

National Library Building
100 Victoria Street
Singapore 188064

Operating Hours
Monday to Sunday
10.00am – 9.00pm
(except public holidays)

On Paper

Singapore
Before 1867

About the Exhibition

On Paper: Singapore Before 1867 features over 150 paper-based artefacts that tell the story of Singapore's early history - from a 17th-century Portuguese navigational chart that points to the existence of a Shahbandar (harbour master) on Singapore island to the key document that established

the Straits Settlements as a Crown Colony of Britain on 1 April 1867. Through carefully preserved records from the collections of the National Library, National Archives of Singapore and overseas institutions, **On Paper** presents a rare treat to all who are interested in our nation's past.

28 Sep 2019 –
22 Mar 2020

Level 10, Gallery
National Library Building

The information stated in this brochure is correct at the time of printing. The National Library, Singapore reserves the right to make changes to the programmes without prior notice.

Courtesy of Maritime Museum Rotterdam

Exhibition Highlights



Scribal copy of 1819 Treaty of Friendship and Alliance (also known as the Treaty of Singapore)
Copy made in 1827
Collection of National Archives of Singapore SSR A33

This handwritten copy of the 1819 Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed on 6 February 1819 between Stamford Raffles, representing the British East India Company (EIC), and Singapore's Malay rulers, Sultan Husain and Temenggung Abdul Rahman.

The treaty granted the EIC the exclusive right to lease a plot of land to set up a "British factory". Following the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824, a new treaty was signed between the EIC and Singapore's Malay rulers that ceded full sovereignty of the island to the EIC.



The Bute Map, c. 1820
Courtesy of The Bute Archive at Mount Stuart

Known as the Bute Map, this earliest known landward map of Singapore was likely commissioned within the first year of the establishment of a British trading post in Singapore. It provides a remarkable view of the early development of the settlement.



The River from Monkey Bridge, 1842-43
Charles Dyce
Courtesy of NUS Museum Collection

Charles Dyce was a Scottish merchant who lived in Singapore between 1842 and 1847. During his short stint on the island, he was an active member of the community, appointed to positions such as the First Secretary of the Singapore Sporting Club, and the Sheriff for the Settlements of Singapore, Melaka and Penang.

Dyce was also an avid painter who produced many sepia and watercolour paintings of Singapore and the region, providing us with breathtaking views of early Singapore.



Contrafactur des Scharmutz als der Hollander wider die Portugesen in dem Flus Batusabar..., 1607
Johann Theodor and Johann Israel de Bry
Collection of National Library, Singapore

This map presents a schematic depiction of a series of battles that took place in the Johor River and the Singapore Straits in the opening days of October 1603.

It portrays the first major confrontation between the Portuguese and the Dutch for control over the Singapore Straits region and is one of the earliest depictions of Singapore's eastern shoreline.



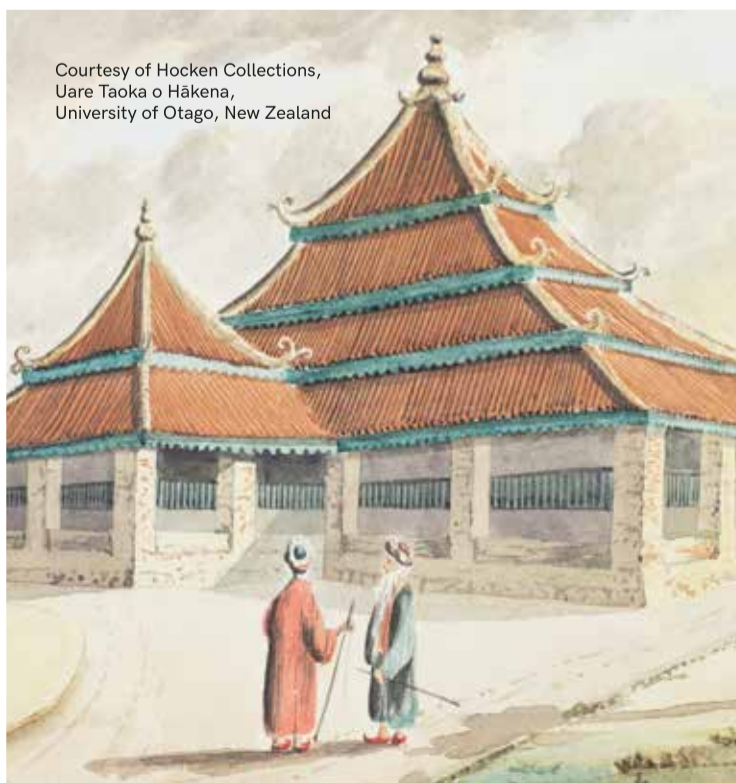
Chart Featuring the Melaka and Singapore Straits, c. 1654
André Pereira dos Reis
Courtesy of Maritime Museum Rotterdam

