



Singapore Pavilion At Venice Biennale 2026: Amanda Heng's *A Pause* Opens 9 May

Description

Singapore returns to **La Biennale di Venezia** for the 12th time with *A Pause* — a quietly radical exhibition by Singaporean artist **Amanda Heng Liang Ngim** that opens to the public from **9 May to 22 November 2026**. The Singapore Pavilion at the historic Sale d'Armi has been transformed into a space for rest and observation, an architectural gesture aimed at people who, frankly, do not pause enough.

Curated by **Selene Yap**, commissioned by the National Arts Council, supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and organised by Singapore Art Museum (SAM), *A Pause* brings together photographs, video and an architectural intervention centred on ordinary actions — sitting, waiting, watching. The official inauguration was on Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at 11.30am, on the first floor of the Arsenale's Sale d'Armi.

Who is Amanda Heng?



Singapore Pavilion artist Amanda Heng Liang Ngim. Image: Singapore Art Museum

For Singaporean readers who came of age in the 1990s and 2000s contemporary art scene, Amanda Heng's work is foundational. Her four-decade practice is built on sustained attention to the body, everyday gestures, and unscripted social encounter. *A Pause* reflects a shift from the charged

immediacy of her early public performances — the iconic *Let's Walk* (2000) where members of the public walked backwards with shoes between their teeth — to a quieter, more interior mode of attention.

The architectural intervention: larch, light, lying down

The Singapore Pavilion has been reconfigured with **larch wood** — the same timber historically used for the Arsenal's floorboards and Venice's foundations — so the intervention reads as an extension of the building rather than an insertion into it. Stepped platforms ranging in width are angled to follow the building's walls, rising through the space and ending at the windowsills, transforming windows into doorways. Visitors can lean, sit, or lie down, deciding where to pause and how long to stay.

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Amanda Heng Liang Ngim, *A Pause* (2025). Image courtesy of the artist.

The centrepiece is a new dual-channel video, also titled *A Pause* (2025), filmed in both Venice and Singapore. The work follows people in moments of everyday activity: watering plants, preparing breakfast, walking, looking up at the sky. Heng herself appears in Singapore alongside Venetian residents in their homes and neighbourhoods. Filmed in real time with long, static shots and available light, it observes how daily tasks themselves become forms of pause and renewal.

Looking back: *Parts of My Body*, reprinted



Amanda Heng Liang Ngim, "Let's Walk" (2000). Courtesy of the artist and National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive.

Alongside the new commission, the exhibition presents *Parts of My Body* (1990, reprinted 2026) a series of close-up photographs of Heng's body: an elbow, the curve of a shoulder, the deep of a back, the hollow of a clavicle. Direct and unadorned, the images isolate fragments, transforming the body into

landscape. First made in 1990 when the artist was in her thirties, the photographs have been reprinted at a larger scale for Venice and lean against the pavilion walls.



Amanda Heng Liang Ngim, 'Let's Chat' (1996). Courtesy of the artist and National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive.

Hengâ??s full curatorial range is also captured in *Amanda Heng: On and On*, the first comprehensive monograph on her art and practice. Conceived and produced by Sydney-based Stolon Press and pavilion curator Selene Yap, and co-published with SAM, the book gathers nearly forty years of work. Essays by architectural theorist Lilian Chee, writer and critic Lee Weng Choy, curator Anca Rujoiu, anthropologist Souchou Yao and Yap each open different aspects of Hengâ??s practice in Singapore.

What the team is saying

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Singapore Pavilion curator Selene Yap. Image: Singapore Art Museum

Heng frames the work as a quiet invitation: *“A Pause transforms the Pavilion into a quiet and open space for a rest, inviting visitors to find their own way of slowing down, to spend time and be present. There are no rules or instructions.”*•

Curator Selene Yap describes the practice as one of small gestures at full scale: “Amanda Heng’s work grounds itself in the everyday – how we move, pause, and sustain ourselves through small gestures. This presentation shows that practice at full scale, transforming the pavilion into a space where visitors complete the work simply by being present.”

SAM’s CEO and Director Eugene Tan, who co-chairs the Commissioning Panel, added: “Amanda Heng has been foundational to Singapore’s contemporary art landscape for nearly four decades. Presenting her work at Venice affirms our commitment to artists whose practices are built through sustained inquiry and deep engagement with local conditions.”

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Amanda Heng Liang Ngim, *Walk with Amanda* (2000). Courtesy of the artist and National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive.

When Singapore can see *A Pause* at home

Heading to Venice this summer? *A Pause* runs from **9 May to 22 November 2026** at the Arsenale's Sale d'Armi. For everyone else, the exhibition will travel to Singapore in **January 2027**, where it will be reimagined for a second iteration at **SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark**.

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