr Stéphane Martin
12.10pm Briefing and media Q&A by Mr Michael Koh, Dr Kenson Kwok and Mr Stéphane Martin
12.30pm Briefing ends. Media proceeds for reception
1.30pm End of Briefing

**Highlights of Singapore's Peranakan Artefacts
travelling to Musée du Quai Branly**

Artefacts	Descriptions
	<p>Beadwork Tablecloth Penang Early 20th century Glass beads, cotton 126 x 118 cm 2006-01927</p> <p>This tablecloth is one of the largest known pieces of Peranakan beadwork. It is believed that such sizeable pieces were specially commissioned from professional Chinese beadworkers, most of whom were men.</p> <p>With its auspicious colours and motifs, this tablecloth was most likely used on a <i>choon tok</i> or 'spring table' in the wedding chamber. During the period of the traditional 12-day Peranakan wedding, the <i>choon tok</i> would often be decorated with the family's collection of fine silver or porcelain, and laden with ceremonial sweets, desserts, coffee and tea which the bride and bridegroom would feed each other.</p>
	<p>Gilded Teak Altar Sideboard Singapore Early 20th century Gilded Teak 332.5 x 186 x 71.5 cm Purchased with funds from Friends of ACM through Gala Dinner, 2005 2005-01479</p> <p>This sideboard was adapted for use as a domestic altar by a Peranakan Chinese family when they converted from Daoism and ancestor worship to Catholicism. Here, Daoist deities like the stellar gods of happiness, wealth and longevity (Hock, Lock and Siew) and auspicious creatures, are juxtaposed against a central Catholic devotional image of the Holy Family. The devotional image is signed 'A Wong' and "...28" which may refer to the date 1928, thus giving a possible indication of when the family converted to Catholicism.</p> <p>This is one of only a few known surviving altar sideboards and is probably one of the largest in gilded teak.</p>



Lime green ground *kamcheng* with turquoise panels
Early Republican period (1911-1930)
China

Donated by Mr & Mrs Tan Eng Sian

Kamcheng comes in a variety of sizes from as little as four centimetres wide to as large forty. The larger examples like this one usually served as a sort of serving tureen for use on special occasions such as birthdays or weddings. However, while Peranakan porcelain was made in China it was decorated specifically to their tastes. Bright, pastel colours and phoenix and peony motifs predominate.



Pink ground platter with insect and fruit motifs
Guangxu period (1875-1908)
China

Donated by Mr & Mrs Tan Eng Sian

This platter is one of a pair used for special occasions for the serving of food. During weddings, symbolic food dishes like *nasi lemak*, fragrant rice cooked in coconut milk will be served on such plates to celebrate the union of two families. Platters of this size are very rare and were commissioned by wealthy Peranakan families. They feature motifs of butterflies, crane, Buddha-finger citron, pomegranates, insects and the eight Buddhist emblems, motifs that Peranakans favoured for use on their specially commissioned porcelain that collectors call *Nonyaware*.



Kerosang Serong
Late 19th to early 20th century
Penang

This *kerosang serong* consists of a relatively large heart-shaped brooch matched by two circular ones. The word '*serong*' is a Malay word that means 'oblique' or 'tilted to one side'. This probably refers to the *kerosang ibu* (*ibu serong*) or heart-shaped mother brooch being tilted to one side. *Kerosangs* are sets of three brooches that are used to fasten the garments of Peranakan Chinese women or *Nonyas*, as they are known locally. This *kerosang serong* is set in gold and rough-cut Kalimantan diamonds or *intans*, as they are known locally.

Bio of Mr Stéphane Martin



Born in 1956, Mr Stéphane Martin, President of Musée du Quai Branly was a former pupil of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration and Magistrate at the Revenue Court. He has an illustrious career that includes presiding over the commission for verification of accounts and monitoring of public establishments including the Republic of Sénégal, from 1986 to 1989. He was the Director of the Centre Georges-Pompidou from 1989 to 1990 and Assistant Director of music at Radio France. He also held various positions in Jacques Toubon's Ministry of Culture and Francophonie including the Departmental Staff Director under M. Philippe Douste-Blazy in the Ministry of Culture from 1995 to 1997. From 1997 to 1998, he was the Director of the Grimaldi Forum, a cultural complex and conference centre in Monaco. Concurrently, he was also the Vice-President of the association of the Musée de l'Homme, des Arts et des Civilisations. In late 1997, he became the President of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, a chamber orchestra specialising in contemporary classical music.

Other honours in Mr Martin's illustrious career include the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, Commander in the Order of Arts and Letters, Commander of the Orders of the Lion and Merit in Senegal and Officer of the Order of Merit.

On 30 December 1998, Mr Martin was appointed the President-Director General of the public establishment of the Musée du Quai Branly, by the President of the Republic's decree. His presidential post at the public establishment of the Musée du Quai Branly was renewed by the President of the Republic's decree of 28 November 2003.

As from 2008, Mr Martin is also the Chairman of ASEMUS - ASia Europe Network of Museums - under The Asia-Europe Foundation.