



Standard Chartered backs SAM's first major Hiroshi Sugimoto survey in Southeast Asia

Description

Standard Chartered has announced its first sponsorship in arts and culture, coming on board as Principal Supporter of **Hiroshi Sugimoto: Form Is Emptiness** at Singapore Art Museum (SAM). The exhibition, on view at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark until 11 October 2026, is the internationally acclaimed artist's first major survey exhibition in Southeast Asia.



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Accelerated Buddha*, 1997-2017. Image courtesy of the artist and Singapore Art Museum

The partnership marks a new direction for the bank, which has built its sponsorship portfolio mainly around sport through ties with Liverpool Football Club, Formula 1 and marathon events. Patrick Lee, CEO Singapore and CEO ASEAN and South Asia at Standard Chartered, said partnerships across the public and private sectors play an important role in sustaining a thriving arts industry, and that the bank was pleased to help bring Sugimoto's work to a wider audience.

Fifty years of work across photography, sculpture and installation

Bringing together 63 works from 11 series, alongside 14 fossils from the artist's own collection, *Form Is Emptiness* traces five decades of Sugimoto's practice. Though best known for his photography, his output spans sculpture, installation, writing, architecture and calligraphy, all treated as extensions of

the same photographic thinking about time, space and perception.



Image courtesy of the artist and Singapore Art Museum

The exhibition title borrows a line from the Heart Sutra, a foundational Buddhist text, and the idea runs through a wall-sized calligraphy installation of the sutra’s characters that visitors walk alongside as they move through the galleries.

A mandala-shaped route through the show

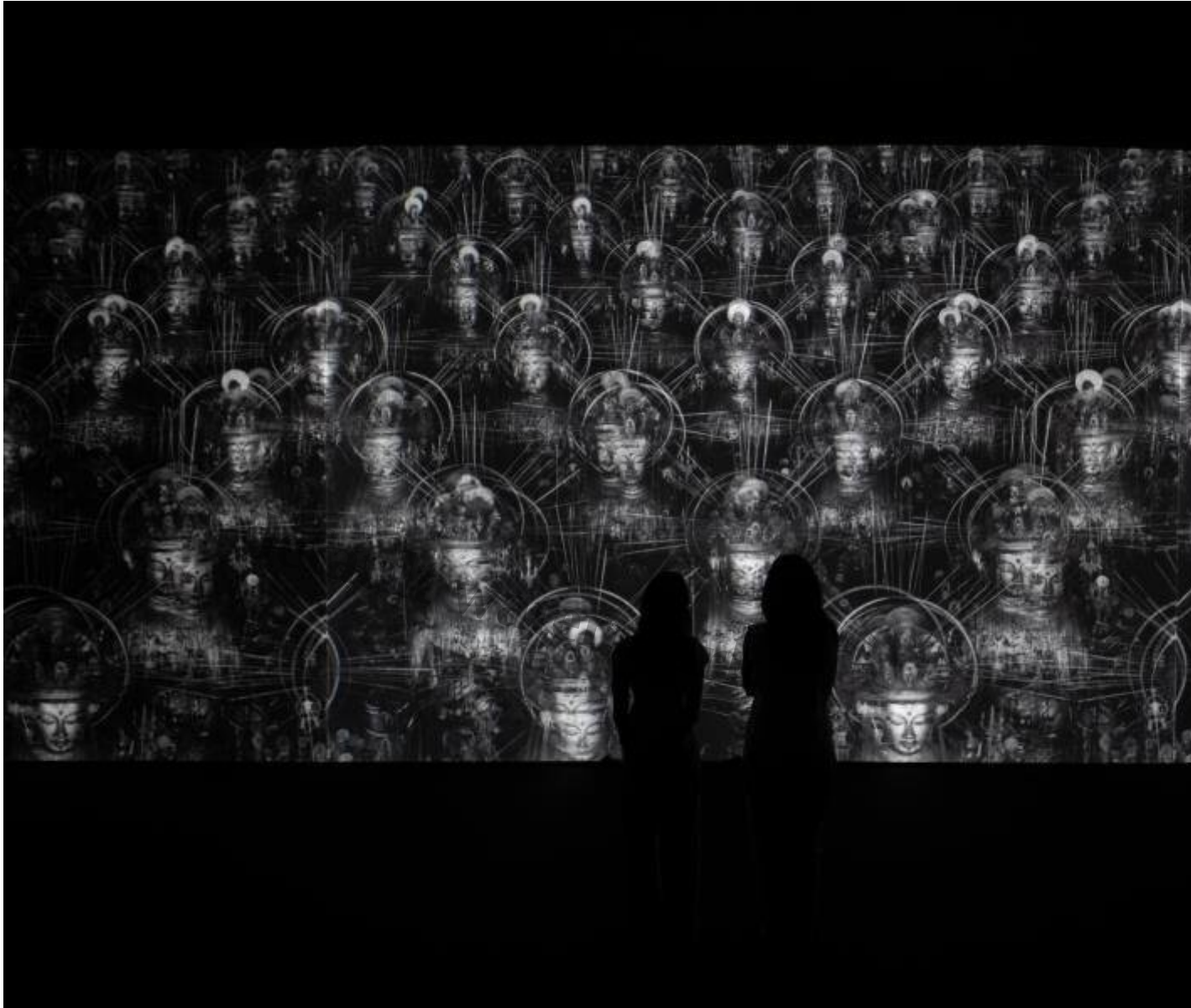
Designed by Sugimoto himself, the exhibition layout takes the form of a mandala, the circular geometric figure that represents the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism. Rather than a single linear route, paths branch, loop and reconnect, so visitors are free to move through the show at their own pace and in their own sequence.



Hiroshi Sugimoto, Brush Impression, Heart Sutra. Image courtesy of the artist and Singapore Art Museum

Among the installations is Spacescape, a series of illuminated panels showing the curve of the Earth against deep space, alongside benches that invite visitors to sit and take in the scale of the work. Eugene Tan, CEO and Director of SAM, said the museum was pleased to have Standard Chartered as Principal Supporter of a show that brings together five decades of Sugimoto's practice and deepens public engagement with contemporary art.

Sugimoto was born in Tokyo in 1948 and splits his time between Tokyo and New York. In 2008 he founded the New Material Research Laboratory, and in 2009 established the Odawara Art Foundation, a nonprofit that promotes traditional Japanese culture and performing arts.



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Spacescape*, 2024. Image courtesy of the artist and Singapore Art Museum

Hiroshi Sugimoto: Form Is Emptiness is on at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark until 11 October 2026. It joins other exhibitions on at SAM this season, including [SAMCollection: The Present is Unstable](#), while over at the Asian Civilisations Museum, [ACM Adventures: Patterns & Prints](#) offers a family-friendly programme for younger visitors.

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