



National Gallery's Fan Chang Tien show brings 80 works by the 'Gardener' of Singapore ink to 31 January

Description

[National Gallery Singapore](#) has opened Fan Chang Tien: Rhythm of the Southern Brush, the first major exhibition to take in the whole life of the ink master many Singapore painters knew as the 'Gardener'. It runs in the Wu Guanzhong Gallery until 31 January 2027, with more than 80 works and archival materials across painting, calligraphy, poetry and seals.



The scholar-artist room has a seal stamp station with motifs from Fanâ??s paintings. Photo: National Gallery Singapore

From Shanghai to Singapore

Fan trained at Shanghai's leading art schools in the 1920s under Zhu Wenyun and Wang Geyi, both disciples of Wu Changshuo of the Shanghai School. He spent years in Bangkok before he settled in Singapore in 1956. The "Southern Brush" of the title is that move south, and the ideas that travelled with him.

Five sections

Moving South opens the show with his training and early recognition. Nurturing the Self turns to bamboo, his favourite subject, a plant tied to the Confucian virtues of integrity, humility and resilience, with his own inscriptions beside the works.

Rejoicing in the Everyday is the Singapore room. Mynahs, sparrows and ducks sit among palm trees and tropical green, along with rare scenes of kampong life. Wandering through Nature gathers his shanshui paintings of mountains and water, and the poems of rain, seasons and running water that go with them.

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The Gathering of Poets, 1971, Chinese ink and colour on paper. Private collection. Photo: National Gallery Singapore

Tending the Garden closes the exhibition with his teaching. It hangs work by his students, including Cultural Medallion recipient Nai Swee Leng, with video interviews of Nai and Tan Oe Pang. Ling Cher

Eng, Chen KeZhan and Chua Ek Kay also trained under him.

The scholar-artist room

A dedicated room recreates the world of the literati. It has a stamp station where visitors build their own composition from seals based on motifs in Fanâ??s paintings, among them mynahs, ducks, cockerels and a coffee flask, and take the print home.

Tickets

Entry needs a General Admission pass, which is free for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents. For other visitors, the same ticket also covers Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art, Lai Foong Moi: Crossings and Art Remembers, and it stays valid for 180 days from purchase. Children aged 7 to 12, seniors aged 60 and above, full-time national servicemen and overseas students and teachers get S\$5 off.

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