This is a hand-drawn chart of the southern part of the Malay Peninsula depicting the Singapore Straits. It is ascribed to the Portuguese cartographer André Pereira dos Reis. A place called Xebandaria (Shahbandaria) - a harbour master's compound - is marked out on the island of Singapore. This place name confirms the presence of a port in 17th century Singapore prior to the arrival of the British.

Collection of National Library of Indonesia



Courtesy of Hocken Collections,
Uare Taoka o Hākena,
University of Otago, New Zealand



Collection of National Library, Singapore



Guided Tours

Join our curator- or docent-led tours and discover fascinating stories from Singapore's rich history.

Curator's Tours

17 Oct 2019 | [Special] Behind-the-Scenes:
A Curator's Perspective
Time: 7.00pm - 8.00pm

19 Nov 2019 | 23 Jan, 20 Feb, 19 Mar 2020
Time: 7.00pm - 8.00pm

Meeting point: Level 10, Gallery entrance

Free admission. Tours will be conducted in English.
Register at www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary

Public Tours

English | 2.00pm - 3.00pm

周末导览

华语讲解 | 下午3时至4时

Meeting point: Level 10, Gallery entrance
集合地点: 于国家图书馆大厦10楼展厅门口

Led by docents. Free admission. First-come, first-served basis.
由义务导览员带领。入场免费, 人数有限, 先到先得。

2019	12, 13, 19, 20 & 26 Oct 10月 19/20/26日
	2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 & 30 Nov 11月 2/3/9/10/16/17/23/24/30日
	1, 7, 8, 14 & 15 Dec 12月 1/7/8/14/15日
2020	4, 5, 11, 12, 18 & 19 Jan 1月 4/5/11/12/18/19日
	8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23 & 29 Feb 2月 8/9/15/16/22/23/29日
	1, 7, 8, 14 & 15 Mar 3月 1/7/8/14/15日

Private Tours

Interested schools or organisations can email visitnls@nlb.gov.sg for more details on private tours.
Book early to secure a tour slot!

Programmes



The Orang Laut in the Realm of the Straits (Negara Selat)

28 Sep 2019 | 5.00pm - 6.00pm
Level 5, Possibility Room

With their intimate knowledge of the seas, proficiency in navigating the waters and expertise in the collection of sea products, the Orang Laut (Sea People) have been indispensable to the success of any Malay kingdom. Yet why has their role been largely forgotten?

Learn more as Dr Leonard Andaya examines the historical evidence in an effort to restore the Orang Laut to their rightful place as major players in the history of the Straits from early times to the 19th century.

Dr Leonard Y. Andaya is a professor of Southeast Asian history at the University of Hawai'i in Mānoa, Honolulu. He held a research fellowship at the Australian National University and has taught at the University of Malaya, Auckland University and the National University of Singapore (NUS). His current research focuses on the complex network of relationships in eastern Indonesia that helped to bind disparate cultural communities into a functioning unity in the early modern period.



Behind-the-Scenes: A Curator's Perspective

17 Oct 2019 | 7.00pm - 8.00pm
Level 10, Gallery Entrance
(Meeting point)

Join Tan Huism and Georgina Wong, the curators of *On Paper*, as they present a special walkthrough of the exhibition and share what went on behind-the-scenes.

Tan Huism is the Director of the National Library and co-curator of *On Paper: Singapore Before 1867*. She was also curator of *Tales of the Malay World: Manuscripts and Early Books* and the National Library's mapping festival, *GeoGraphic*.

