

Malay Heritage Centre: free admission, wayang kulit, name-writing in Jawi and the resident cats

Description

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The revamped Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) in the former Istana Kampong Gelam is free for Singapore Citizens and permanent residents from Tuesday to Sunday. If you are planning a visit, the team behind the centre has shared its own list of the best things to do, from hands-on wayang kulit to writing your name in traditional scripts and meeting the resident cats.



The revamped Malay Heritage Centre sits in the former Istana Kampong Gelam. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

Five galleries from region to home

The Malay Heritage Centreâ??s permanent galleries run on five themes and trace centuries of movement and trade across the Malay Archipelago. They move from traditions and stories to the identities Malay Singaporeans carry today, so the visit works as a primer on what it means to be Malay in Singapore.

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The five thematic galleries trace centuries of movement and trade across the Malay Archipelago. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

A heritage playground for all ages

MHC says heritage here is hands-on. Interactive stations across the galleries let you stage your own wayang kulit drama, collect batik stamps or challenge friends to a game of congkak. For families, there are two educational booklets and an activity sheet to keep younger visitors engaged.

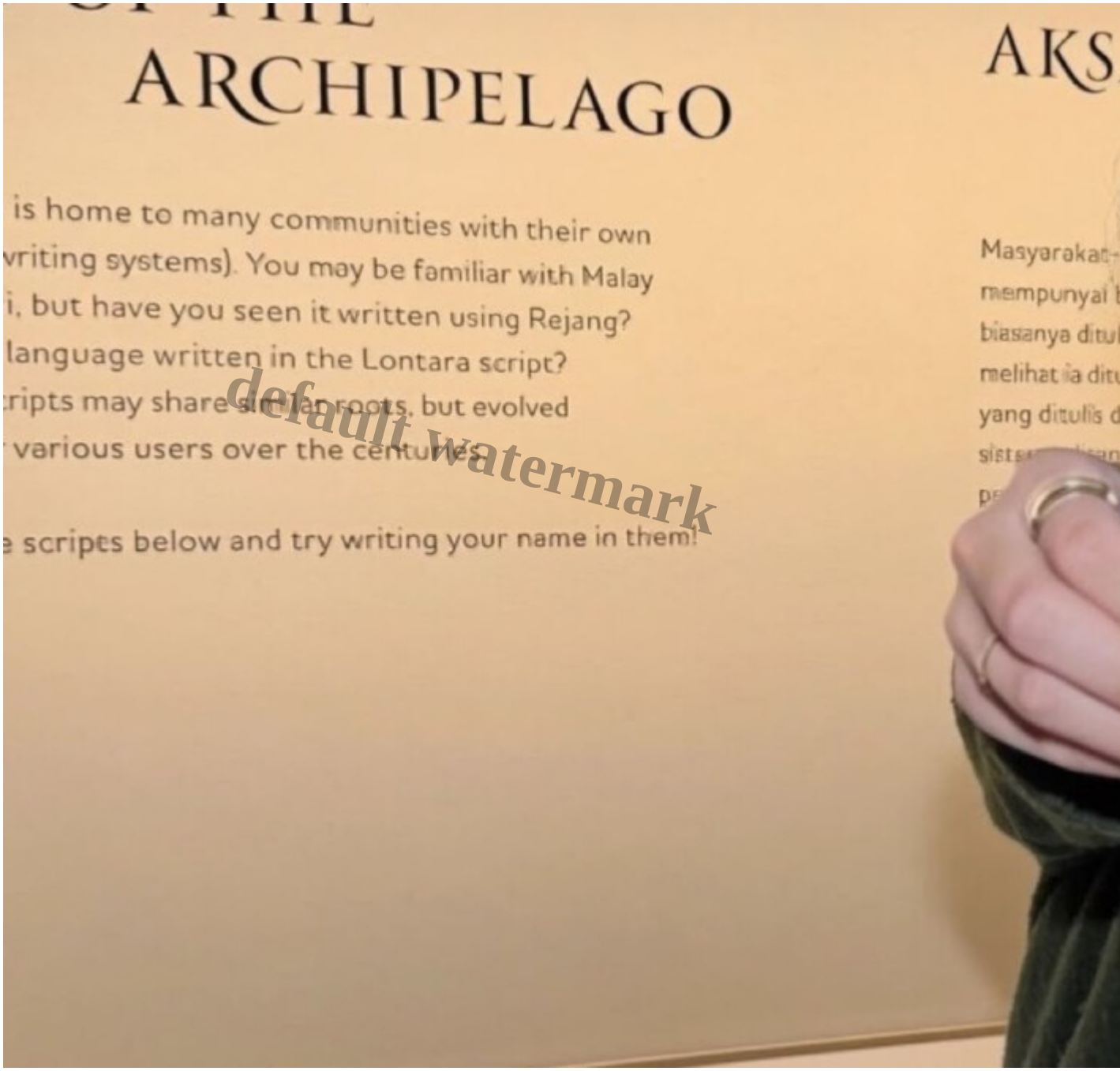
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Stage your own wayang kulit drama at one of the interactive stations. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

Write your name in Jawi, Lontara or Rejang

One station explores how people wrote across Southeast Asia before modern scripts took over. You can decode the roots of the traditional writing systems, try writing your own name in Jawi, Lontara or Rejang, and print it out as a personalised keepsake.



Try writing your name in Jawi, Lontara or Rejang and print it as a keepsake. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

Art that extends the story

Five commissioned artworks are placed around the galleries to extend the centreâ??s narratives. They range from a dressing room that explores scripts and letters to a machine disguised as a piano that lets you encrypt a message.



One commissioned artwork disguises a message-encrypting machine as a piano. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

Photo spots and the resident cats

The historic grounds of the former Malay palace offer plenty of backdrops, from the side courtyards to the front facade, and pockets of greenery that suit a casual photo walk. MHC also points visitors to its unofficial ambassadors, the resident cats named Oreo, Black Truffles and White Truffles. They are well fed by the team, so there is no need to bring snacks, and White Truffles is a little jumpy, so approach with care.


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The front facade is one of the suggested photo spots. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

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One of the resident cats of the Malay Heritage Centre. Image: Malay Heritage Centre

Plan your visit

- Free admission for Singapore Citizens and PRs from Tuesday to Sunday; galleries are closed on Mondays.
- Free guided tours of the galleries run daily.
- More details are on the Malay Heritage Centre website.

Making a day of it? See our guides to the free primary school exhibition at SAM and Money Town at the Childrenâ??s Museum Singapore, or browse our things to do this weekend.

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Author
priya

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