PROJECT MUSE®

The Russian Connection in Singapore's Local Art Identity

David Low Kok Kiat

Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia,
Volume 4, Number 2, October 2020, pp. 91-159 (Article)

Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sen.2020.0008>

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/770698>

The Russian Connection in Singapore's Local Art Identity

DAVID LOW KOK KIAT¹

Abstract

The uncritical acceptance of the Nanyang art discourse as central to the discussion of Singapore's local art identity obfuscates its historical emergence from a richly pluralistic artistic milieu which existed from the 1920s to the 1940s. This article illustrates the diversity of artistic practice in Singapore during this period, through a case study of three Russian artists in Singapore: Anatole Shister, Vasily Zaslavkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff. Examining their migration stories, as well as studying their art and their involvement in the local art world, the article reveals how global upheavals of this period informed Singapore's artistic milieu, contributing to a cosmopolitan environment that allowed for interaction between artists from around the world. In Singapore, artists from different backgrounds and with divergent motives shared in the efforts of depicting local life, searching for local colour and painting the region.

Introduction

In Singapore, notable appraisals of works by Russian artists were given at the *Fight for Freedom* exhibition of 1941, held at the Victoria Memorial Hall; an exhibition wherein both European and Chinese artists who arrived in Singapore between the 1920s and 1940s were seen displaying works that

[Southeast of Now
Vol. 4 No. 2 (October 2020), pp. 91–159]

represented Malayan life and identity.² This exhibition was “designed to bring home the nature of the struggle in which we are engaged, [and] the beauties and riches of the Empire and of this country which we are called upon to defend”.³ For this reason, artworks from both the Singapore Art Club and the Society of Chinese Artists were represented.⁴ Notably, Vasily Zasipkin’s and Vladimir Tretchikoff’s Malay studies were held in equal regard as Yeoh [Yong] Mun Sen’s *Fishermen’s Homecoming* and Tchang Ju Chi’s *Batak Women*.⁵ This exhibition marked a period in Singapore wherein artists from both China and Europe were displaying art side by side, and European artists also had a part to play in the formation of a local art identity. This article moves away from an uncritical acceptance of the centrality of Nanyang art—that is, art made from the perspective and identity of ethnic Chinese artists—in the discussions of Singapore’s local art identity, to look at it historically in relation to the period in which it emerged.⁶

It is little known that in the 1920s to 1940s in Singapore, there were three Russian artists—Vasily Zasipkin (b. 1886, Russia; d. 1941, Singapore), Vladimir Tretchikoff (b. 1913, Petropavlovsk; d. 2006, Cape Town) and Anatole Shister (b. 1884, Odessa; d. 1961, Zurich)—who shared the same world and period, as well as the same interests in representing localness in art, as Chinese artists.⁷ They were for a time considered as well-known Singapore artists by the local media. For example, after arriving in Singapore in 1934, by 1937 Tretchikoff was already reputed to be a well-known Singapore artist and represented Singapore art at the New York World’s Fair.⁸ Zasipkin, who fled from Japanese aggression in Shanghai and settled down in Singapore in 1937, was by 1939 referred to as “a local artist” in Singapore and was known for embellishing the interior of the famous Cathay Building.⁹ Zasipkin, like Nanyang artist Lim Hak Tai, was also a prominent art educator. Zasipkin had spent 20 years teaching art in China before coming to Singapore and setting up the Apollo School of Fine Arts in 1937, a year before Lim established his Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA). Although their schools differed in curriculum, with the former providing lessons in academic realism and life drawing and the latter offering both Western and Chinese painting classes, Zasipkin and Lim Hak Tai were equally concerned with the representation of “local colour”.¹⁰ Zasipkin told reporters that he was “working on a number of canvases in local colour”.¹¹ Shister, who settled down in Singapore 1926, was by 1947 holding art exhibitions alongside leading Nanyang artist Liu Kang, as described in the article “Singapore Art Exhibition”.¹² What was it like in the local art world then? With Russian artists also occupying a prominent place in the Singapore art world and representing “Singapore art”, one ponders how they contributed to the development of local art identity which emerged from that era.

In Singapore art history, the 1920s–40s were critical in the development of local art; this period saw a huge influx of immigrant artists. It was also a time when these foreign artists came to be rooted in Singapore and when the search for the “local” in art was a conscious effort.¹³ A quick glimpse into Singapore’s art world during this period upsets the familiar picture painted in most discourse on Nanyang art—as the art of the period is known—which has presented this narrative exclusively from the perspective and identity of the Chinese *Huaqiao*.¹⁴ In fact, renewed attention to overlooked primary sources from the period points to a less visible history in which artists of different ethnic backgrounds converged in Singapore and had a part to play in the search for the local in art. For example, Malay artists such as Abd Manan, Abdullah Abas and Abdullah Ariff, Indian artist Jacob Tarecon, and Japanese artist Chiyoji Yazaki were very prolific during that same period, and although beyond the scope of this article, more serious scholarship should be done on how they contributed to the local art identity.¹⁵ There were also Jewish refugee artists such as Karl Duldig, Julius and Tina Wentscher from Austria and Germany, as well as Italian sculptors Rudolfo Nolli, Raoul Bigazzi, Augusto Martelli and Angelo Vannetti, and British modern sculptors William Stirling and the famous Dora Gordine, whose contributions have been studied elsewhere.¹⁶ Their work suggests that the search for the local in art involved the active involvement of European artists, going beyond examples that serve merely to substantiate the colonial role in Singapore art history, such as the participation of British officials like Richard Walker and Francis Thomas in art education, or in the transmission of exoticized aesthetics by travelling artists like Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merpres.¹⁷

This essay is concerned with the emergence of a local art identity during that period, paying attention to the artistic milieu that nurtured it. Of course, to examine all the different groups of artists mentioned above would require more substantial studies. Within the space of this essay, I have chosen to focus on three Russian artists, Anatole Shister, Vasily Zasipkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff, as case studies. In terms of the East/West axis, Russia and its cultural development have always been considered East of the divide in Europe.¹⁸ However, this divide amongst Europeans is less apparent in Asia during the 1920s to 1940s. As will be discussed later, Chinese cultural figures admired their Russian counterparts as bearers of Western realist ideologies.¹⁹ In Singapore, the Russian people were often referred to as ‘European’ and were active participants in the local Western community.²⁰ Yet, while Shister, Zasipkin and Tretchikoff were accepted by the local Western community as bastions of ‘Western art’, they did not keep to their own practice but were bent on involving themselves in local conversations of art.²¹ European artists,

especially these three Russians who came to Singapore via China, were not isolated from Singapore's art world then, and I argue that their influences, involvement and art should be further studied for the part they played in the construction of a local art identity. As such, this essay frames Singapore's local art identity as not exclusively dependent on the identity of any one ethnic group, but as historically emerging from a pluralistic artistic milieu that existed between the 1920s and 1940s. Hence, I will first discuss the way local art identity has been framed in Singapore, in order to clarify current understandings and their limitations for encompassing the pluralistic artistic milieu of that time. In this essay, I will illustrate this point in three sections. The first looks at how the migration story of these three Russians artists reveals global circumstances that informed and constituted Singapore's artistic milieu. The second highlights how the involvement of Shister, Zaspikin and Tretchikoff in the local art world and art education institutions unveil a more cosmopolitan environment in which artists from around the world interacted freely with each other. The third clarifies how their art contributed to the formation of a local art identity through the artistic efforts of depicting local life, the search for local colour and painting the region.

Local Art Identity As Framed in Singapore

In Singapore, local art identity has been framed from a standpoint of a post-colonial nation with a large Chinese population.²² Conceptualized this way, discussions have been centred on the contributions of ethnic Chinese artists (sojourners, migrants or Straits Chinese), particularly, discourses that are linked to the development of what is now widely known as Nanyang art.²³ Nanyang art is sometimes referred to as *Nanyang Feng'ge* 南洋风格, emphasizing a stylistic definition, or *Nanyang Fengwei* 南洋风味, denoting an expressed quality or flavour in paintings that signified Nanyang 南洋, a Chinese term referring to the geographic region of Southeast Asia. *Nanyang Feng'ge* is commonly defined as a style developed by a group of émigré Chinese artists who mixed School of Paris approaches such as Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism with Chinese Ink compositions and techniques when depicting local subject matter.²⁴

Rationalized through a nationalist discourse, Nanyang art as a school or style is seen as unfolding together with the history of Singapore growing from an immigrant society to a modern nation independent from colonial rule.²⁵ With this form of thinking, Chinese artists (including even those who settled in Singapore after independence in 1965), have been given agency and primacy in historical narratives, while artists from elsewhere have served as

secondary references for their art. In the dominant discourse on Singapore art, European artists are often portrayed as substantiating a certain colonial reference (as 'foreign'), from which Nanyang art (as 'local') draws its difference.²⁶ The colonial reference encompassed two periods: the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Research into the 19th century has largely dwelt on the visual productions and collections of colonial officials that complemented colonial expansion, such as those of John Turnbull Thomson, Charles Andrew Dyce and William Farquhar.²⁷ For the 20th century, Richard Walker and Le Mayeur are often mentioned, respectively to acknowledge the contributions in art education by the British and the transmission of exoticized images of Bali by travelling artists.²⁸ Recently, Yvonne Low has attempted to draw attention to an art world that existed prior to and during the arrival of Chinese artists in the mid-1930s by presenting the history of the Singapore Art Club and its colonial women. However, Low's account was again written to verify a certain colonial reference, rather than to position the contribution of the European artists as engaged in mutual exchange with Chinese artists.²⁹ European artists who were depicting the tropics from the 1920s to the 1940s, such as Karl Duldig, Anatole Shister and Dora Gordine, are usually portrayed as mere imports of Western art influences that might have inspired Chinese artists during that time.³⁰ Despite the presence of European artists in Singapore, it is clear that Chinese artists have been the primary focus in most previous studies of local art identity.

In 1994, Redza Piyadasa made the bold claim that "the Nanyang artists [predominately Chinese] were the first to have consciously worked toward the establishment of a distinctive Malayan and even regional identity in art by bringing together multiple influences and approaches through their unique experimentations. And that they did so at a time when questions about national, cultural identity had yet to surface is a mark of their artistic ingenuity."³¹

However, some scholars have noted problems with the nationalistic framework that signifies local art identity in the Nanyang style, defined as a syncretic combination of Western (oil and easel) modernist painting with Chinese traditional (ink and scroll) compositional and pictorial techniques when depicting local Indian and Malay subject matter.³² Eclectic practices in art, as Ho Tzu Nyen points out, are not unique to Nanyang artists.³³ Tan Tee Chee and later Ong Zhen Min also note that emphasis on the painting format does not account for art done in other media and other periods, such as the 1930s, that could also be considered as Nanyang.³⁴ Critically, Kevin Chua and Yvonne Low argue that such a stylistic definition is retrospectively conceived under a Western methodological approach that is distant from

the original intention and practice of overseas Chinese artists.³⁵ Examining artists' practices with the identities that Nanyang art had come to represent—Malayan and later Singaporean multiculturalism—Low further demonstrates that *Nanyang Feng'ge* was at various junctures in history monumentalised as a school of painting to satisfy the needs for national art identities.³⁶

Recognising the limitations of a stylistic definition, scholars have sought to examine local art identity under the specificities of Nanyang artists' cultural identities—as *Huaqiao* in Southeast Asia. Developing from the notion that Nanyang translated from Mandarin as 'South Seas' was foremost a Chinese concept referring to the region of Southeast Asia, scholars such as Emelia Ong, Yeo Wei Wei, Ong Zhen Min and Ahmad Mashadi opine that to the artists, *Nanyang Feng'ge* functioned more as a frame of reference in the search for localness, a creative motivation, rather than a style defined by a mixture of techniques and symbols.³⁷ Based on such an interpretation, Low argues convincingly that there was indeed a Nanyang identity shared amongst ethnic Chinese artists in their search for localness during the 1930s and 1940s that predates national considerations.³⁸ Local art identity has thus far been framed according to the experiences, influences and identity of Chinese migrant artists, in their efforts to express a sense of localness in art that relates to Southeast Asia.

Suffice to say that there was a search for localness that predates national considerations. While Nanyang art discourse is well developed, can this search be narrated solely with attention to the contributions of a singular ethnicity-based group, the overseas Chinese? Such an identity-specific framework, I argue, risks excluding other sources and circumstances that equally contributed to the search for a local art identity. The current narrative details how socio-political changes in China during the early 20th century, especially the great reforms in 1919 from the May Fourth Movement, led to the presence of professionally trained Chinese artists in Singapore, who, en route from China to the cultural centres of Europe, signalled the beginnings of a local art identity that was eventually labelled "Nanyang art".³⁹ This narrative provides a one-sided impression with a deep Chinese slant, uncharacteristic of the extent of sources and circumstances present in Singapore's pluralistic art world in the 1930s. For example, taking reference solely from China does not explain the presence of other equally important European artists in Singapore. Furthermore, understanding local art identity through the prism of Nanyang art, through the 'Chinese mind' of practising artists does not account for how certain kinds of subject matter came to signify localness.

Instead, considering the problematics within previous nationalistic and identity-specific frameworks, I am proposing that studies into the emergence

of a local art identity be read historically from the art world that existed in Singapore. This requires further studies into other groups of artists, for example, the Russians—Anatole Shister, Vasily Zasipkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff.

Circumstances That Brought Russian Artists to Singapore

From the 1920s to the 1940s, socio-political changes across the world led to the influx of cultural figures from these regions to Singapore by the early 20th century. Studying the backgrounds of lesser-known Western immigrant artists offers a wider understanding of the circumstances that led to the presence of different artistic voices in the local art world, going beyond factors linked to the Chinese diaspora or to a colonial past. This is evident in the story of how Russian artists came to Singapore. Their migration tales detail how art as taught at Russian academies reached Singapore. These are stories of survival amidst global upheavals.

At the turn of the 20th century, art academies in Russia were driven to equip their students for professional success, with an emphasis on depicting 'Russian' subject matters such as everyday people and the countryside. It was a time when *Peredvizhniki* art—mid-19th-century Russian realism appreciated for its unvarnished depiction of liberated peasants and their economic plight in emancipated Russia—was mainstream in the country.⁴⁰ Many artists associated with *Peredvizhniki* art were by the 1890s hired as professors to teach at Russian art academies. Although their art possessed some level of criticality towards the social injustices of Russian society, professional success was a concern shared by artists of the *Peredvizhniki* art movement. From its inception and throughout the Soviet regime, scholars of Russian art from the 1860s to 1890s have always described *Peredvizhniki* art as democratic, socially responsible and a condemnation of the Tsarist regime.⁴¹ Yet, recent studies by scholars Evgeny Steiner and Elizabeth Valkenier into the subtext and motivations behind *Peredvizhniki* art have convincingly shown that artists associated with the movement had no desire to alter society fundamentally; instead they were focused on finding an independent avenue for professional and economic success within the existing social parameters.⁴² Artists wanted to seek success outside of the monopoly of the Russian academies, state exhibitions and commissions. This desire led to the Revolt of the Fourteen in 1863 and the establishment of the Company of Traveling Art Exhibitions in 1870, later known as the *Peredvizhniki* or Wanderers Society in English, where participating artists painted portraits of liberated serfs and revolutionary writers, genre paintings that highlighted the economic plight of everyday life in emancipated Russia, as well as landscapes paintings that

mirrored human mood and emotions of the time.⁴³ Vasilii Perov, a founding member of the *Peredvizhniki*, admitted that the idea behind travelling exhibitions was to attract more publicity and to increase profitability.⁴⁴ According to Elizabeth Valkenier, by the late 1880s, “the *peredvizhniki* had become the guardians of an ensconced artistic tradition that no longer stood for morally motivated critical realism but mirrored the conservative nationalism of the tsar and of the ascending bourgeoisie—a role that they played until World War I”.⁴⁵ Art as taught in the Russia art academies then emphasized the realist depiction of ‘Russian’ subject matter such as the common peasantry and the countryside, as well as a drive for professional success.

It was in this context that Anatole Shister, Vasily Zasiipkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff received their art training. Although the three artists were all trained in *Peredvizhniki* art, they also received instruction in professional skills that allowed them to make a living. Anatole Shister graduated from the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg. There, he was tutored by a leading *Peredvizhniki* painter, Ilya Repin.⁴⁶ Yet after his graduation, he made his living by gaining a reputation for being an excellent portrait artist. Vasily Zasiipkin graduated from the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in the early 1910s,⁴⁷ where he received a strong foundation in *Peredvizhniki* art from Abram Arkhipov, a member of the Wanderers Society. Concurrently, he was also taught history painting by Sergey Ivanov and was introduced to decorative embellishments by Konstantin Korovin, an artist experienced in producing mood *décor* for theatres.⁴⁸ Vladimir Tretchikoff studied under Vasily Zasiipkin who passed on to him not only the foundations of art, such as accuracy in capturing the human form and proficiency in various media, but also cultivated in him an attentiveness to local everyday people in Shanghai.⁴⁹

Scholars have largely recognised Russian *Peredvizhniki* art influences in Singapore art history as having begun only in the 1950s. Such influences are often attributed to the efforts of Chinese art organizations such as the *Yishu Yanjiuhui* (Arts Association) and the Equator Art Society, which operated at the height of Social Realism as a global artistic trend under Cold War realities in the 1950s.⁵⁰ These influences arrived indirectly through Chinese artists who took Russian *Peredvizhniki* art as an inspiration to realize their desire for art as a vehicle for social change.⁵¹ However, further studies should be done on how these Russian artists—some having direct links with leading members of the *Peredvizhniki* movement—brought to Singapore this attitude of striving for individual professional success and interest in the depiction of local peoples when they arrived earlier, at the turn of the 20th century. Faced with different realities than those of the 1950s, these Russians were

concerned for their personal survival. The skills they received from their art training would prove useful in their tumultuous life journey.

