



**National
Heritage
Board**



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Overseas visitors impressed with Singapore's museums.

Total overseas visitors to national museums near one million mark.

SINGAPORE, 16 September 2009 – In an inaugural survey conducted by the National Heritage Board (NHB) and the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) on visitor demographics and perceptions of selected institutions under the Museum Roundtable (MR) – a grouping of over 50 local museums in Singapore – seven out of 10 respondents said they were impressed with the wide range of museums here. Museum-goers were also delighted with the high curatorial standards, which they said were comparable to top museums overseas.

This survey revealed that 37 percent of museum-goers were from overseas. With increased efforts in international publicity by the STB in the coming years, local museums are set to welcome even more overseas visitors. It was found that some two-thirds of the tourists polled between February and September 2008 said they would give museums a go if they were given sufficient information to include them as part of their itinerary before arriving in Singapore.

The survey found that 11 percent of overseas visitors are repeat museum-goers. Of the tourists, Britons constituted the bulk of museum visitors followed by Australians, Americans, Indians and Filipinos. Most were aged 25 years and above and 59 percent of the tourists were women.

Said Ms Jeannie Lim, Director of Attractions at the Singapore Tourism Board: "Museums mirror the growth of our city and present to the world various perspectives of the Singapore Story. The number of overseas visitors to museums has shown an encouraging increase over the past years. Of the ten million tourists who came to Singapore last year, close to one million visited our national museums.

This year, special promotions such as The Great Singapore Pass™ and the NHB Three-Day Museum Pass, have increased awareness and made museums even more accessible to tourists and locals."

In 2008, over 6.5 million people visited the museums here – a 26 percent jump from the year before. Singapore showcases a diversity of museums, each with a focus ranging from arts and culture to science and healthcare. The iconic National Museum of Singapore topped the list of the most visited museum here with 871,800 visitors in 2008. The other four most visited museums according to figures from MR members were the National Library Gallery, Asian Civilisations Museum, Images of Singapore and

Singapore Art Museum. Some boutique museums also made the top 20 list including The Changi Museum, dedicated to the brave soldiers who fought in Singapore during World War II, and The MINT Museum of Toys, the world's first purpose-built toy museum. American resident, Ms Sandra Simmons summed up the views of many tourists when she said: "I love the museums in Singapore. I was surprised by their range and the depth of focus. It was a simply lovely experience."

NHB has positioned museums in Singapore as a cultural gateway to Asia with unique regional perspective of the region's diverse cultures. NHB's CEO Michael Koh said that annual ASEAN-themed celebrations held here, such as the Vietnam Festival in 2008 and Philippines Fiesta this year are aimed at widening the outlook of museum-goers and offer a taste of different cultures and experiences across Asia.

As part of NHB's efforts to showcase world class exhibitions here and to stage Singapore-curated shows overseas, the Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Réunion des Musées Nationaux in Paris in January 2009 – intensifying cultural cooperation and exchanges between the two countries.

In 2010/11, Asian Civilisations Museum's Peranakan treasures will be on show in France in a traveling exhibition entitled *Between Multiple Worlds – The Chinese Peranakans of Southeast Asia*. This is the first time, Musée du quai Branly, a national museum of France with a world-renowned collection of artefacts from the non-western cultures of the world, is presenting such a showcase of the Peranakan culture.

"We believe that our museums have attained a certain level of reputation in terms of quality." said Mr Koh, "A prime example is the recent donation by Chinese artist Wu Guanzhong to the Singapore Art Museum. Worth \$73.7 million, this was the biggest donation our museums have received. Deciding to entrust his art works with our museums shows his faith in our dedication to preserve his collection for generations to come and to showcase it to the world."

Ms Alissandra Cummins, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) during her recent visit to Singapore, had the opportunity to visit a number of museums here and remarked: "I am positively impressed by the high quality, intriguing and accessible content and professional design of Singapore's museum galleries. The exhibits I encountered during my trip have more than met international standards of practice."

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Please refer to the annexes attached for more information:

ANNEX A – List of Top 20 most visited museums and galleries in Singapore

ANNEX B – A look at the NHB-STB survey results

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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).

