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PEARL LAM TAKES ON SINGAPORE

JANUARY 3, 2014 (HTTP://WWW.CULTURED.MAG.COM/2014/01/PEARL-LAM/) BY VIVIENNE CHOW (HTTP://WWW.CULTURED.MAG.COM/AUTHOR/VIVIENNE-CHOW/)



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Pearl Lam in front of Metal Box (Hyacinth Orchid) by Jim Lambie

Pearl Lam is a woman of determination. When the heiress of Hong Kong's Lai Sun Group founded by her late tycoon father Lim Por-yen made up her mind to pursue an artistic course against her parents' wishes, she was not joking. She started with pop-up art shows in the then-British colony in 1993 as people were busy emigrating overseas before the city's sovereignty was handed over to China in 1997. Even before that, she founded Contrasts Gallery in 1992 in Hong Kong and subsequently ventured north to Shanghai.

Two decades later, Lam has become an authority in Asia's art scene. Contrasts Gallery was renamed Pearl Lam Galleries, and Lam's artistic path went back south, following the art surge. In 2012, she returned to Hong Kong—where the art scene has finally blossomed amid a thriving art market and the building of the mammoth contemporary visual culture museum M+—with an outpost in the heritage Pedder Building.

Now, her new adventure takes her to Singapore. The city-state, characterized by a booming art scene as a result of the joint efforts from public and private sectors, has caught the eyes of the daring curator and gallerist.

"We are always looking for new platforms to present artists' work and are encouraged by the burgeoning art scene in Singapore," says Lam.



(<http://www.culturedmag.com/wp-content/uploads/lam.jpg>)

Zhu Jinshi's *Wooden Stick*, 2013, on view now at Pearl Lam Singapore

She adds that Hong Kong and Singapore are similar in the way they both are centrally located international cities in Asia with great networks of affluent audiences for art. And both cities have important art fairs: Art Basel in Hong Kong and Art Stage in Singapore. She says, while the art scene flares in Hong Kong thanks to its tax-free policy, "Singapore has a different approach, with the government developing areas of the city that can be devoted to culture."

The Singapore outpost of Pearl Lam Galleries—opening in January to coincide with Art Stage—will be located in Gillman Barracks, a government initiative that revitalizes a former military camp into an art cluster consisting of multiple heritage buildings housing galleries, creative businesses and the Centre for Contemporary Art.

Lam says her latest outlet follows her motto to "promote cross-cultural dialogue between the East and the West."

This isn't lip service, as can be seen by Lam's track record. She has staged major solo exhibitions of Asian and Western artists, including Tsang Kin-Wah from Hong Kong and British-Nigerian artist Yinka

Shonibare MBE. To inaugurate her Singapore outpost, Lam is hosting a group show curated by acclaimed British author and broadcaster Philip Dodd.

"In Hong Kong, we have presented two exhibitions dedicated to Hong Kong artists in the past year," she points out, "and we hope to do the same in Singapore by offering a new stage for local artists' work."

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