Anatole Shister: First World War and the Warlord Era in China as Factors for His Move

The turmoil of the First World War and the Warlord Era in China and the search for commission work led Anatole Shister to Singapore. Shister was born in Odessa, Russia in 1884 and graduated from the prestigious Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg.⁵² After graduating, Shister left Russia in 1915 on a government scholarship to be acquainted with Italian art in Rome.⁵³ However, he made an unexpected trip to Manchuria and thence to China in that same year because of the horrors of World War I ravaging continental Europe.⁵⁴ Later that year, he painted former president of China, Yuan Shih-Kai; the work marked the beginning of Shister's wanderings in the Far East.⁵⁵ However, the death of Yuan Shih-Kai in 1916 led to the tumultuous era of warlords in China, which could have impelled Shister's move to Manila, Philippines, where he was eventually naturalized as a citizen in 1921.⁵⁶ It was there that he painted President Quezon and Governor General Francis Barton.⁵⁷ In 1926, on his way to visit Java and Bali, Shister stopped over in Singapore and stayed at the Raffles Hotel.⁵⁸ The British Municipal Commissioners took the opportunity to engage Shister to restore portrait paintings of prominent persons at the Memorial Hall.⁵⁹ This included the restoration of John Singer Sergeant's portrait of Frank Swettenham.⁶⁰ Shister was later commissioned to paint a portrait of Hugh Clifford.⁶¹ Various ensuing commissions grounded Shister in Singapore. Shister's arrival in Singapore was the result of a continual search for commission work to make a living amidst the turmoil in the West and East.

Vasily Zasipkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff: Bolshevik Revolution and the Second Sino-Japanese War as Factors for Their Moves

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia was a major reason for the move of Vasily Zasipkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff to China and then to Singapore. Zasipkin was born in 1886 in Russia and graduated from the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. The social instability created by the Bolshevik Revolution and the transformation of his prestigious school into a socialist school, Svomas in 1918 prompted Zasipkin to flee to Vladivostok in the east.⁶² For a brief period from 1918 to 1922, the city became a haven for cultural refugees like Zasipkin, who conducted some art lessons.⁶³

In 1920, he was commissioned by the Japanese government to paint landscapes in Manchuria.⁶⁴ In Harbin, Manchuria, Zasiipkin started to work on design sets for theatres. In 1930, he arrived in Shanghai and soon gained a reputation for being a proficient portrait painter. It was in Shanghai that Zasiipkin became the mentor of Tretchikoff.

Similarly, for Tretchikoff the Bolshevik Revolution changed the direction of his life. Born in 1913, in Petropavlovsk, Russia, Tretchikoff lived through the bloody Russian Civil War until he and his family, who did not support the Bolshevik regime, moved first to Vladivostok in 1917 and then to Harbin in 1924. In 1930, Tretchikoff moved to Shanghai with the intention to go to Paris. However, that did not materialise. Instead, Tretchikoff stayed on and became involved in commercial art and later learnt theatre design from Zasiipkin. In Shanghai, he was offered a job in design by a Singaporean advertising company, Warin Studios in 1934.⁶⁵

Unlike his mentee, Zasiipkin did not migrate to Singapore then as he was already a well-established portrait artist in Shanghai. He had after all painted 25 consuls in China. Yet, subsequent historical events would change Zasiipkin's fate in Shanghai. The advent of Japanese aggression in 1937 forced Zasiipkin to escape from Shanghai to Singapore.⁶⁶

Hence, for these Russian artists, World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Civil War, the social upheaval in China and the second Sino-Japanese war had all, in one way or another, contributed to their move to Singapore. From their life journeys, one can see that both Europe and China were in turmoil and undergoing great change. Given the upheavals in the Soviet Union, the experience of Europe for these Russian artists was not necessarily a glorious one. More often than not, these Russian artists saw a decline in artistic opportunities in the West, which furnished a reason for their move to the East, and as a result, they experienced a new artistic awakening.⁶⁷ It is precisely these global transformations in both the West and East that led to artists migrating to Singapore at the turn of the 20th century.

Russian Artists' Contributions to the Singapore Art World

Existing discourse on local art activities during the 1920s to 1940s relies heavily on Yeo Mang Thong's seminal *Essays on the History of Pre-war Chinese Painting in Singapore*. Rationalized from the standpoint of a Chinese-majority population and research based solely on Chinese newspapers, Yeo, and later Tan Meng Kiat, argue that the Singapore art milieu was ultimately a Chinese-led one.⁶⁸ Historians like Mary Turnbull argue that in the 1930s each ethnic community kept to itself, as "Singapore remained a collection of immigrant

communities, with their culture, interests and loyalties rooted in foreign countries.”⁶⁹ Such characterizations were not entirely true in the art world during that time. These Russian artists lived here and saw Singapore as their home.⁷⁰ One was even buried here.⁷¹ Their involvement and interaction with Chinese migrant artists also suggest that they were part and parcel of the same world.

In fact, the exchange of ideas between Russian and Chinese artists had already taken place in Shanghai at the turn of the 20th century. As mentioned earlier, the Bolshevik Revolution led to an influx of Russian immigrants in Shanghai. There, Tretchikoff and Zasipkin joined a fellowship of Russian artists who were passionate about Chinese art. This fellowship of artists met to listen to lectures concerning Chinese porcelain or Confucian theories. They made trips around China, seeking to understand its culture and soul, which they expressed in their art.⁷² These Russian artists saw the East as a source of artistic inspiration and the works of art in that region, worthy of emulation. On the other hand, the Chinese viewed the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia as a model for their own revolutionary efforts. Lu Xun, a Chinese modernist writer, whom scholars claimed to have influenced the Nanyang art discourse, had in fact a Russian influence on his ideological leanings.⁷³ According to Chinese scholar Yang Hua, Lu Xun's intellectual concerns were “neither restricted to pure philosophical contemplation nor simply directed against naïve exultations of the self-styled revolutionary writers. They were... a new ideological framework [that]... helped him... analyse the larger picture of China's revolutionary reality... derived... from his knowledge of the Russian revolution and the Soviet literary scene.”⁷⁴ It is clear therefore that both the Russian and the Chinese were interested in the ideas offered from each other's cultures.

Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Similarly, in Singapore, art discussions were often held between artists of Eastern and Western origins. These Russian artists were actively participating in cross-cultural dialogue with local Chinese migrant artists. Tretchikoff did not just stick to his own Russian community in Singapore but mingled with other races, especially with Chinese artists.⁷⁵ Tretchikoff was a very close friend of the now famous Chinese national artist, Situ Qiao (also known as Ssu-tu Qiao), who was praised by Lu Xun and who lived briefly in Singapore.⁷⁶ It was said that many artists had sought to paint the wife of Tretchikoff but were never successful. However, at Situ Qiao's house at Emerald Hill, a reporter found an oil portrait of Mrs Tretchikoff by the Chinese host.⁷⁷

Tretchikoff would often meet up with other artistically-minded individuals at Situ's house. Situ contemplated establishing a new formal art club that would use the premises of his house.⁷⁸ This interaction between Tretchikoff and Situ was not an exception during that period. In fact, Situ Qiao's brother, Situ Jie was enrolled in a sculpture school in Singapore that was set up and taught by Karl Duldig, a Jewish refugee from Austria.⁷⁹ Duldig himself was close friends with Yu Dafu, a Nanyang literary figure, and Monk Quangjia. Duldig had also sculpted in the studios of Rudolfo Nolli, an Italian artist in Singapore.⁸⁰ Situ Qiao wrote a review in the local Chinese newspaper concerning "Sculptor Karl Duldig's Farewell Exhibition".⁸¹ German Jews Julius and Tina Wentscher's exhibition was also reported in the local Chinese newspaper.⁸² These connections made in Singapore provide a window into how during the 1930s and 40s, migrant artists from the East and the West did not keep to themselves but were in active conversation with each other, given their mutual interests in the development of the local art scene.

Cross-cultural dialogues also took place regularly during the 1930s and 1940s in the form of art competitions. The most prominent of these was the annual Inter-School Coronation Art Competitions (later known as Inter-School Art Exhibitions) organised by the St Andrew's Sketching Club starting from 1937.⁸³ Both Chinese and Western schools were regularly represented. Chinese calligraphy, painting, sculpture and woodcuts were some of the media represented. Such competitions encouraged experimentation in art and encounters between Western and Chinese artists.

All three Russian artists were on the judging committee at some point in time, alongside their Chinese counterparts. Zasipkin was on the judging committee in 1938.⁸⁴ Tretchikoff was on the judging committee at the fourth Inter-School Art Exhibition in 1940, together with a prominent member of the Society of Chinese Artists, Chong Yew Chow.⁸⁵ Shister also judged alongside well-known Chinese art collector and artist, Chan Peng Yin, at the sixth Inter-School Art Exhibition in 1947.⁸⁶ All these interactions show resolutely that Russian and Chinese artists inter-mingled in the development of local art. These Russian artists were undoubtedly part of the local art scene.

The Russian artists' involvement as judges at the Inter-School Art Competitions also shows that both Chinese and Western artists were considered to be of equal standing. They were seen by the artistic community as gatekeepers of the local art standard.

Art Education and Their Legacy

The prominence of these Russian artists and their contributions to local art education during the 1930s and 1940s left a lasting impact on the local art

world. They had disciples, they established schools, and their illustrious art lived on after their departure. Shister, Zasipkin and Tretchikoff became well-known Singapore artists and were all personally invested in the development of art in Singapore.

These Russian-born artists each took it upon themselves to raise the standards of art in Singapore. In 1932, Anatole Shister became a new member of the Singapore Art Club under the direction of Mr Santry, and was active in discussions for the club's future and the development of art in Singapore.⁸⁷ Shister was also reputed for being a judge for the Child Art Display Awards in 1947, where works of the now locally well-known artists, Lim Cheng Hoe and T.Y. Choy, and the lesser-known artist Chew Yew Seng were highly appraised.⁸⁸ All of these three local artists became leading members of the YMCA Art Club in the 1950s.⁸⁹ Shister, who was considered an authoritative art figure in the local art world during the early 20th century, was concerned with raising the standards of art amongst local inhabitants.

Tretchikoff also gave lessons in drawing and painting at his own art studio. Tretchikoff later recounted that, "There was quite a cosmopolitan atmosphere in my art school... I had British and Dutch, Chinese and Malays, a German and a Belgian and others."⁹⁰ It was acknowledged that Tretchikoff's lessons greatly influenced the local artist Chew Yew Seng.⁹¹ Contrary to Marco Hsu's characterisation of pre-independence 'foreign' artists as being principally responsible for organising exhibitions, Tretchikoff's art lessons are evidence of the Russian artists' rootedness in the multiracial society and local art scene.⁹²

Zasipkin also left a lasting impact on local art development through his contributions to local art education. Like Nanyang artist Lim Hak Tai, Zasipkin was part of the "large-scale exodus of cultural figures from China, who took sanctuary in Singapore" due to the advent of the Second Sino-Japanese War.⁹³ Many scholars have considered this period to be a watershed event in the development of Singapore art, which led to the emergence of tertiary art institutions.⁹⁴

From 1937 to 1938, Singapore witnessed a proliferation of art institutions, such as the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts set up by Lim Hak Tai, the Bailu Art Academy, the Angel Art Academy, the Xinan Art Academy and the Xihu Art Academy.⁹⁵ However, Zasipkin's Apollo School of Fine Arts stands out from the predominately Chinese-led art institutions as it represents a totally different historical legacy, one that does not originate from the Chinese but instead from the Russian modernist developments.

Today, one rarely hears of Zasipkin's Apollo School of Fine Arts set up at 1 Amber Mansion on Orchard Road.⁹⁶ Yet in the latter half of the 1930s, it was

FIGURE 1: View of Amber Mansion at Orchard Road, Singapore, c.1920s. Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

a very prestigious art school.⁹⁷ From a nationalist standpoint, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, which had from its establishment in 1938, survived the years and continued to the present, has an unparalleled position in Singapore art history in terms of its role and contributions in shaping the evolution of art in Singapore. However, to understand the local artistic milieu during the 1930s, one must also study other art schools that were equally prominent at that time.

The Apollo School of Fine Arts was regarded highly and was culturally significant to Singapore during that period.⁹⁸ *The Straits Times* commented about the school: “Culture is being brought at last to Singapore, notoriously the Empire’s least aesthetic city.”⁹⁹ Opened in October 1937, a year before the establishment of the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), it offered lectures in life painting, drawing and sculpting.¹⁰⁰ It conducted day and evening classes for both amateur and advanced students. According to local newspapers, it was an institution that the colony had long been waiting for and was deemed as a vital supplement to public art education.¹⁰¹ It was an institution where formal artistic training was conducted in addition to the official general public education in art, a similar quality attributed to NAFA by local scholars.¹⁰² In the 1930s, Zaspikin’s Apollo School of Fine Arts was seen as filling that gap in public art education. Zaspikin himself gave instruction on media such as charcoal, crayon, pastel, pencil, oil and tempera painting.

As no information is available about the school's academic structure, one can only speculate that it might have followed that of the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture where Zasipkin was a student. It is, however, certain that Zasipkin had a strong foundation in the realist tradition and an interest in depicting ordinary people, following his tutors back in Russia. Portraiture and especially the academic tradition of painting, drawing or sculpting from life models and nudes were taught seriously at his school since 1937.¹⁰³ In fact, he had a dedicated anatomy class at his Apollo School of Fine Arts that taught the finer details of portraiture.

This school was opened to "all interested in art, of any nationality", and merged with the Singapore Art Club a month after its opening.¹⁰⁴ It is interesting to note that just as the Apollo School of Fine Arts shared its premises with the Singapore Art Club for art activities at 1 Amber Mansion, a similar set-up was later established with the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and the Society of Chinese Artists sharing premises at 167 Geylang Road during that period.¹⁰⁵ Art education was tied to the art world and students had access to leading artists of that time. The difference was that although the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts taught both Chinese and Western art, its students were strictly Chinese.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps due to his background in Peredvizhniki ideology, Zasipkin desired that art education be open to all peoples. Under the atmosphere of openness to other races, the Apollo School of Fine Arts joined with the Singapore Art Club to foster young local art talents in the burgeoning local art scene in the 1950s.

The Apollo School of Fine Arts played a major role in raising the standard of art appreciation and knowledge in Singapore. Young local students from Zasipkin's school competed regularly in inter-school art competitions. Such competitions were vital in the fostering of young talents in the art world. In fact, Zasipkin's school, although short-lived, left a mark in the lives of outstanding Singapore artists and the roles they played in the country's art history. One of his students, Chew Yew Seng, gained prominence at the fourth inter-school art competition, winning the third prize for his "head study".¹⁰⁷ Chew, somewhat less recognised today, was actually quite instrumental in the development of the Singapore art scene. He was a local Chinese who grew up in Geylang and was educated at Raffles Institution. According to historian Wilfred Plumble, he first studied under Tretchikoff and then with Zasipkin.¹⁰⁸ During the Second World War, Chew Yew Seng, Fu Wah Tip (another student of Zasipkin), Tow Siang Ling, T.Y. Choy and others formed the Syonan Art Association.¹⁰⁹ After the war, Chew painted several portraits of British and Japanese soldiers.¹¹⁰ In the late 1940s, he was one of the leading artists in the YMCA Art Club.¹¹¹ His art practice was heavily shaped by both

Tretchikoff and Zasipkin.¹¹² He became a prominent portrait artist and gave art lessons on life nudes at the YMCA during the 1940s and 1950s. Lim Cheng Hoe, a leading watercolour artist from the Singapore Watercolour Society, took lessons from Chew Yew Seng.¹¹³ Chew was the only one who taught nude life drawing classes; neither the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts nor the LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts offered such classes during that time.¹¹⁴ Chew would later appear in the Art in Action project by the National Museum Art Gallery in 1982 where he did a public demonstration on how to paint a portrait in 15 minutes.¹¹⁵ In the 1980s, Chew Yew Seng was supported by the Art for Offices franchise headed by Mr Ong Kok Thai.¹¹⁶ Art for Offices was a company that sourced artworks to decorate commercial offices. Although commercial by nature, Art for Offices perhaps did more in bringing art to the common people than Singapore's art exhibitory circuits at the time. In short, given Chew's involvement in these various activities and Zasipkin's role in educating Chew, it is clear that Zasipkin's Apollo School of Fine Arts should be further studied for its legacies in Singapore's art education and art history.

Writing in the 1990s, scholars Yeo Mang Thong and Tan Meng Kiat considered the local artistic milieu of the 1920s to the 1940s to be ultimately Chinese-led. However, as illustrated above, the local artistic milieu that existed in Singapore at the time was a pluralistic one. During these decades, these Russian artists, like their Chinese counterparts, were equally concerned for the development of local art in Singapore. They were seen judging at local art competitions alongside Chinese artists, and their efforts in local art education had shaped art values for prominent local artists such as Lim Cheng Hoe, T.Y. Choy and Chew Yew Seng, leaving a legacy on artistic practices such as portraiture and nude life drawing. All of this shows that the local art world between the 1920s and the 1940s was not solely Chinese, but rather was constituted by different cultural figures who interacted with each other.

Russian Artists' Contributions to Local Art Identity

Living alongside and occupying the same professional and social world as the Chinese artists, Shister, Zasipkin and Tretchikoff also played a part in the construction of localness, aiding in the development of a local art identity. It was not uncommon to see artists of different backgrounds in Singapore during the 1920s to 1940s painting the same subject matter, such as local peoples of the region, villages, street scenes and so on, and even sometimes adopting a similar colour scheme and style of brushwork in their art. However, given their very diverse backgrounds, different emphases and interests shine through in the artists' efforts in their depiction of the reality of local life, their search for local colour and the emergence of a tropical paradise.

For example, this is evident when the art of Russian and Chinese artists in Singapore is examined.

For example, let us consider two artworks, one by Vladimir Tretchikoff and the other by Situ Qiao. It is hard to locate surviving locally-engaged artworks by Situ Qiao that were done in Singapore, apart from his famous anti-Japanese realist painting *Put Down Your Whip*, 1941.¹¹⁷ However, we do know that he made several boldly-coloured artworks of local scenery and peoples during his sojourns in Burma, Penang and Singapore in the late 1930s.¹¹⁸ Due to the scarcity of images of surviving artworks by Situ of this period in Singapore, I use here his 莱雅湖上的清洁工人 (*Cleaning Workers on Laiya Lake*), an artwork representative of his style and interest at that time, in comparison with Tretchikoff's *Untitled* painting. Although one depicts a Burmese setting and the other was done in Singapore, these artworks show the kind of subject matter that was popular and circulating in Singapore at that time.¹¹⁹ In terms of colour scheme, subject matter and style, Situ Qiao's 1939 artwork of two labourers is strikingly similar to Tretchikoff's *Untitled* painting of a year earlier. Situ and Tretchikoff displayed an identical interest in labourers with turbans. In both artworks, bold and often unmixed hues are used to signify a certain local tropical atmosphere. Situ used greens, blues and bronze to emphasize the lush vegetation and environment wherein the two figures were situated. Tretchikoff used blues, yellow and bronze to emphasize how light in the region is reflected off the skin of the figure. It is known that Situ's *Cleaning Workers on Laiya Lake* was created in the same vibrant colour palette and style as his other Singapore artworks of the period such as 华侨少女 (*Overseas Chinese Girl*) and 四位马来亚少女 (*Four Malayan Girls*).¹²⁰ Sojourning Chinese artists who were considered antecedents of Nanyang art, such as Situ Qiao, painted Singapore with the same zeal in the search for the local as the Russian artists.¹²¹ Thus, it could be seen that both the Chinese and Western artists who were practising art alongside each other made efforts towards the formation of a local art identity in the 1920s to 1940s.