About the Museum Roundtable

The Museum Roundtable (MR) was formed in 1996 to bring museums and heritage galleries closer to the public. Chaired by the National Heritage Board, it seeks to develop a stronger museum-going culture amongst Singaporeans and tourists. Key activities include organising of major museum-going festivals, joint marketing of activities, sharing of knowledge, and improving professional standards. Currently, the MR has 52 members covering a wide range of themes and topics – from art, culture, history, World War II, science, urban planning, healthcare, to security and defence.

About the Singapore Tourism Board

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is a leading economic development agency in tourism, one of Singapore's key service sectors. Known for partnership, innovation and excellence, the mission of the Board is to champion tourism and build it into a key economic driver for Singapore. STB aims to differentiate and market Singapore as a must-visit destination offering enriching experiences through the "Uniquely Singapore" brand.

ANNEX A

TOP 20 MOST VISITED MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES IN SINGAPORE		
No	Museum/ Gallery	Jan - Dec 2008*
1	National Museum of Singapore	871,800
2	National Library Gallery***	761,500
3	Asian Civilisations Museum	697,800
4	Images of Singapore	506,600
5	Singapore Art Museum	489,600
6	Chinatown Heritage Centre	262,500
7	Singapore City Gallery	212,500
8	Peranakan Museum **	171,900
9	Marina Barrage **	161,800
10	NEWater Visitor Centre	110,000
11	Singapore Philatelic Museum	95,300
12	8Q sam **	88,300
13	Reflections at Bukit Chandu	85,200
14	Fort Siloso	77,200
15	NUS Museum	74,600
16	The Changi Museum	71,600
17	Civil Defence Heritage Gallery	45,600
18	The Battle Box	32,300
19	MINT Museum of Toys	30,000
20	Malay Heritage Centre	27,600

* Figures have been rounded up

** Opened within 2008

*** Includes temporary exhibitions within the National Library

ANNEX B

Total visitorship to national museums in FY2008:

2.5 million

National museums in Singapore:

- Asian Civilisations Museum
- Memories at Old Ford Factory
- National Museum of Singapore
- Peranakan Museum
- Reflections at Bukit Chandu
- Singapore Art Museum
- Singapore Philatelic Museum