Georgina Wong is an Assistant Curator at the National Library and co-curator of *On Paper: Singapore Before 1867*. She was also involved in curating exhibitions such as *Selling Dreams: Early Advertising in Singapore*, and *From The Stacks: Highlights from the National Library*.



Early Singapore in the *Syair* of Dissent: Tuan Simi's Narration of Local Predicament

26 Oct 2019 | 11.00am - 12.00pm
Level 5, Imagination Room

Composed by Tuan Simi (a contemporary of Munsyi Abdullah) in the early 19th century, *Syair Dagang Jual Beli* (On Trading and Selling) and *Syair Potong Gaji* (On Wage Cut) are distinct not only for their themes, but also their places in Malay literary tradition. These *syair*, or Malay rhymed poems, depart from traditional themes, and instead relate the economic success and predicaments of indigenous traders and coolies under the grip of colonial capitalism, simultaneously providing insight into life in early Singapore.

Join Dr Azhar as he examines these *syair* and considers their place in Singapore's literary heritage.

Dr Azhar Ibrahim is a lecturer at the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore. He teaches Malay-Indonesian literature and ideologies of development. His research interests include the sociology of religion, sociology of literature and critical literacy, and Malay-Indonesian intellectual development.

Flip to find out more



28 Sep 2019 - 22 Mar 2020
Level 1, Lobby, National Library Building

Curiosity explores one of Singapore's most iconic and historical districts - Raffles Place. **Curiosity** presents photographs, books, building plans, archival footage as well as oral history records that explore the evolution of and memories associated with the city's commercial centre.



22 Aug 2019 - 24 Mar 2020
Various Public Libraries
Learn more from www.nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/

The earliest records of Singapore's existence can be found in maps and charts dating as far back as the 1400s. However, as early map makers were often unfamiliar with the region, misspellings and misidentifications abounded, resulting in much confusion as to Singapore's precise location and proper name. **An island by any other name...** explores the various incarnations and names of Singapore on early maps from the collection of the National Library.

Organised by:



Children's Workshop

26 Oct 2019 | 2, 9 & 16 Nov 2019
Session 1 | 2.00pm - 3.00pm
Session 2 | 4.00pm - 5.00pm
Level 10, Learning Space

2 sessions are held each day.

Join us for this interactive children's workshop set against the backdrop of pre-1867 Singapore.

Suitable for children aged 9 to 12.

The information in this brochure is not exhaustive. For more information on our current and new programmes, please visit www.nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/

Admission to programmes is free and open to all unless otherwise stated. Seats are limited on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please register at www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary

All programmes will be held at the National Library Building (100 Victoria Street, Singapore 188064).



Early Singapore Through the Lens of Colonial Artists

16 Nov 2019 | 11.00am - 12.00pm
Level 5, Possibility Room

The visual representations (notably in paintings and prints) of early Singapore left behind by Western artists in the 19th century are often overlooked. These artists were sojourners, part of scientific expeditions or members of the colonial establishment. Using the works of J.T. Thomson as a starting point, this talk will examine the function of their body of work, their subject matter and aesthetic merits.

Jeffrey Say is an art historian who has been instrumental in the development of art history studies at LASALLE College of the Arts. In 2009, he designed the world's first Master's programme focusing on Asian modern and contemporary art histories. He is a frequent speaker at museums, universities and galleries, and conducts short courses that are hugely popular. He is the co-editor of *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art* (2016).



On Paper: A Special Maps Tour

5 Dec 2019 | 7.00pm - 8.00pm
Level 10, Gallery Entrance
(Meeting point)

Join respected map research consultant Mok Ly Yng as he takes you on a specially curated tour of the exhibition *On Paper: Singapore Before 1867*, highlighting a selection of historical maps of Singapore.

These maps include the Mao Kun Map (commonly known as the Zheng He Navigational Map), which dates back to the 1620s and is the only known map that uses the name 'Temasek'; an original copy of the first map showing the true shape and size of Singapore produced by Captain James Franklin of the Bengal Cavalry in 1822; and an 1868 map that features the detailed distribution of gambier plantations across the island.

Mok Ly Yng is a map research consultant with more than 20 years' experience in the field. He has worked in the Singapore Armed Forces Mapping Unit as well as the National Archives of Singapore. He has provided mapping consultancy to several map exhibitions, books and heritage projects and has given numerous talks.