Nevertheless, their artworks highlight their different artistic backgrounds. Situ Qiao, a Chinese artist, composed *Cleaning Workers on Laiya Lake* with two slender labourers sitting in a lush green field beside a meandering lake that leads to the background. The figures' limbs and facial profiles and the trunks and foliage of the trees are outlined with quick subtle lines before colour and light shading are added. His use of composition and techniques take reference from traditional Chinese painting. In this artwork, Situ was concerned with capturing a sense of localness through figures in their environment, perhaps stressing an appreciation for the relationship between man

FIGURE 2: Vladimir Tretchikoff, *Untitled*, 1938. Image courtesy of Natasha Swift.

FIGURE 3: Qiao Ssu-Tu (Situ), 莱雅湖上的清洁工人 (*Cleaning Workers on Laiya Lake*), 1939, pastel on paper, 36.1 × 48.9 cm. Gift of Feng Yimei. Collection of the Guangzhou Museum of Art. Image courtesy of Situ Qiao's family.

and nature. Leading Nanyang artists in Singapore would also create artworks with local subject matter and similar references, for example, Chen Chong Swee's undated *Pounding Rice* and *Homeward Bound*.¹²²

In contrast, Tretchikoff's painting is focused on a singular burly and bare-chested Indian man. Although a portrait, this painting was not composed in a studio for the elites but created while sketching in the streets of Singapore, indicating an interest in the common people and a search for a certain authenticity through their depiction.¹²³ Painted in 1938, Tretchikoff's *Untitled* depicts a ubiquitous scene of daily life in a Singapore that was fast becoming a miniature of the world. A modern cosmopolitan city by the 1930s, there was a heightened mutual interest between the different races in Singapore. Hence, there was also a search for a distinguishing local identity. In this painting, the background is ill defined, registering Tretchikoff's interest in expressing localness through figures. There are no visible outlines here. Instead Tretchikoff's use of brushstrokes and warm and dark colours to define the figure's details, heightens the three-dimensionality of his musculature and facial features. Such skills in representing the human anatomy must have been passed down from his teacher Vasily Zaslavkin. However, as in Peredvizhniki art, portraits are not just masterpieces of physical details but also "talismans" for the "invisible".¹²⁴ In this painting, the warm tropical evening atmosphere is captured by the bold alternating treatment of yellow-orange and blue hues on the bronze skin of the figure. This signals Tretchikoff's interest in capturing and interpreting how the tropical light is reflected off the slick musculature of his figure's body. The figure's fortitude amidst daily challenges is also registered in his expression as he looks stern and resilient even through his tired eyes.

It could be seen that although both the Chinese and Western artists who were practising art alongside each other made efforts towards the formation of a local art identity in the 1920s to 1940s, the art they produced is not identical in nature. Instead, their backgrounds and interests inform the different ways they express localness, even when depicting the same subject matter. If one is to have an understanding of the formation of a local art identity that takes into account the pluralistic art milieu during this period, further studies into the artistic efforts made by artists of different backgrounds and concerns are required.

This understanding differs from the one presented in the Nanyang art discourse, which largely concerns the identity of the Chinese *Huaqiao*. The tradition of Nanyang art has been closely linked to Lim Hak Tai, who was considered a visionary by influential art historians T.K. Sabapathy and Redza Piyadasa, as one who provided the artistic direction for Nanyang art based

on the principle of depicting the “localness of a place” and “reality of the South Seas”.¹²⁵ Scholars have largely taken the fifth of Lim’s six precepts explicated in *The Art of the Young Malaysians* in 1955—the expression of tropical flavour—as the cornerstone of Nanyang art’s identity to register local agency.¹²⁶ Concerning the idea of localness in Nanyang art, Ong Zhen Min in writing for the National Gallery, explains that the concept does not stem from a perspective on a physical location, but a relative location that is defined in connection to other areas. Ong points out that this ambiguous concept of localness results in an approach to subject matter that expands over time. That concept of localness amongst Nanyang artists started with Malayan subjects (like local peoples and scenes) and grew to encompass those of other Southeast Asian countries, for example, Balinese dancers. It also progresses from the idea of localness as being part of an art that depicts the realities of life in the region, to that which embodies the idea of a tropical paradise.¹²⁷ What prompted this shift in the concept of localness? Why did certain subject matters come to register localness?

Existing discourses largely answered these questions from the perspective of a visual evidence of Chinese *Huaqiao* negotiating their identities from being mainland Chinese to locals in Southeast Asia. This perspective presents only a singular aspect of local art and obfuscates the richness of the local artistic milieu that existed from the 1920s to the 1940s.¹²⁸ Instead, as Kevin Chua has pointed out, future studies into local art should be read “apart from the [Chinese] artists’ own manifested discourse on them...[and] read in the light of the social throng, the din and buzz of the city.”¹²⁹ Scholars should also examine what other prominent non-Chinese artists were doing in that period which might have contributed to the idea of localness in Singapore art identity.

The next section will examine the background and concerns of the Russian artists, which lay behind their artistic efforts in forming a Singapore art identity. In looking at the progression of the Russian artists’ shared consciousness of the local, this section identifies three artistic efforts that led to the formation of local art identity between the 1920s and 1940s: first, the depiction of local life; second, the search for local colour; and third, the representation of a tropical paradise.

Contributions to Local Art: Depiction of Local Life

In Singapore art history, the depiction of local life has been ideologically linked to Chinese artists’ concern to modernise ‘outdated’ traditions of Chinese art. According to Ong Zhen Min:

This thinking is rooted in the ideology of art as a medium that serves social and political changes, as espoused by the influential early 20th century Chinese writer Lu Xun: art should reflect critical contemporary issues, rather than pay homage to outdated notions of traditions. With this form of thinking, the rendition of tropical landscapes became seen as true reflection of the daily life of overseas Chinese in the tropics, and the four seasons of classical Chinese art were replaced with brightly coloured sunlit scenes of rubber plantations and coastal shores.¹³⁰

Scholarship on how Chinese artists reworked their artistic traditions to depict local subject matter as a reflection of their daily experience has been well developed. However, an overemphasis on the importance of Lu Xun only acknowledges the agency of Chinese modern thought behind such behaviour. In fact, realist ideologies advocating art as a vehicle for social change that influenced Chinese modern thought came largely from Soviet revolutionary literature at the turn of the 20th century.¹³¹ Such literatures interpreted *Peredvizhniki* art, a mid-19th-century Russian realism, as a historical backing for an extreme politicization of art.¹³² Not only does the emphasis on Chinese modern thought and concerns present in the Nanyang art narrative make invisible its Russian *Peredvizhniki* ideological inspiration, efforts towards the depiction of local life in Singapore by other immigrant artists are overlooked.

Unlike their Chinese colleagues who had lofty goals of reworking Western and Eastern art conventions to depict local life, Russian artists were concerned for their professional success and their place in the Singapore art world.¹³³ It is not clear for Shister, Zasipkin and Tretchikoff, where their political feelings laid after coming to Singapore.¹³⁴ Unlike the *Yishu Yanjiuhui* of the 1950s, none of them produced art with an overt intention to affect political change, whether for Russia or for Singapore. Instead, like the *Peredvizhniki* artists of the first generation, who had tutored some of them, these Russian artists were concerned with self-promotion and wanted to be seen as part of Singapore's intelligentsia.¹³⁵ As mentioned in the previous section, they were involved in cross-cultural dialogues, judging at inter-school art competitions and teaching art at a professional level, showing an intent to lead or at least be part of local conversations in art. Hence, their personal artistic practice showing an interest in painting the common people could be read as an individual endeavour to break free from the Singapore art market of that era, which mainly called for the production of portraits for the elites. Instead they searched for subject matter that was, for them, befitting an artist of that land.

When these Russian artists arrived in Singapore, they were engaged in commissioned portraits and commercial art for the elites. Upon his arrival in 1926, Anatole Shister, because of his reputation as a portraitist, dealt mainly with local white residents, as seen in his restoration work for the paintings at the Memorial Hall and his portraits for Mrs F.G. Stevens, President Roland J. Farrer, Mr J. Dashwood Saunders, Malcolm MacDonald and Hugh Clifford.¹³⁶ Zasipkin, known to be one of the most technically proficient portrait artists in Shanghai, was commissioned to paint the former President of Singapore Municipality, William Bartley, in 1939.¹³⁷ Making portraits of the elites was very lucrative. Even Tretchikoff, who was not known to paint in an academically realistic way, was ranked among the highest-paid European artists in Southeast Asia for his engagement in commercial art and portraits for the advertising company, Warin Studios.¹³⁸

In the history of Russian artists in Singapore, the search for the local in art could be said to originate in a desire to move away from a reputation of being mere commercial artists engaged in work for the elites. Although such engagements were lucrative, Russian artists like Shister wanted success through a more meaningful status.¹³⁹ After living in Singapore for a while, Shister declared in a newspaper article, “I like the natives of the Far East. To me every one of them is a picture.”¹⁴⁰ Although as a professional, he was reputed as a fine portraitist of important white men in power, in his personal artistic pursuit, he loved to paint “natives” (Singapore people).¹⁴¹ To him, the local peoples presented the best subject for a “Malayan painter”.¹⁴² By 1930, wealthy Chinese merchants such as Mr Eu Tong Sen, Mr San Ah Wing, Mr Chew Kam Chuan and Mrs Lee Choon Guan all had their portraits painted by Anatole Shister.¹⁴³

Anatole Shister’s *Untitled (Portrait of a Man)* painting of a Chinese man in 1928—currently his first publicly known portrait of a non-white subject—is a detailed study of a man in blue Chinese overalls depicted against a blackened-out background typical of his academic realist style of portraiture for the elites.¹⁴⁴ Shister began depicting local (non-white) immigrants by relying on techniques taught at Russian art academies, such as the use of light and tonal value, and of chiaroscuro. Here, such techniques were used to produce a highly realistic painting, such that even the folds in the figure’s ears and clothing could be clearly seen without visible outlines. Further details in the figure’s subtle frown, piercing eyes and twisted smile create an arresting gaze, which testify to Shister’s ability to convey complex emotions in his portraits.

This kind of depiction of local (non-white) immigrants, rendered in a Western tradition of portraiture, is aesthetically different from the kind of

FIGURE 4: Anatole Shister, *Untitled (Portrait of a Man)*, 1928, oil on canvas, 70 × 54 cm. Collection of National Heritage Board. Reproduced with permission of the family of the artist.

FIGURE 5: Tchang Ju Chi, *Untitled, Unfinished*, 1942, oil on canvas. The collection of the late Dr Ho Kok Hoe. Image courtesy of Mr Ho Kah Keh.

hybridised art produced later by Nanyang artists and which came to signify localness. For example, Tchang Ju Chi's *Untitled, Unfinished*, 1942, depicts a Malay man with Western realistic shading and tonal value, but with details of his hands, feet and facial features defined by line work akin to those in Chinese *gongbi hua*.¹⁴⁵ Shister's interest in painting local (non-white) immigrants in the 1920s coincided with an increasing desire amongst the middle class of the region to have their portraits made, signalling a growing desire for the 'self' to be depicted visually. Low Kway Song, a Singapore-born self-taught artist who mastered the skill of portrait painting, made a fortune supplying the demand for portraits from leading personalities of Malaya.¹⁴⁶ His brother Low Kway Soo's *Portrait of Tan Jiak Kim*, 1919 was also one of the few portraits of local personalities that was hung alongside British officials in the Victoria Memorial Hall.¹⁴⁷ Such works indicate perhaps a growing sense of belonging, where local (non-white) immigrants are recognised as contributors to the betterment of the cosmopolitan city of Singapore. Although these works were rendered in a 'foreign' tradition of portraiture, more studies should be done on them and the role they played in the construction of localness.

The foreignness of racial types came to be a register of localness. Scholars are quick to dismiss European depiction of local people as operating in a kind of racist ethnographic study.¹⁴⁸ However, Shister's work seems to me as less of kind of racist study and more of a genuine interest in the 'foreignness' of the locale that artists from around the world were also experiencing in Singapore. Portrait studies were slowly enlarged to depict life and environmental realities of the figures. For example, Tchang Ju Chi's *Untitled, Unfinished*, 1942, painted a decade later, depicts a portrait of a Malay man clothed with added details of the songkok and a sarong. This shift from portrait studies to life can be seen in the titles of works presented to the annual exhibitions of the Society of Chinese Artists between 1936 and 1937: *Malay Women, Malay Beauties, Portrait of a Bengali, An Old Kling Man, Old Kling Lady, Malay Children at the Seaside, Attap House, Shadow of a Coconut Tree* and *Coolies*.¹⁴⁹

This shift in the 1930s was not confined to Chinese artists but was also seen in the practice of Russian artists. However, while Chinese artists were concerned to capture the enchanting environment in which they lived and how it related to their identity, the Russian artists had a different preoccupation. Shister's desire for depicting local inhabitants coincided with his idea that an artist was one "who paints with his hands, brains, and heart".¹⁵⁰ If one was to be an artist taken seriously in Malaya, one must not only display

FIGURE 6: Anatole Shister, *Nude Balinese Girl*, 1935, oil on canvas. Reproduced with permission of the family of the artist.

FIGURE 7: Vladimir Tretchikoff, *Last Divers*, 1938. Image courtesy of Natasha Swift.

technical skills but also engage with local subject matter, of which the local (non-white) immigrants were “so interesting and so full of life”.¹⁵¹ It was this spirit of local life and its veracity found in his painting subjects that Shister tried to capture in his works. He began to move away from Western aesthetics during the 1930s. Notably, a newspaper article described his works retrospectively as “completely unrestricted by the conventionalities of the formal portrait”.¹⁵² Over the course of 25 years, from 1926–51, Shister’s interest in capturing the soul and beauty of localness expanded from Chinese subjects to those of other races in the region.

Shister professed in a newspaper article mentioned above that to him “every one of them is a picture—the Indians, the Chinese, the Balinese and the Malays. I have studied them all my life and I know how to paint them.”¹⁵³ As seen in his *Nude Balinese Girl*, 1935, his style of painting did not remain within the stuffy confines of academic portraiture but became looser and more compatible with the environment. Instead of a pitch-black background, the setting is defined and there is light shining through the window on the left. While still relying on his Russian realist training, as seen in his adding of white when painting a well-lit scene, Shister’s rendering of the patterned tablecloth and offering and his treatment of the light illuminating the breast of the topless figure, indicated that apart from his professional portraits in the 1920s, he was more attentive to local form and colours.

Similarly, apart from his day job at the Warin Studios, Tretchikoff desired to become a serious fine artist in Singapore.¹⁵⁴ His painting *Last Divers*, completed in 1938, depicted penny divers at the Singapore River. Tretchikoff must have met these divers in their *jongkong* when he first arrived in Singapore in 1934.¹⁵⁵ Passengers alighting from their ships would toss coins into the water and these divers would defy whirling propeller blades to retrieve them.¹⁵⁶ Tretchikoff’s painting eschewed the often arranged setting found in formal portraiture and instead depicted local people in their environment. *Last Divers* was later selected to represent Singapore at the IBM gallery of the New York World’s Fair in 1939 and received high praise.¹⁵⁷ The international publicity of this work must have had an impact on aspiring artists in Singapore. Tretchikoff was seen then as a Singapore artist of international standing.¹⁵⁸ This caught the attention of *The Straits Times*, a local newspaper, and it later hired Tretchikoff to make portraits and caricatures of important people in Singapore. Hence, like the other Nanyang/Chinese artists during the 1920s–40s, these Russian artists were equally focused on depicting the realities of local and regional life. Yet, unlike the Nanyang/Chinese artists, their motives for depicting local life stems from a desire to be seen as Singapore artists.

Contributions to Local art: The Search for Local Colour

Local colour, which stood for localness, was a concept invented by outsiders in the cosmopolitan environment that existed in Singapore from the 1920s to the 1940s. It was thus constituted of different origins. For the Chinese artists, local colour, conceptualized as *Nanyang Fengwei*, was a selection of 'native' subject matter and themes that differentiated their diasporic Chinese identity from that of the Chinese in Mainland China.¹⁵⁹ For the Russian artists, the search for local colour in Singapore was an ostensibly objective one that could be traced back to their exposure to Peredvizhniki art at the turn of the 20th century. Peredvizhniki art was concerned with capturing the beauty and identity of the Russian native land, conceptualized as Rodina, in paintings. In Russia, second-generation Peredvizhniki artists starting from the 1880s were more inclined to depict the beauty and soul of the Russian countryside—not to criticise social injustices, but to signify a kind of nationalism that was popular and lucrative.¹⁶⁰ In Singapore, Russian artists would localise this form of thinking in their art. Scholars of local art bent on creating cultural difference are quick to dismiss these Russian artists as merely incorporating tropical motifs into their practice and not being concerned with representing local identity.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, Russian artists also had a role in concretizing subject matters and themes that stood for local colour, as played out at exhibition venues such as the YWCA, and major art surveys of Malayan art like the *Fight for Freedom* exhibition of 1941.¹⁶²

In 1937, Zasiipkin explicitly made known to the *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)* that after fleeing to Singapore from the Japanese, he was active in "working on a number of canvases in local colour".¹⁶³ After losing most of his artworks in Shanghai, Zasiipkin had to rebuild his fortune and reputation as an artist, and he did so by identifying with the local. While Chinese artists employed the concept of 'local colour' to differentiate their art from those of Mainland China, Zasiipkin's art in 'local colour' adapted techniques in Peredvizhniki art for representing Russian rural woodland landscapes to commemorate the tropical landscape of the local habitus.¹⁶⁴ His paintings focused on coastal scenes and old urban scenes so as to capture the beauty of Malaya in his search for local colour.¹⁶⁵ When he held his much anticipated solo exhibition at the YWCA in 1938, it was reported that the locals were impressed by his great attention to detail in his landscapes of Singapore and Malacca.¹⁶⁶ In total, for that exhibition, he produced 115 paintings of Singapore people, old-fashioned buildings and nudes.¹⁶⁷ Due to the Second World War and the disruption it caused, it is difficult to locate the original works by Zasiipkin in Singapore. But one can deduce from the newspaper reports that his ability to capture with fidelity the character of the landscapes was not solely attributed

to his academic proficiency but also to his deep involvement in the local social life since he had made Singapore his home. Through publicity gained in the local media, the exhibition could be understood as contributing to the popularisation of local people, old street scenes, fishing boats and local landscape as art subjects.