Total Museum Roundtable Visitorship

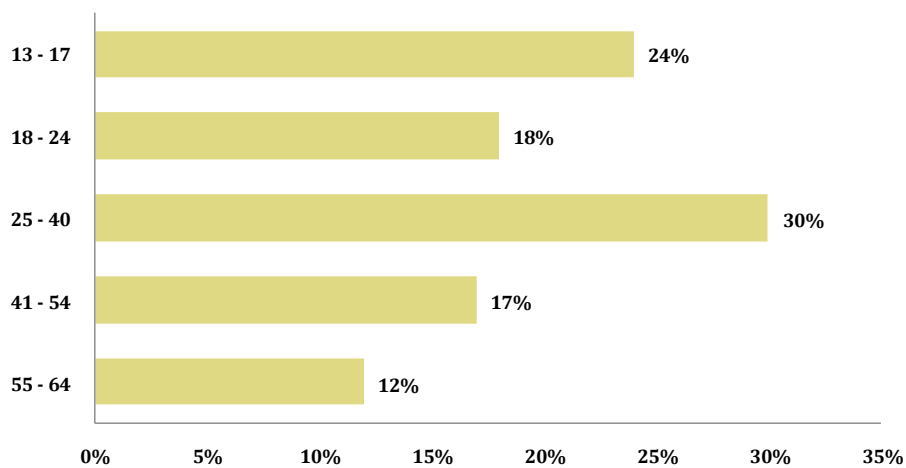
FY 2008 : 6,584,327

FY 2007 : 5,207,340

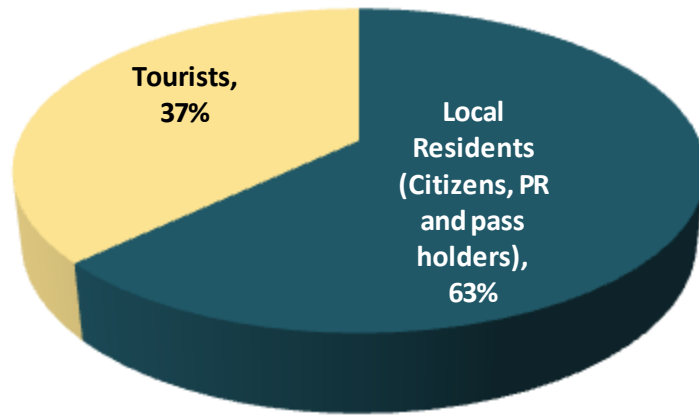
Percentage Increase : 26.4%

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VISITORS

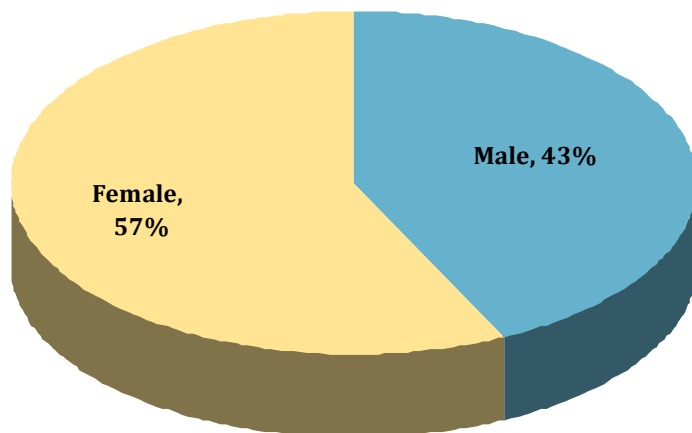
Age



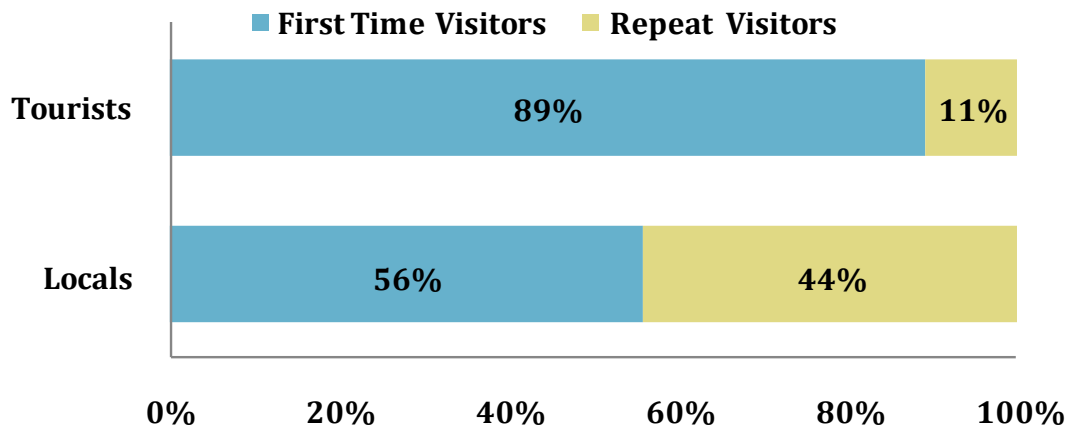
Visitors to museums



Gender

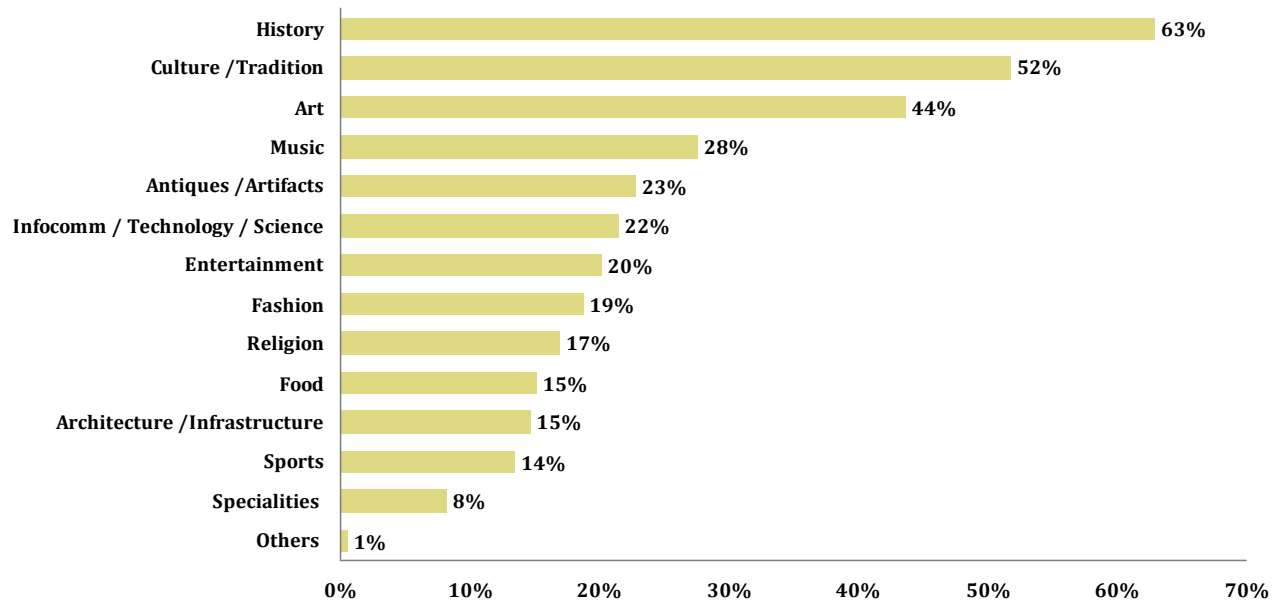


