SAMâ??s HOYA temple tours seven public libraries from Jurong

Description

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Singapore Art Museum has moved a new installation out of the gallery and into seven public libraries, beginning at Jurong Library. Proposal for HOYA: 5 Lungs Temple by Yussef Agbo-Ola opened on 28 October and stays at Jurong until 13 December, the first stop on a tour that ends at Jurong West Library on 3 October 2027. Admission is free at every venue.

The work is built around a flower. Hoya wallichii is extinct in Singapore, and the installation takes the plantâ??s microscopic structure and enlarges it into knitted forms visitors can walk between. The linen and yarn come from deep-sea plastic waste. The museum describes the library tour as the first of its kind in Southeast Asia, and this is the first time the work has been shown in Singapore.

The installation sits among the shelves at Jurong Library until 13 December 2026. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

A flower that has gone

The Hoya carries associations with fertility and harmony, which is part of why a plant that no longer grows here can hold a room. Agbo-Ola came to it through his own background: he is of Nigerian heritage and draws on Yoruba and Cherokee traditions, where weaving sits close to identity and family history. His practice is framed as medicinal architecture, and the towers read as a structure you enter rather than an object you look at.

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Detail view of the knitted panels inside one of the towers. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

From Jurong to Jurong West

The installation moves through seven branches in sequence, ending where it started in the west of the island. Jurong Library has the work from 28 October to 13 December 2026. Central Library at the National Library Building takes it from 16 December 2026 to 31 January 2027, then Bedok Library from 3 February to 21 March 2027, Bishan Library from 24 March to 9 May 2027, Woodlands Library from 12 May to 27 June 2027, Tampines Library from 30 June to 15 August 2027, and Jurong West Library from 18 August to 3 October 2027.

It is presented in collaboration with the National Library Board, so the work sits among the shelves during ordinary library opening hours rather than in a gallery.

What visitors can touch

The tactile table is the part that asks something of the visitor. Weaving samples sit out for handling, fabric can be touched, and a colouring station invites people to fill in sheets drawn from the flowerâ??s stem cells. Visitors who hand in a completed sheet can take a coaster printed with facts about the flower. In later iterations Agbo-Ola wants to gather the drawings into an animation, and each finished sheet is kept for that purpose.

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Visitors handling the textile pieces at the tactile table. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

The show behind the show

The installation runs alongside Lost & Found: How We Remember, which opens at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark on 27 November 2026 and runs to 18 April 2027. That exhibition looks at how artists give form to stories that are lesser known or unseen, and SAM links the two through materials and through the act of remembering something that has disappeared.

Fang-Tze Hsu, SAMâ??s curator and head of interpretation and publishing, frames the library tour as turning public libraries into somewhere to stop and look. The artistâ??s own reading is quieter: he treats the work as an offering, and every coloured sheet as a small addition to it.

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The colouring station at Jurong Library. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Jurong Library has the installation until 13 December, and the colouring sheets are out for the length of the stay.

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