In the 1930s, the YWCA at Raffles Quay was a popular venue for art exhibitions. It was at such venues that Western and Eastern cultural figures sparred in ideologies and concepts for localness. Zasipkin's solo exhibition in June 1938 preceded by a month the third annual Society of Chinese Artists exhibition at the same venue.¹⁶⁸ In Zasipkin's art, local colour was represented through "meticulous study and sound technique" by the use of oil paintings, charcoal and pastels.¹⁶⁹ One of the notable artworks in his exhibition was a realistic representation of *Newspaper Sellers, Singapore*.¹⁷⁰ In his speech for the aforementioned Society of Chinese Artists exhibition, Liu Kang declared that Chinese artists "wanted to produce, not a replica of an object or scene on canvas but the significance of that object or scene, the true meaning behind it".¹⁷¹ Liu Kang also went on to say that the Chinese artists preferred the art of Gauguin and Matisse as they felt that it was similar to their aim of finding "meaning".¹⁷²

Here two concepts of localness are presented. Zasipkin, under the influence of Russian Peredvizhniki art, sought an unvarnished representation of daily scenes as a means to signify localness, whereas the Chinese/Nanyang artists did not seek to reproduce reality but, entrenched in the traditional appreciation for 写意 *Xieyi* (literally, writing ideas/meaning) and inspired by modernist styles of the School of Paris aesthetics, sought to emphasize semblance in their art, in order to achieve a certain translation of the artists' minds or feelings of the local environment. Liu Kang would later be well known for his Nanyang paintings, where he appropriated Fauvist techniques in his work, for example, *Artist and Model*, 1954. However, he and other Chinese artists like Lim Cheng Hoe and Chew Yew Seng were also known to have produced realistic portraits in pastels of local people in the 1950s, not unlike what the Russian artists were creating between the 1920s and 1940s.¹⁷³ Although scholarship in Singapore art has focused on Chinese/Nanyang artists' conception of localness, more studies should be done to explore what other concepts or expression of localness were circulating in Singapore from the 1920s to 1940s.

The climax of these exchanges in expressions of localness emerged at the *Fight for Freedom Exhibition* in 1941 at the Victoria Memorial Hall. It was an exhibition with an expressed aim to showcase Malaya and her identity, and it involved both the Society of Chinese Artists and the Singapore Art

Club.¹⁷⁴ It was there that Tretchikoff displayed his 1937 *Untitled* portrait of a Malay man.

This portrait depicts a skinny Malay man with sharp features wearing a *songkok*, a traditional Malay cap. Coming about a decade after Anatole Shister's professional portraits of elites, this portrait is markedly different. Compositionally it is a typical head study portrait with a darkened background. Yet, despite not including any background details of the sitter's surroundings, Tretchikoff's palette of warm orange, reflecting off the left of the figure, manage to instil a certain fiery sense of tropical heat. The deep blue that shimmers on the indigo bronze skin on the right, captures Tretchikoff's interpretation of how local light behaves when it hits the skin of the local inhabitants. This dramatic play of light and bold skin tones rendered by visible brushstrokes sets it aside from the academic realism in professional portraits made for the elites during the 1920s. More than just a change in subject matter, it signals a different way of painting in order to capture the essence of local environment through portraiture. The painting shows a unique style that was born out of the amalgamation of experiences gained from Tretchikoff's itinerant life up to that point: theatrical use of colours learnt from his Russian theatre design colleagues in Harbin, accurate rendering of facial features and an interest in the common people as imparted by his teacher Zasipkin in Shanghai, and the tropical light he encountered in Singapore. It is critical to note that this way of painting was never again repeated in Tretchikoff's later works made in Java or in South Africa, when Art Deco had a stronger influence on him; in a sense, it was unique to Tretchikoff's Singapore style.

Tretchikoff's painting and his colour scheme had a strong appeal to the Singapore public. This painting originally completed in 1937 was exhibited and considered to be of note in the major *Fight for Freedom Exhibition* in 1941, which saw a record 30,000 attendees.¹⁷⁵ This might have impacted how local art was envisioned then. Boris Gorelik, a scholar on Tretchikoff, had difficulty finding reproductions of this work in *The Straits Times Annual* at six different libraries around the world, including even the National Library in Singapore. Pages with the painting were found to have been removed via cut-outs or by hand. In consultation with curator Khairuddin Hori, Boris Gorelik concluded that the local public had perhaps found much to like in this work and had removed reproductions of it deliberately. Gorelik felt that this testifies to the strong appeal of this painting.¹⁷⁶

Indeed, not only did Tretchikoff's palette appeal to his Chinese contemporaries such as Situ Qiao, his influence was felt in the works of Nanyang artists about a decade later. For example, leading Nanyang artist Chen Wen Hsi, whose works are considered today as representative of local colour,

FIGURE 8: Vladimir Tretchikoff, *Untitled*, 1937.
Image courtesy of Natasha Swift.

FIGURE 9: Chen Wen Hsi, *Indian Children*, c. 1953, oil on canvas,
75 × 59 cm. Collection of National
Gallery Singapore P-1225.

produced *Indian Children* in the 1950s. One sees the same use of indigo blue shimmering on a dark-skinned figure, albeit used differently. In Tretchikoff's artworks, for example his *Untitled* painting of a Malay man, it was used in one direction to indicate a certain dramatic lighting that adds to both the tropical atmosphere and the volume of the figure. In contrast, in Chen's *Indian Children*, blue streaks on both sides of the two dark-skinned children carrying a basket of fruit seem to serve more as formal elements corresponding to the wild brushstrokes in the background, emphasizing the vibrancy of the local environment. While both Tretchikoff and Chen made art that was informed by local life, they painted differently.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Chen's palette of yellows and deep blues are reminiscent of Tretchikoff's untitled paintings in Singapore.

The years (1937–38) in which Russian artists were active and gaining acclaim in Singapore were also the years in which Lim Hak Tai arrived in Singapore and set up the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. Both Russian and Chinese artists were displaying and exchanging ideas in their search for localness in Singapore's exhibitory circuit. While scholars have studied Nanyang artists' search for local identity linearly and have attributed its origins to Chinese modernist art, they have not considered it laterally. When Lim's statements regarding the direction of Nanyang art are viewed alongside the works of these Russian artists, we see that tastes in colour scheme and subject matter that came to shape local art emerged from the pluralistic art world that existed in Singapore during the 1930s.

Contributions to Local Art: Painting the Region

Concerning the idea of localness as also a regional identity, local scholars have noted that Nanyang artists conflated the idea of representing the local with the concept of 'tropical paradise' and started painting not just Malayan subject matter but also those of the region, especially Balinese.¹⁷⁸ Scholars have also traced the concept of 'tropical paradise' to French post-Impressionist artist Paul Gauguin (who had never set foot in Singapore) and primitivism in modern art.¹⁷⁹ Yvonne Low, through a close reading of artists' professed ideology, showed that Bali presented Nanyang artists with a "means to convey this sense of Nanyang-ness".¹⁸⁰ What scholars have not satisfactorily addressed is how an imagined paradise of Bali came to signify the essence of Nanyang, a regional identity, in the minds of the Nanyang artists? Nanyang artists did not practise art in a vacuum. Although Nanyang was a Chinese conception, I argue that ideas about what Nanyang should look like were constructed by exchanges or encounters specific to Singapore's

art world. Perhaps one way is to look at inspirations from the local non-Chinese contemporaries of the Nanyang artists and examine how the quest for Balinese subjects was reinforced by local artistic exchanges among the Nanyang and other artists practising in Singapore at that time, for example, the Russian artists.

Anatole Shister visited Bali in 1934, 1937 and 1939, after he joined the Singapore Art Club in March 1932.¹⁸¹ It is important to note that after 1932, there are no reports of Shister engaging in any commission work for the elites. Instead, in his search for individuality, he noted that Malayan painters should travel outside the country to gain experiences.¹⁸² In 1934, he travelled around the world to the United States, Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Java and Bali.¹⁸³ He concluded that the peoples of Asia are important subjects for an artist in Malaya, and Balinese people became a major feature in his art.

Perhaps inspired too by what other European artists like Le Mayeur were producing on the island of Bali, Shister began to break free from the conventions of portrait painting and produced artworks of Balinese subjects that were popular and lucrative in the local art world.¹⁸⁴ Although his undated painting of *Charwan* (top left corner of Figure 10) is rendered in a realistic manner, his brushstrokes and form are looser, giving the painting an unrestrained character. The bold use of painterly brushstrokes and of light and shadow to accent the figure's relaxed pose, bare breast and embroidered pants in *Charwan* is in contrast with Shister's earlier *Untitled* painting in 1928 of a Chinese man, which was rigidly posed and depicted realistically with no visible signs of brushwork. Shister's *Charwan*, with its figure dramatically lit and breast exposed, exudes a kind of carefree beauty that was not unlike what Nanyang artists were searching for in the 1950s.

Nanyang artist Liu Kang felt that Bali was filled with "characteristics suitable to Nanyang".¹⁸⁵ He explained that the tropical traditions, landscapes and customs should form the subjects and they should be rendered in a bright and light manner in combination with relaxed brushstrokes.¹⁸⁶ Like Shister's *Charwan*, Liu's *Siesta in Bali* featured a topless woman in a relaxed posture rendered in loose brushstrokes.¹⁸⁷ Yet when comparing both paintings, one sees that in *Siesta in Bali*, Liu paid more attention to creating a bright and breezy environment surrounding a near-stylized figure, whereas Shister's *Charwan* is more detailed in the rendering of facial and bodily features, giving the fleshy figure a subdued gaze. Shister found that the Balinese "have a mystery in their faces which is difficult for an artist to capture".¹⁸⁸ Although they were markedly different in motivation and style, with Nanyang artists using the concept of the Nanyang region as a guide

and Shister seeking individuality in his art through travels, it is clear that the Nanyang artists were not alone in the construction of a local art that possesses a regional identity.

Furthermore, in works like Shister's *Charwan*, which uses an indigenous name to title a painting, we see a trend that was shared amongst other immigrant artists during the late 1930s. For example, in 1936, Tina Wentscher made *Anjang*, a sculpture of a Temiar Sakai girl who followed the artist from Cameron Highlands to Singapore.¹⁸⁹ In 1939, Tchang Ju Chi created *Mila and Jena*, a painting of two girls in patterned sarongs within a rustic setting. He created this painting while visiting Brastagi Highlands in modern-day Indonesia and submitted it amongst other works to the annual exhibition of the Society of Chinese Artists that year.¹⁹⁰ The titles of these paintings are strikingly different from previous artworks with generic titles like *Malay Women*, *Malay Beauties* and *Indian Children*. The shift signalled a deeper consciousness of the local region amongst artists, who were now painting real people who were known to them, rather than from the perspective of an outsider painting strangers.¹⁹¹ In a sense, the subjects were no longer merely foreign racial types, but instead seen and depicted as fellow inhabitants of the region. Artists from both China and Europe travelled around the region making portraits and other artworks, and exhibited their art in Singapore.

The masterpieces from Shister's intermittent travels also enjoyed an exhibition at Singapore's Robinson and Co. mall in 1947, which received noteworthy publicity and official endorsement.¹⁹² In that exhibition, local media commented that Bali was Shister's paradise.¹⁹³ Such an assertion in the local media must have helped conjure imaginations of Bali in the minds of Nanyang artists. However, hardly any of Singapore's art commentators have discussed Anatole Shister's exhibition of Balinese subjects at the Robinson and Co. mall in 1947.

Today, only the Bali trip of 1952 undertaken by Liu Kang, Cheong Soo Pieng, Chen Wen Hsi and Chen Chong Swee, as well as their subsequent exhibition in 1953, have been reified as the milestone in Singapore art history that marked a new sense of localness in art rooted in the region's cultural way of life.¹⁹⁴ Low has demonstrated that such claims must be seen historically alongside the tumultuous socio-political climate during the early 1950s, which was geared towards constructing a Malayan nation fostered by ideas of Chinese and Malayan unity.¹⁹⁵ However, peeling back the years of social construction, Shister's exhibition points to a history often overlooked by scholars, that of local European artists who organized art exhibitions in Singapore of their travels in the region. In the 1930s, Dora Gordine travelled to Angkor Wat and Bangkok and produced artworks in Singapore that were

Saturday, October 18, 1947

THE STRAITS TIMES

Page 9

A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali

IN Singapore a man awaits his chance to return to "paradise" to re-explore with brush and canvas its mysteries. He is Russian artist Anatole Shister, graduate of Charles St. Petersburg's Academy of Fine Arts.

His paradise is Bali, venue for years of painters and writers from many lands.

Mr. Shister first went to Bali in 1931, was unimpressed, left after three weeks.

Six months later he returned, came to realise the beauty of the island and its natives built himself a bungalow and studio in a native village, remained. The artist was completely enchanted.

"The Balinese," says Shister, "have a mystery in their faces which is difficult for an artist to capture."

One day in 1942 Mr. Shister hastily packed up 34 paintings, 11 sketches, boarded the last ship to Australia and safely left most of his belongings to the Japanese.

A Belgian artist friend writes from Bali that Shister is unimpressed now, does not advise him to return yet.

Today, in response to requests by friends who used to visit him in Sydney during the war, he is opening an exhibition of these paintings and sketches in Singapore.

The Straits Times picture page today shows photographs of the artist (right) and of some of the five-and-a-half-dozen paintings at the exhibition.

Portrait on the left is "Charwan," famous Balinese beggar dancer.

Anatole Shister's subjects include the late Sir Cecil Clementi and Sir Hugh Clifford, the first president of the Republic of China, Yuen Shih-kai. The portrait of Sir Hugh is in the Victoria Hall Gallery, Sir Cecil's at the University of Hong Kong. Shister left Bali two years before the Revolution, studied in Rome, toured Europe, went to Manchuria and China. He may have six sittings a day, duration of each depending on his mood, the subject's mood, the weather which influences the light—and the mind.

Today Four Shows
1.30 - 4 - 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

PAVILION
PHONE 4701

This is Reddy...
...and you can see the best of him here...

REDDY LAMAR
Diamond Lady
DORIS GREEFE - JOHN LORR

Children's Matinees Today & Tomorrow 11 a.m.
Turhan Bey In "NIGHT IN PARADISE"
(In Technicolor)

TO-NIGHT at 8.45 p.m.
GREAT WORLD WRESTLING
Malayan Lt. Heavy-wt Title
BANTA SINGH 10x5
(India)
HIGHLAND LADDIE
(Scotland)

GORILLA WONG 10x5 **WHITE BUTCHER**
(The 118 lb. Chinese Sensation)

PERGAWAN 10x5 **R'HOUSE PETERS**
(The L.A. Flyer)

TEAM WRESTLING
Winston Hanson vs. Bill Gaudin
and Tiger Aloni vs. D. Heston

BOOKINGS
Tel. 4158
Tickets: \$2.50, \$1.50, \$1.00

FOR YOUR RELAXATION COME TO THE TAVERN
(EUROPEAN RESIDENTIAL HOTEL)
Our 4 x 10 Blocks only High Class Liquors
NO OTHER WHISKY BUT SCOTCH.
NO OTHER GIN BUT ENGLISH.
Cook and Quiet Locality
Crazy and nice Tiffin every Sunday
Our every evening is specially prepared
787, TANGLER ROAD (Opposite NAKSIE ROAD).
Cables "TAVERN"
Telephone 4948

The Gramophone Co., Ltd.
is pleased to inform music lovers that a comprehensive selection of recorded music to meet all tastes is readily available in Malaya.

Shipments of previous issues as well as current releases are constantly arriving from England and if your local dealer is unable to supply your needs immediately from his shelves, he should be able to obtain the particular records you require from our Singapore stock centre. Ask him to place an order for you.

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
GRAMOPHON ARTISTS
FINEST RECORDING

JOHN L. THORNYCROFT & CO.
(Incorporated in England)
TANK ROAD • SINGAPORE • TANJONG RHU

Thornycroft Marine Engines & Commercial Vehicles
Chadburn Telegraph & Steering Gears
Spiral Compasses, Marine Instruments & Boat Fittings
Rivard Paints & Varnishes
Seagull Outboard Motors
Tandem Bearing Metals
R. T. H. Magnetics
Beclaw Windows

PACKARD
is the Aristocrat of Motordom

MALAYAN MOTORS LTD.
14/15, Orchard Road, Singapore, Phone 521
Represented in Malaya by
WEARNE BROS. LTD.
ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE

"Lakmat," 14-year-old Balinese and "Head of an Old Man." The last portrait was done with palette knife as well as brush. The old man belongs to the legun g orchestra in Klandia, the village where Shister lived.

FIGURE 10: "A Russian Artist Dreams of Bali", *The Straits Times*, 18 October 1947, p. 9. Source: *The Straits Times* © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reprinted with permission.

FIGURE 11: Liu Kang, *Siesta in Bali*, c. 1953, oil on canvas, 132.5 × 92 cm. Collection of Liu Liang. Image courtesy of Liu Liang.

inspired by her travels.¹⁹⁶ Other European artists such as Julius and Tina Wentscher travelled along the Malayan East Coast and in Bali, and held exhibitions of artworks made during their travels in 1936 and 1937.¹⁹⁷ Because they were highly publicized by the local media at that time, I argue that the movement of these European artists in Southeast Asia and their works displayed in Singapore might have inspired how Chinese artists imagined Nanyang visually, and for that matter, Singapore art.

For instance, Shister's exhibition in 1947 was taken by the public as equal to the works of Liu Kang in the construction of a multicultural identity for Singapore art. *The Straits Times* noted:

Singapore is becoming quite cosmopolitan in its cultural interests these days. The past two weeks have seen exhibitions of pictures by a Chinese artist, Lui [Liu] Kang, and by a Russian artist, Mr. Anatole Shister, and during the week we have a third exhibition by an Italian Count.¹⁹⁸

Artworks displayed at Shister's and Nanyang artist Liu Kang's exhibitions were seen as exemplifying Singapore's multicultural art identity in their display of Balinese subjects.

