

Panel 9

Urban Space and Public Art

Urban Landscape Sketching – Visual Art that Connects All Levels

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In 2009, Miss Tia Boon Sim, the founder of the Singapore Urban Sketchers chapter, held the first meeting with a small group of artists who regularly sketched outdoors on location. Since then, the group has grown to over six thousand members, organizing regular monthly gatherings and various ad hoc activities over the past twenty-six years. While events like Singapore Art Week and the former Art Stage showcase internationally renowned artworks to regional art enthusiasts, urban sketching offers a more inclusive approach, connecting individuals of all skill levels—from complete beginners to established artists like Mr. Khoo Cheang Jin, president of the Penang Water Colour Society.

Both Miss Tia and Mr. Khoo have played key roles in the growth of urban sketching, fostering connections with global urban sketching chapters, organizing regional symposiums, and transforming casual monthly meetups into a structured chapter with clear artistic development goals. Urban sketching provides an accessible and low-cost entry point for participants of all ages and experience levels. Social media has further simplified the organization of sketching outings, a stark contrast to the past when artists from The Singapore Watercolour Society arranged weekend painting sessions.

This study explores how urban sketching has emerged as a dynamic artistic movement with the potential to influence art development in new directions, broadening the scope of traditional visual art presentation platforms such as Singapore Art Week.

Biography

Ng Woon Lam is an Associate Professor at the School of Art, Design & Media, Nanyang Technological University, where he has been teaching drawing and painting since 2009. He received a Master of Fine Arts from New York Academy of Art in figure painting and obtained his Ph.D. from National Institute of Education (Singapore) in Educational Research. His research covers heritage conservation, Chinese calligraphy and painting.