First time vs Repeated Visitors

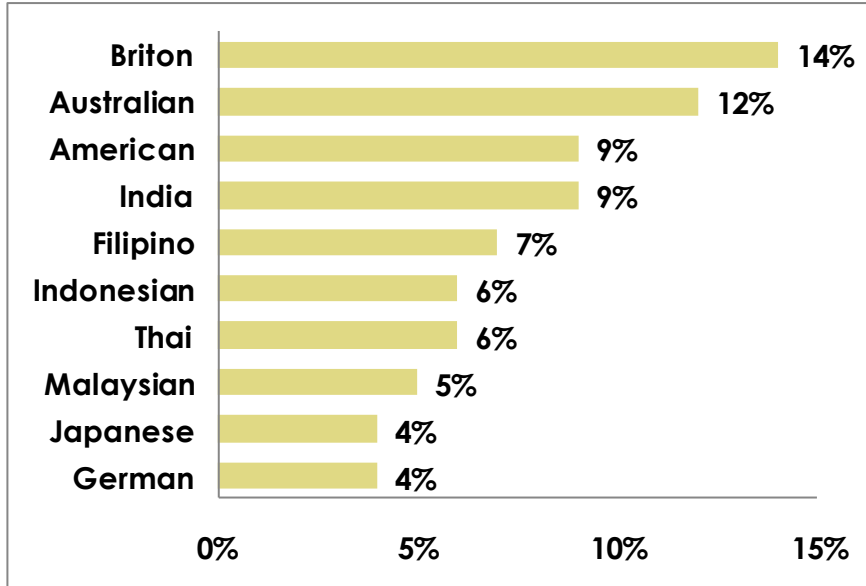


PSYCHOGRAPHICS

What people look for in the museums



MUSEUM TOURISTS BY NATIONALITIES



TOURIST PERCEPTIONS

- 75% of tourists felt that Singapore's museums are on par, if not better than overseas museums

REASONS WHY TOURISTS DO NOT VISIT LOCAL MUSEUMS

- Insufficient time to visit the museums (21%)
- Insufficient information about Singapore museums (64%)