Shister's exhibition is significant because in its opening speech, Dato Roland Braddell, a reputable civil servant, urged, "What we need very badly

is a proper art gallery in Singapore.”¹⁹⁹ A Singaporean educated in Britain, Braddell must have been inspired by the National Gallery in London. His remark that Singapore needed its own art gallery shows that Shister's exhibition was consequential to developing local institutions for art. It elevates Shister's paintings as worthy of collecting and displaying at a national level and suggests the promulgation of Balinese subjects as typifying localness. Although the pioneer artists Chen Chong Swee, Chen Wen Hsi, Cheong Soo Pieng and Liu Kang did not reference Shister as an influence on their historic 1952 trip to Bali, it may be fair to assume that the strong endorsement for Shister's exhibition in 1947 might have helped to condition the local art environment for artistic travels to Bali and the incorporation of Balinese subjects as typifying localness.

Although coming from a background and having concerns different to the Chinese artists, these Russian artists also made efforts in the depiction of local life, the search for local colour, and travels for painting the region, contributing to a local art identity. We see that the sources for depicting the realities of local life cannot be traced back only to Chinese modernist developments, but also to individuals, including Russian artists, who desired to be part and parcel of the local conversations of art. Alongside Chinese Nanyang artists, these Russian artists were equally involved in the search for local consciousness in art, whereby they adapted aspects of *Peredvizhniki* art to local settings. If *Peredvizhniki* art from the 1880s was committed to representing the countryside as an embodiment of the soul of Tsarist Russia, then the depiction of different races, street scenes and fishing boats in Singapore could have been elevated by these Russian artists to be the anchoring soul of local art identity during the 1930s. Their artworks and efforts helped to internalize the idea of a 'tropical paradise' in Southeast Asia, and thereby aided the incorporation of regional subject matter in Singapore art. The history of these Russian artists points to a history of local European artists who lived in Singapore and exhibited the art of their travels in Southeast Asia, which might have set the precedent for how the ethnically Chinese artists imagined the Nanyang region visually. Though they have been largely excluded from most discourse on local art identity, these Russian artists should be understood as having played a role in constructing localness in Singapore art.

Conclusion

Conceptualised in the context of a postcolonial nation with a Chinese-majority population, existing discussions on Singapore's local art identity

has chiefly reified the contributions of a singular ethnic group, the Chinese *Huaqiao*, in the development of the Nanyang art discourse. Nationalist frameworks in Singapore art history have meant that the rich pluralistic art world that existed in Singapore during the 1930s, and the history of European artists who inhabited it alongside Chinese artists, have been occluded from most discussions on local art identity.

This article has attempted to fill this gap by examining the contributions of three Russian artists in Singapore in the early 20th century: Anatole Shister, Vasily Zasiipkin and Vladimir Tretchikoff. Although focused on the contributions of these three Russian artists, the article does not seek to establish a Russian perspective on Singapore's story of art. Instead, through a case study of their migration stories, their interactions with other artists, and their art produced and exhibited within Singapore's artistic milieu during the 1920s to the 1940s, the article offers a historical perspective on the formation of a local art identity.

As a whole, the story of these Russian artists in Singapore opens up several implications to be explored further in future studies of local art in the period from the 1920s to the 1940s. For example, the fact that artists from Europe and China were together displaying art that showcased the beauty of Malayan life and identity at the *Fight for Freedom* exhibition in 1941, speaks of specific circumstances constituting the Singapore art world during the period, from which a local art identity emerged.

Socio-political transformations not only in China but also in Europe were important circumstances leading to the influx of cultural figures to Singapore. By recognising this, the story of art in Singapore is no longer a one-sided tale of Chinese art students bringing their interpretations of School of Paris modernist styles from a glorious European centre. Instead, through the study of local European artists—in this case Russian artists—Europe is cast in a less than elegant light, its artists not as enlightened champions of modernism, but as figures who often struggled for survival. Perhaps further studies into other artists of different ethnicities would facilitate the rethinking of Singapore's relationships with historic centres of art, such as those in China and Europe.

This article has also demonstrated that the Singapore artistic milieu between the 1920s and the 1940s can no longer be described solely by a narrative of Chinese leadership. Apart from the Society of Chinese Artists and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, there were also other institutions such as the multiracial Singapore Art Club and the Russian-led Apollo School of Fine Arts. This case study of Russian artists' contributions to and participation in the local art world shows that artists of different backgrounds and ethnicities

were equally concerned about art education, and were also involved in active cross-cultural dialogues, for example, in the inter-school art competitions. This provides material for future scholars to study the context of a pluralistic art world from which Singapore's local art identity emerged.

Moving forward, studies into local art identity must recognise Singapore's historic identity as a port city where many different ideas and cultures have converged. This article has only looked at this phenomenon through a case study of Russian artists. More scholarship on the Malay, Indian and Japanese artists, and their contributions during this period should be undertaken in future studies of Singapore's local art identity. Efforts into understanding how Singapore art has embodied a regional consciousness should look beyond the Chinese *Huaqiao's* experience, and also consider the contributions of other artists who held exhibitions in Singapore.

BIOGRAPHY

David Low Kok Kiat is an independent scholar. Previously, he was a Curatorial Assistant at the National Gallery Singapore where he worked on exhibitions such as *Siapa Nama Kamu: Art in Singapore since the 19th Century*, *Chua Soo Bin: Truths and Legends* and *Latiff Mohidin: Pago Pago*. He was also involved in curating and producing *The Artist Speaks: Chua Ek Kay* publication, which won a silver award at the 10th ICMA Award for Books. Low also co-authored *Expanding Fields: An Appendix*. He graduated with a MA in Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore.

NOTES

- ¹ This article is based on a chapter of my MA (Southeast Asian Studies) thesis, “European Artists in Singapore during the Early 20th Century: Towards a Global Multicultural Understanding of Nanyang Art”, National University of Singapore, 2018. The thesis was supervised by Goh Beng Lan. In rewriting the chapter for this article, I consulted Seng Yu Jin, who provided additional feedback and comments during the early stages.
- ² Vera Ardmore, “Fight For Freedom Exhibition At Victoria Hall”, *Morning Tribune*, 12 Sept. 1941, p. 4, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19410912-1.2.28?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; Mary Heathcott, “Fight for Freedom Exhibition Opens”, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 12 Sept. 1941, p. 5, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19410912-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ³ Local media characterised it as “An all-Malaya scheme”, which started first in Kuala Lumpur and ended in Singapore. “Fight For Freedom”, *Malaya Tribune*, 12 April 1941, p. 12, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19410412-1.2.126?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “Fight for Freedom Exhibition Tour Starts Next Month” *Malaya Tribune*, 21 Apr. 1941, p. 2, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19410421-1.2.24?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁴ In Singapore, this exhibition was expanded to include annual exhibitions of both the Singapore Art Club and the Society of Chinese Artists. “There will be three exhibitions simultaneously in the Victoria Memorial Hall, Singapore, from Memorial Hall, Singapore, from Sept 11 (Thursday) to 17. The Fight for Freedom Exhibition will be presented by the Department of Information and publicity; the Singapore Art Club will hold its annual exhibition; and the Singapore Chinese Art Club will also hold its annual exhibition. All these three exhibitions will be staged in the Memorial Hall and the surrounding galleries. They will open simultaneously until Sept 17.” “Three Big Exhibitions In Singapore’s Town Hall”, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 6 Sept. 1941, p. 5, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19410906-1.2.64?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “Three Local exhibitions”, *The Straits Times*, 6 Sept. 1941, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19410906-1.2.49?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁵ Heathcott, “Fight for Freedom Exhibition Opens”, p. 5.
- ⁶ Notions of *Nanyang Feng’ge* and localness will be discussed in the next section.
- ⁷ There were, of course, other Russian artists in Singapore at that time, for example, Mr V.D. Shilonosoff, who was a successor of Zaspikin at his Apollo School of Fine Arts; however, there is currently very little information about him. Dora Gordine has also been considered a Russian artist, but in art history she belongs more to a

group of early British modern sculptors. See: Mary Heathcott, "'Footlights Parade' 1941 promises To Be Bright Show", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 Sept. 1941, p. 5, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19410905-1.2.52?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- ⁸ "Local Artist's Work at New York Fair", *The Straits Times*, 7 Aug. 1939, p. 13, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19390807-1.2.84?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁹ "Singapore's First 'Skyscraper' In The Making", *Malaya Tribune*, 10 July 1939, p. 5, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19390710-1.2.190.11?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁰ "New Singapore School Of Art", *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 10 Oct. 1937, p. 13, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19371010-1.2.68?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² "Singapore Art Exhibition Opens Today", *The Straits Times*, 26 Oct. 1947, p. 7, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19471026-1.2.70?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹³ Ong Zhen Min, "Nanyang Reverie", in *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art in Singapore Since the 19th Century*, ed. Low Sze Wee and Sara Siew (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2015), pp. 42–53.
- ¹⁴ *Huaqiao*, a transliterated Chinese term for Overseas Chinese. Yeo Wei Wei, "Drying Fish in Singapore Art: Making Sense of the Nanyang Style", *Biblioasia* 7, 1 (April 2011): 4–9.
- ¹⁵ Chiyoji Yazaki and Jacob Tarecon were artists who lived in Singapore for a currently undetermined time. Chiyoji Yazaki held exhibitions in Singapore in 1922 and 1926. He told reporters that "he intends to stay for some time in Singapore there will be ample opportunity for his work to become known and appreciated." "Chiyoji Yazaki and his art", *The Straits Times*, 27 June 1933, p. 15, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19330627-1.2.103?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Untitled", *The Straits Times*, 2 June 1922, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19220602-1.2.44?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Europe in Colour", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (Weekly)*, 7 April 1926, p. 220, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepresswk19260407-1.2.73?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Indian Sculptor Whose Work Adorns the Palaces Of Kings", *The Straits Times*, 30 June 1935, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19350630-1.2.36?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; Mulyadi Mahamood, *Modern Malaysian Art: From the Pioneering Era to the Pluralist Era, 1930s–1990s* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributions Sdn Bhd, 2007), p. 2.

- ¹⁶ David Low Kok Kiat, "European artists in Singapore during the Early 20th Century: Towards a Global Multicultural Understanding of Nanyang Art", MA thesis, National University of Singapore, 2018; Jeffery Say, "An Émigré Artist in Singapore", *The Arts Magazine: The Centre for the Arts at the National University of Singapore* (Sept./Oct. 2002): 36–41; Pfeiffer-Hunt Jhana, "A Malayan Bungalow", *Exhibition Supplement Issue 1* (Melbourne: The Duldig Studio, 2013); Jon S.H. Lim, "Cabalori Rudolfo Nolli a sculptor & entrepreneur", *National University of Singapore's Architecture Journal* (1984): 11–5; Jonathan Black and Brenda Martin, *Dora Gordine: sculptor, artist, designer* (London: Dorich House Museum, Kingston University, in association with Philip Wilson, 2007).
- ¹⁷ Many surveys of Singapore art mention Richard Walker and Le Mayeur. In particular, many Nanyang artists professed being greatly inspired by Le Mayeur. Writing for the National Gallery Singapore, Ong Zhen Min positioned Le Mayeur as one of the key proponents who promulgated exoticized imaginings of Balinese life based on representations of 'icons' in paintings, such as rural landscapes, cultural practices of Balinese inhabitants and topless women. Such Balinese paintings were perceived to be a platform where travelling European artists enacted their sexual desires and for the erotization of indigenous bodies. Ong Zhen Min, "Nanyang Reverie", p. 48. See also: Kwok Kian Chow, *Channels & Confluences: A History of Singapore Art*; Chia Wai Hon, "Traditional Aesthetics in the Visual Arts: The Singapore Story", in *Bits and Pieces: Writings on Art* (Singapore: Contemporary Asian Art Centre LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, 2002), pp. 47–57; Tan Meng Kiat, "The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style: A Study in the Search for an Artistic Identity in Singapore, 1930–1960", MA thesis, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 1997; Yvonne Low, "Remembering Nanyang Feng ge", in *Modern Art Asia Issues 1–8*, ed. Majella Munro (United Kingdom: Enzoarts, 2012), pp. 22–60.
- ¹⁸ See: Peggy Heller, "The Russian Dawn: How Russia contributed to the emergence of 'the west' as a concept", in *The Struggle for the West: A Divided and Contested Legacy*, ed. Christopher Browning and Marko Lehti (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 33–52.
- ¹⁹ Chinese modernists and other artists' admiration for their Russian counterparts will be discussed in a later section. Please also see note 132.
- ²⁰ Roland St. John Braddell, "We call all white people 'Europeans', whether they come from Europe or the United States or Australia, & etc", *The Lights of Singapore* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1935), p. 43; "European Association Of Malaya", *Malaya Tribune*, 8 Sept. 1937, p. 12, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19370908-1.2.77?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Mura Smirnova", *The Straits Times*, 12 April 1932, p. 12, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19320412-1.2.77?ST=1&AT>

[accessed March 2020]; “Malayan Correspondents Use 41 Languages”, *Malaya Tribune*, 25 Oct. 1939, p. 3, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19391025-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “Wednesday, October 26, 1927”, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (Weekly)*, 2 Nov. 1927, p. 277, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepresswk19271102-1.2.39?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- ²¹ In Singapore, Anatole Shister was considered a European artist with a well-established reputation in Western portrait painting. “Cultural Life In Singapore”, *Malaya Tribune*, 22 July 1948, p. 4, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19480722-1.2.54?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “New Municipal Portraits”, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 19 April 1929, p. 16, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19290419-1.2.118?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]. When Vasily Zasipkin opened his Apollo School of Fine Arts shortly after his arrival in Singapore, he was celebrated in an English-language newspaper article as one who brought ‘culture’, or more accurately, Western art traditions of painting, drawing, modelling and sculpture, to the city. “Brings Art to Singapore”, *The Straits Times*, 10 Oct. 1937, p. 3, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19371010-1.2.20?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]. Tretchikoff frequently played water polo at the Singapore Swimming Club, a chief Sunday retreat for the local Western community, and was considered as one of the highest-paid European artists in the city. Boris Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer* (London: Art Books Publishing Ltd, 2013), pp. 46–9.
- ²² Chia Wai Hon, “Traditional Aesthetics in the Visual Arts: The Singapore Story”, in *Bits and Pieces: Writings on Art* (Singapore: Contemporary Asian Art Centre LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, 2002), pp. 47–57.
- ²³ The growth of the Chinese population in Singapore and their art activities was the motivation for scholars to focus their study on local identity through the perspective of the Chinese community. Yeo Mang Thong, *Xinjiapo zhanqian huaren meishushi lunji* 新加坡战前华人美术史论集 [Essays on the History of Pre-War Chinese Painting in Singapore] (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 1992), pp. 1–6; Tan Meng Kiat, “The Evolution of the Nanyang Style”, p. 11.
- ²⁴ Yvonne Low, “Nanyang Style”, in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism*, 9 May 2016, <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/nanyang-style> [accessed March 2020].
- ²⁵ “The history of Chinese presence in Singapore, their artistic activities and the emergence of a local art style [Nanyang style] is a story that unfolds together with the history of Singapore how it evolved from an immigrant society to a modern nation.” Tan Meng Kiat, “The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style”, p. 11; Chia Wai Hon, “Traditional Aesthetics in the Visual Arts: The Singapore Story”, pp. 47–57.

- ²⁶ Kwok Kian Chow's survey of Singapore art in his 1996 *Channels of Confluence: A History of Singapore Art* was a project in the production of cultural difference. Burdened like his contemporaries to dispel the notion of Nanyang art as lacking originality, Kwok wanted to make clear that "while the history of Western art serves as an important reference for a study of Singapore's modern art history, Singapore art is not derivative of any international art trends". However, in trying to create difference from the West and establish local agency in art, Kwok marginalised the contributions of European artists in Singapore. Kwok Kian Chow, *Channels & Confluences: A History of Singapore Art*, pp. 9, 30; Tan Meng Kiat, "The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style", p. 3.
- ²⁷ John Hall Jones and Christopher Hooi, *An early surveyor in Singapore: John Turnbull Thomson in Singapore, 1841–1853* (Singapore: National Museum of Singapore, 1979); Irene Lim, *Sketches in the Straits: nineteenth-century watercolours and manuscript of Singapore, Malacca, Penang, and Batavia by Charles Dyce* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Museum, 2003); Chong Guan Kwa, John Bastin and Morten Strange, *Natural History Drawings: The Complete William Farquhar Collection: Malay Peninsula 1803–1818* (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2010).
- ²⁸ See note 17.
- ²⁹ Yvonne Low, "A 'Forgotten' Art World: The Singapore Art Club and Its Colonial Women Artists", in *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, ed. Elaine Ee and Charmaine Oon, 1st ed. (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017), pp. 104–20.
- ³⁰ Kwok merely listed Anatole Shister, Dora Gordine and Karl Duldig in a sentence as artists who might have inspired the Chinese artist Lim Cheng Hoe. Kwok Kian Chow, *Channels & Confluences: A History of Singapore Art*, p. 30; Melinda Susanto, "Tropical Tapestry", in *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art in Singapore Since the 19th Century* (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2015), pp. 30–1.
- ³¹ Redza Piyadasa, "On Origins and Beginnings", in *Vision and Idea—Relooking Modern Malaysian Art*, ed. Thiagarajan Kanaga Sabapathy (Kuala Lumpur: National Art Gallery, 1994), p. 31.
- ³² Thiagarajan Kanaga Sabapathy, "Scroll Met Easel", in *The Straits Times Annual '82* (Singapore: Times Printers, 1982), pp. 114–27; Redza Piyadasa, "On Origins and Beginnings", pp. 15–49; Redza Piyadasa, "The Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts" and Thiagarajan Kanaga Sabapathy, "The Nanyang Artists: Some General Remarks", in *Pameran Retrospektif Pelukis-pelukis Nanyang* (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Seni Negara Malaysia, 1979); Tan Meng Kiat, "The Evolution of the Nanyang style"; Ian Li Ong, "Tradition and change: The eclectic artworks of the Nanyang artists", MA thesis, University of Malaya, 2007; Seng Yu Jin, "The Primacy of Painting: The Institutional Structure of the Singapore Art World from 1935–1972", MA thesis, National University of Singapore, 2006.

- ³³ “First, at the level of form, it is debatable if eclecticism constitutes a sufficient criterion whereby difference from the ‘West’ can be founded. For, as we have seen, eclecticism of the ‘East’ and the ‘West’ was itself already the modus operandi of a painter like Gauguin.” Ho Tzu Nyen, “Afterimages—Strands of Modern Art in Singapore”, MA thesis, National University of Singapore, 2007, pp. 212–3.
- ³⁴ Tan Tee Chie, “The Definition of Nanyang Style”, in *Nanyang-ism 2003*, ed. Yau Tian Yau (Singapore: The Society of Chinese Artists, 2003), p. 12.
- ³⁵ Kevin Chua also notes that such interpretations “may belong less to the painting, than to Sabapathy’s methodology itself, one rooted in an understanding of style and iconography that was being disseminated in Euro-America in the 1950s and 1960s”. Kevin Chua, “When Was Modernism? A Historiography of Singapore Art”, in *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, ed. Low Sze Wee and Patrick D. Flores (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017), pp. 22–33, 29.
- ³⁶ Low, “Remembering Nanyang Feng ge”, pp. 229–60.
- ³⁷ Emelia Ong Ian Li, “Hybridity as Expressions of a Diaporic Community: Selected Nanyang Artists”, *Malaysian Journal of Performing and Visual Arts* 1 (2015), https://umexpert.um.edu.my/file/publication/00011272_136485.pdf [accessed March 2020]; Yeo Wei Wei, “Drying Fish in Singapore Art: Making Sense of The Nanyang Style”, pp. 4–9; Ong Zhen Min, “Nanyang Reverie”, pp. 42–53; Ahmad Mashadi, “De-Nationalizing Nanyang Modernity”, *CARTS: Asian contemporary art and culture* 2 (March–April 2008): 92–3.
- ³⁸ Low, “Remembering Nanyang Feng ge”, pp. 229–60.
- ³⁹ Julia F. Andrews, “A Century in Crisis: Tradition and Modernity in the Art of Twentieth-Century China”, in *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth - Century China*, ed. Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1998), pp. 2–9; Tan Meng Kiat, “The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style”, p. 11.
- ⁴⁰ “These artists are usually called the Wanderers (sometimes, Itinerants, fr. Ambulants — rus. *Peredvizhniki*), or else, in the Soviet historiography they were invariably called “democratic.” One of the most typical figures in the art world of that time was Ivan Kramskoi (1837–1887), and his advent to the professional scene began from the conflict with the Academy of Arts, when he organized what was later called the Revolt of the Fourteen. This “revolt” did not lead to the revolution, and it was not intended to. The radical ideas of the artistic and political Avant-garde of the following generations to make “du passé faisons table rase” were totally foreign for these artists. What they were looking for, was the professional (this, for a larger part, was understood as economic) success within the existing, not radically changed, society. To this end they alternatively distanced themselves from the Academy or collaborated with it—according to the situation. Their

intention was to challenge the authority of the Academy of Arts as an art world monopolist.” Evgeny Steiner, “A battle for the “people’s cause” or for the market case: Kramskoi and the Itinerants”, *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 50, 4 (2009): 627–46, <https://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/9910?lang=en> [accessed March 2020].

- ⁴¹ See essays by Vladimir Stasov and others in Ilia Dorontchenkov, Charles Rougle and N.A. Gur’iānova, *Russian and Soviet Views of Modern Western Art: 1890s to Mid-1930s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Tatsumi Yukiko, “Russian Critics and *Obshchestvennost’*, 1840–1890: The Case of Vladimir Stasov”, in *Obshchestvennost’ and Civic Agency in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia*, ed. Matsui Y. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- ⁴² Steiner, “A battle for the “people’s cause” or for the market case: Kramskoi and the Itinerants”; Evgeny Steiner, “Pursuing Independence: Kramskoi and the Peredvizhniki vs the Academy of Arts”, *The Russian Review* 70 (April 2011): 252–71.
- ⁴³ For more information concerning the Revolt of the Fourteenth and the Company of Traveling Art Exhibitions, refer to Elena Nesterova, “The Itinerants: Masters of Russian Realism” (London: Parkstone Press Ltd, 1997).
- ⁴⁴ Steiner, “Pursuing Independence: Kramskoi and the Peredvizhniki vs the Academy of Arts”, p. 261; Vasilii Perov, “A letter to Kramskoi, April 13, 1877”, *Tovarishchestvo* vol. 1, p. 142.
- ⁴⁵ Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, “The Peredvizhniki and the Spirit of the 1860s”, *The Russian Review* 34, 3 (1975): 247–65, 247.
- ⁴⁶ “A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali”, *The Straits Times*, 18 Oct. 1947, p. 9, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19471018-1.2.63?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁴⁷ “New Singapore School Of Art”, p. 13.
- ⁴⁸ Boris Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer* (London: Art Books Publishing Ltd, 2013), p. 34.
- ⁴⁹ “In Shanghai he was studying under artists V Zasipkin who passed on to him the traditions of good schooling and developed his artistic taste.” Ibid., p. 34.
- ⁵⁰ Ong Zhen Min and Seng Yu Jin, “Malayan Social Realism (1945–1965)”, *Modern Art Studies* 4 (2007): 253–60 (Seoul: National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea).
- ⁵¹ According to Valkenier, “In the third period, 1932–56, the art of the peredvizhniki experienced a spectacular resuscitation that served the extreme politicization of art and the imposition of cultural autarchy, carried out under the slogan of socialist realism.” Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, “The Peredvizhniki and the Spirit of the 1860s”, pp. 247–65, 248.
- ⁵² “A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali”, p. 9; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: U.S. Passport Applications, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Philippines, 1907–1925; Volume 65: Passport Applications-

Philippine Islands. Ancestry.com. U.S. Passport Applications, 1795–1925 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2007 <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=USpassports&h=2322941&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&rhSource=2997> [accessed March 2020].

- 53 “Every Asian Is A Picture Says Famous Painter In Farewell Message”, *Sunday Standard*, 11 Feb. 1951, p. 2; “A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali”, p. 9.
- 54 “A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali”, p. 9.
- 55 “Singapore Portrait Gallery”, *The Straits Times*, 30 Sept. 1926, p. 10, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19260930-1.2.58?ST=1&AT>. [accessed March 2020].
- 56 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: U.S. Passport Applications, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Philippines, 1907–1925; Volume 65: Passport Applications-Philippine Islands. Ancestry.com. U.S. Passport Applications, 1795–1925 [database online]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2007. <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=USpassports&h=2322941&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&rhSource=2997> [accessed March 2020]; “Every Asian Is A Picture Says Famous Painter In Farewell Message”, p. 2.
- 57 “Every Asian Is A Picture Says Famous Painter In Farewell Message,” p. 2.
- 58 “Social and Personal”, *The Straits Times*, 19 June 1926, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19260619-1.2.28?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 59 “Singapore Portrait Gallery”, p. 10.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 “Portrait of Sir Hugh Clifford”, *Malaya Tribune*, 21 Sept. 1928, p. 10, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19280921-1.2.88?ST=1&AT>. [accessed March 2020].
- 62 Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 50.
- 63 Although the Bolsheviks took over Vladivostok in 1917, they were swiftly repelled by the White Army and the city did not come into Soviet control until 1922.
- 64 “Brings Art To Singapore”, *The Straits Times*, 10 Oct. 1937, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19371010-1.2.20?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 65 For Tretchikoff’s full biography, refer to Boris Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer* (London: Art Books Publishing Ltd, 2013).
- 66 “New Singapore School Of Art”, p. 13; “V.A. Zasipkin School of Art”, *Sunday Tribute*, 30 March 1941, p. 13, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19410330-1.2.96.3?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 67 Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 36.

- ⁶⁸ “The unique character of pre-war Singaporean art was shaped and informed by the immigrant Chinese’s manifold emotional bonds to their homeland.” Quoted in a translated version of Yeo Mang Thong’s earlier essay in 1992 by Ng Kum Hoon, “Pre-war (1886–1941) Art Activities of the Chinese Community in Singapore”, in *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017), pp. 102–3. “Unstable times in China in the early decades of the 20th century that resulted in the emigration of people like writers and artists, which in turn explains why Chinese were the first racial group on the island to engage in cultural pursuits of writing and painting. That the Chinese would take focal point in this thesis is therefore more a result of circumstances rather than a deliberate choice.” Tan Meng Kiat, “The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style”, p. 11.
- ⁶⁹ Constance Mary Turnbull, *A History of Modern Singapore, 1819–2005* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), p. 165.
- ⁷⁰ In a farewell speech in 1951, Shister made known to the local media that it was with great sorrow that he was leaving Singapore, Malaya, his home for 25 years. “Every Asian Is A Picture Says Famous Painter In Farewell Message”, p. 2; “Society and Personal”, *Malaya Tribune*, 8 June 1928, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19280608-1.2.29?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]. Zasiptkin saw Singapore as his home, a place worth protecting in the face of war, as shown in his repeated donations to the war fund. “Donations To The War Fund”, *The Straits Times*, 21 Dec. 1940, p. 4, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19401221-1.2.8?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]. For Vladimir Tretchikoff, Singapore was where he married his wife Natalie in 1935 and had their daughter, Mimi. From 1934–42, Tretchikoff made Singapore his home and was right at the top of social life there. However, his stable jobs at the Warin Studios and The Straits Times and his high life came to an end when the Japanese invaded Singapore. He was forced to flee from Singapore in 1942. Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, pp. 41–75.
- ⁷¹ Zasiptkin died while teaching art to local inhabitants on 14 March 1941 and was buried at Bidadari Cemetery, Singapore. “Dramatic Death Of Local Artist”, *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 16 March 1941, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19410316-1.2.21?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁷² Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 36.
- ⁷³ Lee Leo Ou-Fan, “Literature on the Eve of Revolution: Reflections on Lu Xun’s Leftist Years, 1927–1936”, *Modern China* 2, 3 (July 1976): 277–326; Lin Yu-sheng, “The Morality of Mind and Immorality of Politics: Reflections on Lu Xun, the Intellectual”, in *Lu Xun and his Legacy*, ed. Lee Leo Ou-Fan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 107–28.

- ⁷⁴ Yang Hua, "Revisiting a Chinese Intellectual through the Russian Lens: Lu Xun's Dilemma During 1925–1927", in *Richard A. Harrison Symposium*, vol. Paper 2 (Appleton, Wisconsin: Lawrence University LUX, 2013), pp. 1–26, <https://lux.lawrence.edu/harrison/2/> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁷⁵ Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 50; "Chinese Win At Water-Polo", *Malayan Tribune*, 28 Nov. 1938, p. 15, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19381128-1.2.114?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁷⁶ "Passion and Responsibility--Exhibition of Arts by Situ Qiao and Situ Jie Unveiled in NAMOC", NAMOC, 31 March 2016, http://www.namoc.org/en/news/news2016/201603/t20160331_297313.htm#.Wm7R8WlMSUk [accessed March 2020]; Lu Xun, "看司徒乔的画 Kan Situ Qiao de hua [Reading Situ Qiao's paintings]", in *Lu Xun Quan Ji* [Complete works by Lu Xun] (Beijing: 人民文学出版社 Ren min wen xue chu ban she, 2005), p. 73.
- ⁷⁷ "Chinese Artist.... And Cultural Plan," *Morning Tribune*, 24 Nov. 1941, p. 6, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19411124-1.2.40?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Passion and Responsibility Exhibition of Arts by Situ Qiao and Situ Jie", NAMOC, 21 March 2016, http://www.namoc.org/xwzx/zt/stqstj/stq/zpxs/201603/t20160321_296583.htm [accessed March 2020].
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Jhana Pfeiffer-Hunt, "A Malayan Bungalow © An Exhibition Supplement", *The Duldig Studio* 1 (July 2012): 1–8. See David Low Kok Kiat, "European Artists in Singapore during the Early 20th Century: Towards a Global Multicultural Understanding of Nanyang Art", pp. 111–2, 124.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Yeo Mang Thong, *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)* (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2018), p. 98.
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ "Inter-School Coronation Art Exhibition", *Morning Tribune*, 11 May 1937, p. 24, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19370511-1.2.85?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁸⁴ "Inter-School Art Exhibition", *Malaya Tribune*, 24 May 1938, p. 14, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19380524-1.2.120?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁸⁵ "Société des Artistes Chinois", *Malaya Tribune*, 18 Aug. 1939, p. 11, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19390818-1.2.49?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Inter-School Art Exhibition", *Malaya Tribune*, 20 May 1940, p. 2, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19400520-1.2.24?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- ⁸⁶ "Inter-School Art Exhibition", *Malaya Tribune*, 7 Aug. 1947, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19470807-1.2.36?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "S'pore Artist to Study In US", *Sunday Tribune (Sunday)*, 21 Sept. 1947, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19470921-1.2.54?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Art Exhibition in Aid of China Relief Fund", *Malaya Tribune*, 30 Sept. 1937, p. 6, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19370930-1.2.47?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Inter-School Art Show in August", *Morning Tribune*, 22 May 1947, p. 2, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19470522-1.2.18?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁸⁷ "Singapore Art Club", *Malaya Tribune*, 23 March 1932, p. 7, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19320323-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁸⁸ "Singapore Child Art Display Awards", *The Straits Times*, 12 Aug. 1947, p. 4, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19470812-1.2.40?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁸⁹ "S'pore Art Club Has 20 Members", *Malaya Tribune*, 5 April 1947, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19470405-1.2.90?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁹⁰ Vladimir Tretchikoff and Anthony Hocking, *Pigeon's Luck*, 1st ed. (United Kingdom: Harper Collins Distribution Services, 1973), p. 104; Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 50.
- ⁹¹ Wilfred J. Plumbe, *The Golden Pagoda Tree: Adventures in Southeast Asia* (London: Grey Seal, 1990), p. 49.
- ⁹² Marco Hsu, *A Brief History of Malayan Art*, ed. Chee Kien Lai, trans. (Singapore: Millennium Books, 1999), p. 132.
- ⁹³ Ong Zhen Min, "Nanyang Reverie", p. 43.
- ⁹⁴ Please refer to Zhong Yu, *Malaixiya huaren meishushi 1900–1965* (History of Malaysian Chinese Art 1900–1965) (Kuala Lumpur: Chung Chen Sun Art and Design Group Sdn Bhd, 1999); Tan Meng Kiat, "The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style".
- ⁹⁵ Yu Jin Seng, "The Primacy of Painting: Institutional Structures of the Singapore Art World from 1935 to 1972", unpublished MA thesis, Department of History, National University of Singapore, 2006, p. 20.
- ⁹⁶ It was demolished in the 1980s to make way for Dhoby Ghaut station. "Urban Renewal at Orchard Road in Front of Amber Mansion", National Archives of Singapore, <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/b76234a5-1162-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad> [accessed March 2020].
- ⁹⁷ Its prestige caught the eyes of well-known artists in Singapore and after one month of its opening in 1937, the Singapore Art Club moved its premises to the

Apollo School. Under this collaboration, the Art Club used the Apollo studios at the Amber mansion at Orchard Road for their activities. Effectively, the Singapore Art Club was merged with the Apollo School of Fine Arts. Lectures and weekly classes were arranged for the members of the club on top of the normal schedule of the school. "Art Club for Singapore Inauguration of New Movement", *Morning Tribune*, 27 Nov. 1937, p. 7, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19371127-1.2.31?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

⁹⁸ The name "Apollo School of Fine Arts School" is used officially in advertisements. "Page 3 Advertisements Column 5", *Malaya Tribune*, 13 Dec. 1937, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19371213-1.2.9.5?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

⁹⁹ "Brings Art To Singapore", p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ The success and openness of the Apollo School of Fine Arts might have strengthened Zasiipkin's contemporary Lim Hai Tai's resolve to establish the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1938. While Lim never mentioned Zasiipkin's Apollo School of Fine Arts as an influence, it was a major institution then and shared the same world as the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.

¹⁰¹ "New Singapore School Of Art", p. 13.

¹⁰² Hsu, *A Brief History of Malayan Art*, p. 123.

¹⁰³ "Art Club In Singapore", *Malaya Tribune*, 27 Nov. 1937, p. 12, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19371127-1.2.70?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

¹⁰⁴ This move was significant as it was the Singapore Art Club's attempt to shed its amateur image and to take on a more serious institutional position. It was symbolic as it marked a shift in Singapore art history, whereby tertiary art institutions were set up on top of art education in public schools, art clubs and societies. "Art Club for Singapore Inauguration of New Movement", p. 7; "Art Club In Singapore", p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ "NAFA: Pioneering Arts Education", *Ghetto Singapore*, 20 Aug. 2016, <https://www.ghettosingapore.com/nafa-pioneering-arts-education/> [accessed March 2020].

¹⁰⁶ A picture of the first batch of graduates shows that the student population is strictly Chinese. See the official website: "OUR HISTORY", NAFA: Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, <https://www.nafa.edu.sg/about-nafa/corporate-information/history#yearTwo> [accessed March 2020].

¹⁰⁷ "Exhibition of School Art", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 11 June 1940, p. 2, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19400611-1.2.19?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "General Opens Inter-School Art Exhibition", *The Straits Times*, 11 June 1940, p. 13, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19400611-1.2.91?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- ¹⁰⁸ Wilfred J. Plumbe, *The Golden Pagoda Tree: Adventures in Southeast Asia* (London: Grey Seal, 1990), p. 49.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Syonan Artists To Seek Official Sanction To Form Association," *Syonan Shimbun*, 11 Nov. 1942, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/syonantimes19421111-1.2.14?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹¹⁰ "Portraitist Who Draws Festive Crowds", *The Straits Times*, 29 Jan. 1987, p. 5, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19870129-1.2.60.9.1?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹¹¹ "S'pore Art Club has 20 Members", p. 8.
- ¹¹² Wilfred J. Plumbe, *The Golden Pagoda Tree: Adventures in Southeast Asia*, p. 49.
- ¹¹³ Lim Hock Ann. Interview by Sian, Eira Jay. Oral History Interviews, National Archives of Singapore. 20 January 2010. Reel 4. 02:53mins.
- ¹¹⁴ Chia Wai Hon, "The figure in art in the Singapore context", in *2nd Group Exhibition by Group 90* (Singapore: Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, 1992).
- ¹¹⁵ Agatha Koh, "In and around town", *New Nation*, 6 June 1982, p. 14, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/newnation19820606-1.2.33?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹¹⁶ Mara Fernandez, "Let Your Office Objets D'art Do the Talking", *The Straits Times*, 16 Sept. 1987, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19870916-1.2.91.6?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹¹⁷ Please refer to the image of Situ's *Put Down Your Whip*, 1941, in Yeo Mang Thong, *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)*, p. 221.
- ¹¹⁸ Please see "华侨画家司徒乔与《三个老华工》Huaqiao huajia situ qiao yu sange laohuagong" [Overseas Chinese painter Situ Qiao and "Three Old Chinese Workers"]", 刊参考网 *Kan Cankao Wang*, 21 Nov. 2019, <http://m.fx361.com/news/2019/1121/6079320.html> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹¹⁹ Situ's artworks created during his sojourns in Southeast Asia were shown at an exhibition in Singapore on 19 November 1940. Yeo Mang Thong, *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)*, pp. 142, 241. Tretchikoff's *Untitled* painting was reproduced in the 1938 issue of *The Straits Times Annual*. Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 59.
- ¹²⁰ I was unable to locate the images for 华侨少女 (*Overseas Chinese Girl*) and 四位马来亚少女 (*Four Malayan Girls*). However, they were mentioned in "华侨画家司徒乔与《三个老华工》Huaqiao huajia situ qiao yu sange laohuagong" [Overseas Chinese painter Situ Qiao and "Three Old Chinese Workers"]".
- ¹²¹ As mentioned in the previous section, like the Russian artists, Situ Qiao was concerned for the local development of art in Singapore. His works such as 华侨少女 (*Overseas Chinese Girl*) and 四位马来亚少女 (*Four Malayan Girls*) showed that he was concerned with expressing localness in his art. Situ Qiao also judged at

an inter-school art competition and “proposes to make his home the centre for discussions on art; in other word he proposes to form a new kind of Art Club, the kind that Singapore has been waiting for such a long time.” “Chinese Artist.... And Cultural Plan”, *Morning Tribune*, 24 Nov. 1941, p. 6, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19411124-1.2.40?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “Inter-School Exhibition”, *Malayan Tribune*, 29 Sept. 1941, p. 5, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19410929-1.2.50?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- ¹²² Chen Chong Swee, a native of Guangdong province, China settled in Singapore in 1934. For images of his undated *Pounding Rice* and *Homeward Bound*, see the website “Chen Chong Swee”, Collections National Gallery Singapore, <https://collections.nationalgallery.sg/#/search?Search=Chen%20Chong%20Swee&SearchType=b&CategoryCode=ART> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹²³ Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 59.
- ¹²⁴ “All are masterpieces of physical detail -- but in Russian realism conquering the visible world was only a step towards comprehending the invisible one. “Reading was generally considered a nobler and more interesting activity than living. For many people the word and the artistic image represented life itself,” was how Mikhail Shvuydkoi introduced the Guggenheim’s 2005 show Russia! to American audiences. Portraits, then, are talismans.” Jackie Wullschlager, “Russian Portraiture: Icons of Early Modernism”, *FT.com*, 18 March 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/1607f08a-eabd-11e5-bb79-2303682345c8> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹²⁵ T.K. Sabapathy, “Hak Tai Points the Way”, in *Sources of Modern Art* (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1986), pp. 148–50; Redza Piyadasa, “The Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts”, p. 32.
- ¹²⁶ Lim’s six precepts are:
 1. The fusion of the culture of the different races.
 2. The communication of Eastern and Western art.
 3. The diffusion of the scientific spirit and social thinking of the twentieth century.
 4. To reflect the needs of the peoples of the federation of Malaya and Singapore.
 5. The expression of tropical flavour.
 6. The educational and social functions of fine art.Lim Hak Tai, preface to *The Art of the Young Malaysians* (Singapore: NAFA, 1955), p. 1; Yu Jin Seng, “Lim Hak Tai Points a Third Way: Towards a Socially Engaged Art by the Nanyang Artists, 1950s–1960s”, in *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, pp. 188–201, 194.
- ¹²⁷ Ong Zhen Min, “Nanyang Reverie”, pp. 42–53.
- ¹²⁸ Emelia Ong Ian Li, “The Nanyang Artists: Eclectic Expressions of the South Seas”, in *Imagining Identities: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, Vol. 1, ed. Nur Hanim

Khairuddin and Beverly Yong, with T.K. Sabapathy (Kuala Lumpur: RogueArt, 2012); Yeo, "Drying Fish in Singapore Art: Making Sense of the Nanyang Style", pp. 4–9.

¹²⁹ Kevin Chua, "When Was Modernism? A Historiography of Singapore Art", p. 29.

¹³⁰ Ong Zhen Min, "Nanyang Reverie", p. 47.

¹³¹ Lee, "Literature on the Eve of Revolution: Reflections on Lu Xun's Leftist Years, 1927–1936".

¹³² In fact, much of the Russian revolutionary literature that obsessed Chinese intellectuals like Lu Xun, Chen Duxiu and Qu Qiu-bai, originated from art theories developed by Belinsky and Chernychevsky. These were 19th-century radical art writers often associated with the Peredvizhniki movement who preached about the political role of art. Furthermore, Xu Beihong, an artist (trained in France) who had a pervasive influence in Chinese art circles in both China and Singapore, championed the reform of Chinese painting with realism. Among the realist painters fervently promoted within Chinese art circles were Vasily Surikov and Ilya Repin (Shister's tutor) of the Peredvizhniki school of painting, whom Xu lauded as the greatest painters of the world. See Lee, "Literature on the Eve of Revolution: Reflections on Lu Xun's Leftist Years, 1927–1936"; Sylvia Chan, "Realism or Socialist Realism?: The 'Proletarian' Episode in Modern Chinese Literature 1927–1932", *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 9 (1983): 55–74; Chow Yian Ping, *Xu Beihong in Nanyang* (Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 2008), p. 21; Hung Chang-tai, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 131; Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "The Peredvizhniki and the Spirit of the 1860s", pp. 247–65, 248; Richard Lee Brown, "Chernyshevskii, Dostoevskii, and the Peredvizhniki: Toward a Russian Realist Aesthetic?", PhD diss., Ohio University, 1980.

¹³³ Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 58.

¹³⁴ Tretchikoff was taught by Zasipkin and was exposed to Peredvizhniki by him.

¹³⁵ "The young realists [early Peredvizhniki] were first of all concerned about attaining social and cultural equality for themselves and their profession so that with their work they would be acknowledged as full participants in the national awakening. In practical terms, this meant becoming accepted as members of the intelligentsia, that glamorous elite which guided the nation and from which the profession of painter was at that time excluded." Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "The Peredvizhniki and the Spirit of the 1860s", pp. 247–65, 249.

¹³⁶ "Singapore Portrait Gallery", p. 10.

¹³⁷ "Tributes To Retiring Municipal President", *Malaya Tribune*, 30 Sept. 1939, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19390930-1.2.39?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- ¹³⁸ Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, pp. 46–8.
- ¹³⁹ Vasily Zasipkin was not merely a portrait painter but also, more importantly, an effective art educator in Singapore. Vladimir Tretchikoff was mostly known to the public for his advertisements, fashion design and cartoons of important people, yet “he did not give up the hope of becoming a ‘serious fine’ artist” (Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 57). See also “Tributes To Retiring Municipal President”, p. 3.
- ¹⁴⁰ “Every Asian Is A Picture Says Famous Painter In Farewell Message”, p. 2.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁴² “Painter Comes to S’pore”, *The Singapore Free Press*, 19 Nov. 1949, p. 4, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/freepress19491119-1.2.53?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁴³ “Untitled”, *Malaya Tribune*, 27 Feb. 1930, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19300227-1.2.42?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁴⁴ In conversations with curator Shujuan Lim of the National Gallery Singapore, it was noted that although this painting bears the signature “A. Mustapi”, the name Mustapi is actually Cyrillic for Shister and thus should be rightly attributed to Anatole Shister. Also refer to Shister’s portraits of colonial civil servants. “Portrait of Municipal Engineer, Mr. R. Peirce”, Roots.sg, <https://roots.sg/Roots/learn/collections/listing/1051730> [accessed March 2020]; “Portrait of the Municipal Health Officer, Dr. W.R.C. Middleton”, Roots.sg, <https://roots.sg/Roots/learn/collections/listing/1050827> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁴⁵ Tchang Ju Chi’s father, Zhang Yinbo, was a specialist in the Chinese *gongbi* (fine brushstrokes) style. Yeo Mang Thong, *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)*, p. 126.
- ¹⁴⁶ For example, he made portraits of Chan Kang Swi, Mr PG Pamadasa, Oei Tham Ham and others. “On the Margin”, *The Straits Times*, 16 May 1952, p. 8, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19520516-1.2.122?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “The way to live—by Mr Low, 88”, *New Nation*, 18 Nov. 1977, p. 3, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/newnation19771118-1.2.11?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; “Brothers who blazed the trail of art in Malaya”, 19 July 1953, p. 4, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19530719-1.2.41?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁴⁷ Low Sze Wee, *Artist and empire: (en)countering colonial legacies* (Singapore: National Gallery of Singapore, 2016), p. 86.
- ¹⁴⁸ Former curator of the National Gallery Singapore, Melinda Susanto, saw European artists in Singapore during the early 20th century as a group who brought new artistic practices from abroad, held various exhibitions in Singapore

that enriched the cultural scene, and whose art albeit being inspired by local sights and peoples, embodies the “sensorial encounter reminiscent of early European engagements”. By “early European engagements”, she refers to the section of the Gallery’s inaugural exhibition, *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art in Singapore since the 19th Century* that showcased visual productions of colonial officials and commercial photographers that complemented colonial expansion and ideals, such as John Turnbull, Charles Andrew Dyce, William Farquhar and August Sachtler in the 19th century. Visual production in that section of the exhibition, Susanto argued, operated in kind of scientific ethnographic “accumulation of knowledge” and also served to boast the wealth of the colony. Indigenous people, local inhabitants, and local flora and fauna were depicted to evoke a certain wildness of “a life far from the centres of civilization and alludes to the commercial appropriation of natural wealth of this island”. Melinda Susanto, “Tropical Tapestry”, pp. 35–6; Wong Hong Suen and Roxana Waterson, *Singapore through 19th Century Prints & Paintings* (Singapore: Didier Millet, 2010); John Falconer, *A Vision of the Past: A History of Early Photography in Singapore and Malaya. The Photographs of G. R. Lambert & Co, 1880–1910* (Singapore: Times Editions, 1987), pp. 189–92.

¹⁴⁹ Yeo Mang Thong, *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)*, p. 133.

¹⁵⁰ “Painter Comes to S’pore”, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² This particular article speaks of the 1947 exhibition of a collection of 46 works on Balinese subjects painted by Shister during the 1930s. Despite the scarcity of publicly assessable artworks, it is safe to deduce from his Bali works that his practice had become less confined within the traditions of portrait painting and more attentive to local colour and form when depicting indigenous subject matter in the 1930s. “Art Exhibition In S’pore”, *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 19 Oct. 1947, p. 8, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19471019-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

¹⁵³ “Every Asian Is A Picture Says Famous Painter In Farewell Message”, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 58.

¹⁵⁵ *Tongkang, jong or djong*, referring to Malay boats.

¹⁵⁶ Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 52.

¹⁵⁷ His work was displayed alongside 78 others at the IBM Gallery of the fair. IBM offices throughout the world were tasked by the firm’s president Thomas J. Watson to search for artworks that were characteristic of their countries, in consultation with leading art authorities. Painted in 1938, Tretchikoff’s *Last Divers* was acquired by the IBM office in Singapore and brought to America. Art critic Edward Alden Jewell commented that Tretchikoff’s work was among the most

outstanding of the New York art fair. In Singapore, local newspapers reported that the work represented Malaya in the exhibition. See Edward Alden Jewell, "Three Countries and Seventy-Nine," *New York Times*, 28 May 1939, p. X7; "Local Artist's Work at New York Fair", p. 13.

- 158 "Local Artist's Work at New York Fair", p. 13.
- 159 Ong, "Nanyang Reverie", p. 46.
- 160 Valkenier, "The Peredvizhniki and the Spirit of the 1860s", p. 247.
- 161 Susanto, "Tropical Tapestry", pp. 30–1.
- 162 "Singapore Artist's Exhibition", *Malaya Tribune*, 11 June 1938, p. 12, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19380611-1.2.93?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Exhibition Of Chinese Art In Malaya", *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 3 July 1938, p. 2, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19380703-1.2.29?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; Ardmore, "Fight For Freedom Exhibition At Victoria Hall", p. 4 [accessed March 2020].
- 163 "New Singapore School Of Art", p. 13.
- 164 Ong, "Nanyang Reverie", p. 46.
- 165 "New Singapore School of Art", p. 13; "Singapore Artist's Exhibition", p. 12.
- 166 "Singapore Artist's Exhibition", p. 12.
- 167 Ibid.
- 168 "Exhibition Of Chinese Art In Malaya", p. 2.
- 169 "Russian's Exhibition Opens At Y. W. C. A", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 13 June 1938, p. 9, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19380613-1.2.68?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 170 Ibid.
- 171 "A throwing away of old gods", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 July 1938, p. 9, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19380705-1.2.75?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 172 Ibid.
- 173 As Chew Yew Seng has already been discussed, please refer to a selection of Liu Kang's and Lim Cheng Hoe's pastels on Roots SG. "Lady in Green Dress", Roots.sg, <https://www.roots.sg/learn/collections/listing/1032352> [accessed March 2020]; "The Athlete", Roots.sg, <https://www.roots.sg/learn/collections/listing/1031531> [accessed March 2020].
- 174 Ardmore, "Fight For Freedom Exhibition At Victoria Hall", p. 4.
- 175 "30,000 People See Exhibition", *The Straits Times*, 16 Sept. 1941, p. 10, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19410916-1.2.51?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; Heathcott, "Fight for Freedom Exhibition Opens", p. 5.
- 176 Gorelik, *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*, p. 60.

- 177 Chen Wen Hsi's *Centennial Exhibition* in 2007 revealed that he believed in the concept of art being informed by local life while painting works such as *Indian Children*. See Julia F Andrews, *Convergences: Chen Wen Hsi Centennial Exhibition* (Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 2006).
- 178 Ong, "Nanyang Reverie", pp. 46–8.
- 179 Alison Carroll, "Gauguin and the Idea of an Asian Paradise", *Asian Art News* 2, 21 (March/April 2011): 56–61.
- 180 Low, "Remembering Nanyang Feng ge", p. 251.
- 181 "Singapore Art Club", *The Straits Times*, 26 March 1932, p. 19, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19320326-1.2.104?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Mr. A. Shister", *Malaya Tribune*, 4 Feb. 1935, p. 11, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19350204-1.2.56?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Untitled", *Malaya Tribune*, 20 March 1937, p. 15, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19370320-1.2.119?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Untitled", *Morning Tribune (Singapore)*, 11 March 1939, p. 3, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19390311-1.2.21?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 182 "Painter Comes to S'pore", p. 4.
- 183 "Mr. A. Shister", p. 11; "Untitled", p. 15.
- 184 Shister earned \$8,000 from his exhibition of Bali paintings, which was no small amount at that time. "Singapore Needs An Art Gallery", *The Straits Times*, 19 Oct. 1947, p. 7, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19471019-1.2.73?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 185 Liu Kang, interview with Rawanchaikul Toshiko, trans. Horikawa Lisa, in *Nanyang 1950–65: Passage to Singapore Art* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, 2002), p. 36.
- 186 Sen Gu, "Reflections on the paintings of Master Liu Kang", in *Journeys: Liu Kang and His Art*, exhibition catalogue, trans. Goh Beng Choo (Singapore: National Arts Council and Singapore Art Museum, 2000), pp. 22–35.
- 187 Curator Lim Shujuan reckons *Siesta in Bali* to be closer to 1953 than 1957 as it was dated in the book *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art in Singapore since the 19th Century*. See Ong Zhen Min, "Nanyang Reverie", p. 157.
- 188 "A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali", p. 9; "Singapore Needs An Art Gallery", p. 7.
- 189 "A Woman Peeps At Singapore", *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 14 Feb. 1937, p. 10, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19370214-1.2.69?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "Exhibition Of Painting and Sculpture in Singapore", *Morning Tribune*, 16 Feb. 1937, p. 7, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19370216-1.2.38?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- 190 An image of *Mila and Jena* can be found in Yeo Mang Thong, *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)*, pp. 130, 217.

- ¹⁹¹ Curator Lisa Horikawa considered the title of the painting *Mila and Jena* as evidence of Tchang Ju Chi identifying himself as a fellow inhabitant of the region. Lisa Horikawa and Yu Jin Seng, "Nanyang Colours: Remembering Tchang Ju Chi", Art in Singapore 2019, In-Gallery Talks, Public lecture, National Gallery Singapore, 13 Sept. 2019.
- ¹⁹² "Singapore Needs An Art Gallery", p. 7; "A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali", p. 9.
- ¹⁹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁴ Marco Hsu, "地方色彩和风格 [Localness and Style]", in *Yishu JuTan* (1961): 4–6.
- ¹⁹⁵ Low, "Remembering Nanyang Feng ge", p. 247.
- ¹⁹⁶ "Untitled", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 March 1931, p. 20, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19310305-1.2.152?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "The Language of Plastic Beauty," *The Straits Times*, 5 Aug. 1932, p. 10, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19320805-1.2.31?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁹⁷ An article in *The Straits Times* commented that the exhibition was "an intimate study of some of the most attractive aspects of this Malaysian world of ours... Not only people who are interested in art but those who are interested in Malaysia may be urged to see the exhibition of paintings and sculpture by Mr and Mrs Julius Wentscher which opens at the YWCA, Raffles Quay, this afternoon... anyone into whose blood Malaysia has entered (whether literally or figuratively), should study the work of Mr and Mrs Wentscher. The Bali paintings show what beauty there is in common humanity in this part of the world." "Notes Of The Day", *The Straits Times*, 26 March 1936, p. 10, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19360326-1.2.52?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]; "A Woman Peeps At Singapore", p. 10.
- ¹⁹⁸ "Singapore Art Exhibition Opens Today", *The Straits Times*, 26 Oct. 1947, p. 7, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19471026-1.2.70?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- ¹⁹⁹ "A Russian Artist Dreams Of Bali", p. 9; "Singapore Needs An Art Gallery", p. 7.

REFERENCES

- Andrews, Julia F. "A Century in Crisis: Tradition and Modernity in the Art of Twentieth-Century China". In *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*, ed. Julia F. Andrews and Shen Kuiyi. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1998.
- Black, Jonathan and Martin Brenda. *Dora Gordine: Sculptor, Artist, Designer*. London: Dorich House Museum, Kingston University, in association with Philip Wilson, 2007.
- Braddell, Roland St. John. *The Lights of Singapore*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1935.

- Brown, Richard Lee. "Chernyshevskii, Dostoevskii, and the Peredvizhniki: Toward a Russian Realist Aesthetic?" PhD diss., Ohio University, 1980.
- Carroll, Alison. "Gauguin and the Idea of an Asian Paradise". *Asian Art News* 2, 21 (March/April 2011): 56–61.
- Chan, Sylvia. "Realism or Socialist Realism?: The 'Proletarian' Episode in Modern Chinese Literature 1927–1932". *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 9 (1983): 55–74.
- "Chen Chong Swee". Collections National Gallery Singapore. <https://collections.nationalgallery.sg/#/search?Search=Chen%20Chong%20Swee&SearchType=b&CategoryCode=ART> [accessed March 2020].
- Chen, Wen Hsi, Julia F. Andrews, Sun Shuyan, Chua Kianaik, Poon Lian, Toh Lamhuat, Chung Anita, Li Gongming and Ho Ho Ying. *Convergences: Chen Wen Hsi Centennial Exhibition*. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 2006.
- Chia, Wai Hon. "The Figure in Art in the Singapore Context". In *2nd Group Exhibition by Group 90*. Singapore: Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, 1992.
- . *Bits and Pieces: Writings on Art*. Singapore: Contemporary Asian Art Centre LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, 2002.
- Chow, Yian Ping. *Xu Beihong in Nanyang*. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 2008.
- Chua, Kevin. "When Was Modernism? A Historiography of Singapore Art". In *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, ed. Low Sze Wee and Patrick D. Flores, 1st ed. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017.
- Clark, Katerina. *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Falconer, John. *A Vision of the Past: A History of Early Photography in Singapore and Malaya. The Photographs of G. R. Lambert & Co, 1880–1910*. Singapore: Times Editions, 1987.
- Gorelik, Boris. *Incredible Tretchikoff: Life of an Artist and Adventurer*. London: Art Books Publishing Ltd, 2013.
- Gu, Sen. "Reflections on the Paintings of Master Liu Kang". In *Journeys: Liu Kang and His Art*. Exhibition catalogue, trans. Goh Beng Choo. Singapore: National Arts Council and Singapore Art Museum, 2000.
- Heller, Peggy. "The Russian Dawn: How Russia contributed to the emergence of 'the west' as a concept". In *The Struggle for the West: A Divided and Contested Legacy*, ed. Christopher Browning and Marko Lehti. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Ho, Tzu Nyen. "Afterimages—Strands of Modern Art in Singapore". MA thesis, National University of Singapore, 2007.
- Horikawa, Lisa and Seng Yu Jin. "Nanyang Colours: Remembering Tchang Ju Chi". Art in Singapore 2019: In-Gallery Talks. Public lecture at the National Gallery Singapore, 13 Sep. 2019.
- Hsu, Marco, "地方色彩和风格 [Localness and Style]". *Yishu JuTan* (1961): 4–6.

- . *A Brief History of Malayan Art*, ed. Chee Kien Lai. Trans. Singapore: Millennium Books, 1999.
- Hung, Chang-tai. *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Jones, John Hall and Christopher Hooi. *An Early Surveyor in Singapore: John Turnbull Thomson in Singapore, 1841–1853*. Singapore: National Museum of Singapore, 1979.
- Kwa, Chong Guan, Bastin John and Morten Strange. *Natural History Drawings: The Complete William Farquhar Collection: Malay Peninsula 1803–1818*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2010.
- Kwok, Kian Chow. *Channels & Confluences: A History of Singapore Art*. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 1996.
- Lee, Leo Ou-Fan. "Literature on the Eve of Revolution: Reflections on Lu Xun's Leftist Years, 1927–1936". *Modern China* 2, 3 (July 1976): 277–326.
- Lim, Hak Tai. *The Art of the Young Malaysians*. Singapore: NAFA, 1955.
- Lim, Hock Ann. Interview by Sian, Eira Jay. Oral History Interviews. National Archives of Singapore. 20 Jan. 2010. Reel 4. 02:53mins.
- Lim, Irene. *Sketches in the Straits: Nineteenth-Century Watercolours and Manuscript of Singapore, Malacca, Penang, and Batavia by Charles Dyce*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Museum, 2003.
- Lim, Jon S.H. "Cabalori Rudolfo Nolli a sculptor & entrepreneur". *National University of Singapore's Architecture Journal* (1984): 11–5.
- Lin, Yu-sheng. "The Morality of Mind and Immorality of Politics: Reflections on Lu Xun, the Intellectual". In *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, ed. Lee Leo Ou-fan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- Liu, Kang. "Interview with Rawanchaikul Toshiko". In *Nanyang 1950–65: Passage to Singapore Art*. Trans. Horikawa Lisa. Fukuoka: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, 2002.
- Low, Yvonne, "Remembering Nanyang Feng ge". In *Modern Art Asia: Selected Papers*, Issues 1–8, ed. Majella Munro, pp. 229–60. UK: Enzoarts, 2012.
- . "Nanyang Style". In *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism*, 9 May 2016. <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/nanyang-style> [accessed March 2020].
- . "A 'Forgotten' Art World: The Singapore Art Club and Its Colonial Women Artists". In *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, ed. Elaine Ee and Charmaine Oon, 1st ed. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017.
- Low, Sze Wee. *Artist and Empire: (En)countering Colonial Legacies*. Singapore: National Gallery of Singapore, 2016.
- Low, Sze Wee, Ong Zhen Min, Susanto Melinda, Mustafa Shabbir Hussian, Cai Heng and Charmiane Toh. *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art in Singapore since the 19th Century*, ed. Low Sze Wee and Sara Siew. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2015.

- Lu Xun. “看司徒乔的画 Kan Situ Qiao de hua” [Reading Situ Qiao’s paintings]. In *Lu Xun Quan Ji* [Complete works by Lu Xun]. Beijing: 人民文学出版社 Ren min wen xue chu ban she, 2005.
- Mahamood, Muliyadi. *Modern Malaysian Art: From the Pioneering Era to the Pluralist Era, 1930s–1990s*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributions Sdn Bhd, 2007.
- Mashadi, Ahmad. “De-Nationalizing Nanyang Modernity”. *CArts: Asian Contemporary Art and Culture* 2 (March–April 2008): 92–5.
- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: U.S. Passport Applications. Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Philippines, 1907–1925; Volume 65: Passport Applications-Philippine Islands. Ancestry.com. U.S. Passport Applications, 1795–1925 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2007. <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=USpassports&h=2322941&tid=&pid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&rhSource=2997> [accessed March 2020].
- Nesterova, Elena. *The Itinerants: Masters of Russian Realism*. London: Parkstone Press Ltd, 1997.
- Ong, Emelia Ian Li. “Tradition and Change: The Eclectic Artworks of the Nanyang Artists”. MA thesis, University of Malaya, 2007.
- . “The Nanyang Artists: Eclectic Expressions of the South Seas”. In *Imagining Identities: Narratives in Malaysian Art*, vol. 1, ed. Nur Hanim Khairuddin and Beverly Yong, with Thiagarajan Kanaga Sabapathy. Kuala Lumpur: RogueArt, 2012.
- . “Hybridity as Expressions of a Diaporic Community: Selected Nanyang Artists”. *Malaysian Journal of Performing and Visual Arts* 1 (2015). https://umexpert.um.edu.my/file/publication/00011272_136485.pdf [accessed March 2020].
- Ong, Zhen Min and Seng Yu Jin. “Malayan Social Realism (1945–1965)”. In *Modern Art Studies* 4 (2007): 253–60. Seoul: National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea.
- . “Nanyang Reverie”. In *Siapa Nama Kamu? Art in Singapore since the 19th Century*, ed. Low Sze Wee and Sara Siew. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2015.
- Perov, Vasilii. “A letter to Kramskoi, April 13, 1877”. *Tovarishchestvo* vol. 1: 142.
- Pfeiffer-Hunt, Jhana. “A Malayan Bungalow”. Exhibition Supplement Issue 1. Melbourne: The Duldig Studio, 2013.
- Piyadasa, Redza. “On Origins and Beginnings”. In *Vision and Idea—ReLooking Modern Malaysian Art*, ed. Thiagarajan Kanaga Sabapathy. Kuala Lumpur: National Art Gallery, 1994.
- Piyadasa, Redza and Thiagarajan Kanaga Sabapathy. *Pameran Retrospektif Pelukis-pelukis Nanyang*. Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Seni Negara Malaysia, 1979.
- Plumbe, Wilfred J. *The Golden Pagoda Tree: Adventures in Southeast Asia*. London: Grey Seal, 1990.

- Sabapathy, Thiagarajan Kanaga. "Scroll Met Easel". In *The Straits Times Annual* 82. Singapore: Times Printers, 1982.
- . "Hak Tai Points the Way". In *Sources of Modern Art*. Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1986.
- Say, Jeffery. "An Émigré Artist in Singapore". *The Arts Magazine: The Centre for the Arts at the National University of Singapore* (Sept./Oct. 2002): 36–41.
- Seng, Yu Jin. "The Primacy of Painting: The Institutional Structure of the Singapore Art world from 1935–1972". MA thesis, National University of Singapore, 2006.
- . "Lim Hak Tai Points a Third Way: Towards a Socially Engaged Art by the Nanyang Artists, 1950s–1960s". In *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, ed. Low Sze Wee and Patrick D. Flores, 1st ed. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017.
- Stasov, Vladimir, Ilia Dorontchenkov, Charles Rougle and N.A. Gur'ianova. *Russian and Soviet Views of Modern Western Art: 1890s to Mid-1930s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Steiner, Evgeny. "A Battle for the "People's Cause" or for the Market Case: Kramskoi and the Itinerants". In *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 50, 4 (2009): 627–46. <https://journals.openedition.org/monderusse/9910?lang=en> [accessed March 2020].
- . "Pursuing Independence: Kramskoi and the Peredvizhniki vs the Academy of Arts". *The Russian Review* 70 (April 2011): 252–71.
- Tan, Meng Kiat. "The Evolution of the Nanyang Art Style: A Study in the Search for an Artistic Identity in Singapore, 1930–1960". MA thesis, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 1997. HKUST Electronic Theses (10.14711/thesis-b538296).
- Tan, Tee Chie. "The Definition of Nanyang Style". In *Nanyang-ism 2003*, ed. Yau Tian Yau. Singapore: The Society of Chinese Artists, 2003.
- Turnbull, Constance Mary. *A History of Modern Singapore, 1819–2005*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2009.
- Valkenier, Elizabeth Kridl, "The Peredvizhniki and the Spirit of the 1860s". *The Russian Review* 34, 3 (1975): 247–65.
- Vladimir, Tretchikoff and Anthony Hocking. *Pigeon's Luck*, 1st ed. United Kingdom: Harper Collins Distribution Services, 1973.
- Wong, Hong Suen and Roxana Waterson. *Singapore through 19th Century Prints & Paintings*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2010.
- Yang, Hua. "Revisiting a Chinese Intellectual through the Russian Lens: Lu Xun's Dilemma During 1925–1927". In *Richard A. Harrison Symposium*, paper 2, pp. 1–26. Appleton, Wisconsin: Lawrence University LUX., 2013. <https://lux.lawrence.edu/harrison/2/> [accessed March 2020].
- Yeo, Mang Thong. 新加坡战前华人美术史论集 *Xinjiapo zhanqian huaren meishushi lunji* [Essays on the History of Pre-War Chinese Painting in Singapore]. Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 1992.

- . “Pre-war (1886–1941) Art Activities of the Chinese Community in Singapore”. In *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*. Trans. Ng Kum Hoon. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017.
- . *Migration, Transmission, Localisation: Visual Art in Singapore (1866–1945)*. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2018.
- Yeo, Wei Wei. “Drying Fish in Singapore Art: Making Sense of the Nanyang Style”. *Biblioasia* 7, 1 (April 2011): 4–9.
- Yukiko, Tatsumi. “Russian Critics and ‘Obshchestvennost’, 1840–1890: The Case of Vladimir Stasov”. In *Obshchestvennost’ and Civic Agency in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia*, ed. Y. Matsui. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Zhong, Yu. *Malaixiya huaren meishushi 1900–1965* [History of Malaysian Chinese Art 1900–1965]. Kuala Lumpur: Chung Chen Sun Art and Design Group Sdn Bhd, 1999.

Newspapers

- “30,000 People See Exhibition”. *The Straits Times*, 16 Sept. 1941, p. 10. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19410916-1.2.51?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- “A throwing away of old gods”. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 July 1938, p. 9. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19380705-1.2.75?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- “A Woman Peeps At Singapore”. *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 14 Feb. 1937, p. 10. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19370214-1.2.69?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- Ardmore, Vera. “Fight For Freedom Exhibition At Victoria Hall”. *Morning Tribune*, 12 Sept. 1941, p. 4. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19410912-1.2.28?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- “Art Club for Singapore Inauguration of New Movement”. *Morning Tribune*, 27 Nov. 1937, p. 7. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19371127-1.2.31?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- “Art Club In Singapore”. *Malaya Tribune*, 27 Nov. 1937, p. 12. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19371127-1.2.70?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- “Art Exhibition In Aid of China Relief Fund”. *Malaya Tribune*, 30 Sept. 1937, p. 6. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19370930-1.2.47?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- “Brings Art to Singapore”. *The Straits Times*, 10 Oct. 1937, p. 3. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19371010-1.2.20?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- "Brothers who blazed the trail of art in Malaya", 19 July 1953, p. 4. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19530719-1.2.41?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Chiyoji Yazaki and his art". *The Straits Times*, 27 June 1933, p. 15. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19330627-1.2.103?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Cultural Life In Singapore". *Malaya Tribune*, 22 July 1948, p. 4. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19480722-1.2.54?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Donations To The War Fund". *The Straits Times*, 21 Dec. 1940, p. 4. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19401221-1.2.8?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "European Association Of Malaya". *Malaya Tribune*, 8 Sept. 1937, p. 12, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19370908-1.2.77?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Europe in Colour". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (Weekly)*, 7 April 1926, p. 220. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepresswk19260407-1.2.73?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Exhibition Of Chinese Art In Malaya". *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 3 July 1938, p. 2. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19380703-1.2.29?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Exhibition Of Painting and Sculpture in Singapore". *Morning Tribune*, 16 Feb. 1937, p. 7. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19370216-1.2.38?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Exhibition of School Art". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 11 June 1940, p. 2. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19400611-1.2.19?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- Fernandez Mara. "Let Your Office Objets D'art Do the Talking". *The Straits Times*, 16 Sept. 1987, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19870916-1.2.91.6?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Fight For Freedom". *Malaya Tribune*, 12 April 1941, p. 12. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19410412-1.2.126?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020];
- "Fight for Freedom Exhibition Tour Starts Next Month". *Malaya Tribune*, 21 April 1941, p. 2. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19410421-1.2.24?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020]
- "Footlights Parade 1941 promises To Be Bright Show". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 Sept. 1941, p. 5. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19410905-1.2.52?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- "General Opens Inter-School Art Exhibition". *The Straits Times*, 11 June 1940, p. 13. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19400611-1.2.91?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- Heathcott, Mary. "Fight for Freedom Exhibition Opens". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 12 Sept. 1941, p. 5. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19410912-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Huaqiao huajia situ qiao yu sange laohuagong." "华侨画家司徒乔与《三个老华工》" [Overseas Chinese painter Situ Qiao and "Three Old Chinese Workers"], *刊参考网 Kan Cankao Wang*, 21 Nov. 2019. <http://m.fx361.com/news/2019/1121/6079320.html> [accessed March 2020].
- "Indian Sculptor Whose Work Adorns The Palaces Of Kings". *The Straits Times*, 30 June 1935, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19350630-1.2.36?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Inter-School Art Exhibition". *Malaya Tribune*, 24 May 1938, p. 14. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19380524-1.2.120?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Inter-School Art Exhibition". *Malaya Tribune*, 20 May 1940, p. 2. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19400520-1.2.24?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Inter-School Art Exhibition". *Malaya Tribune*, 7 Aug. 1947, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19470807-1.2.36?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Inter-School Art Show In August". *Morning Tribune*, 22 May 1947, p. 2. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19470522-1.2.18?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Inter-School Coronation Art Exhibition". *Morning Tribune*, 11 May 1937, p. 24. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19370511-1.2.85?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- Jewell, E.A. "Three Countries and Seventy-Nine". *New York Times*, 28 May 1939, X7.
- Koh, Agatha. "In and around town". *New Nation*, 6 June 1982, p. 14. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/newnation19820606-1.2.33?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Local Artist's Work at New York Fair". *The Straits Times*, 7 Aug. 1939, p. 13. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19390807-1.2.84?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Malayan Correspondents Use 41 Languages". *Malaya Tribune*, 25 Oct. 1939, p. 3. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19391025-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Mr. A. Shister". *Malaya Tribune*, 4 Feb. 1935, p. 11. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19350204-1.2.56?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- "Mura Smirnova". *The Straits Times*, 12 April 1932, p. 12. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19320412-1.2.77?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "New Municipal Portraits". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 19 April 1929, p. 16. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19290419-1.2.118?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "New Singapore School Of Art". *Sunday Tribune (Singapore)*, 10 Oct. 1937, p. 13. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19371010-1.2.68?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Notes Of The Day". *The Straits Times*, 26 March 1936, p. 10. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19360326-1.2.52?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "On the Margin". *The Straits Times*, 16 May 1952, p. 8. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19520516-1.2.122?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Page 3 Advertisements Column 5". *Malaya Tribune*, 13 Dec. 1937, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19371213-1.2.9.5?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Painter Comes to S'pore". *The Singapore Free Press*, 19 Nov. 1949, p. 4. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/freepress19491119-1.2.53?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Passion and Responsibility Exhibition of Arts by Situ Qiao and Situ Jie", NAMOC, 21 March 2016, http://www.namoc.org/xwzx/zt/stqstj/stq/zpxs/201603/t20160321_296583.htm [accessed March 2020].
- "Passion and Responsibility--Exhibition of Arts by Situ Qiao and Situ Jie Unveiled in NAMOC", NAMOC, 31 March 2016, http://www.namoc.org/en/news/news2016/201603/t20160331_297313.htm#.Wm7R8WlMSUk [accessed March 2020].
- "Penny Smythe talks to Tretchi". *Fair Lady*, 13 Sept. 1989, p. 53.
- "Portrait of Sir Hugh Clifford". *Malaya Tribune*, 21 Sept. 1928, p. 10. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19280921-1.2.88?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Portraitist Who Draws Festive Crowds". *The Straits Times*, 29 Jan. 1987, p. 5. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19870129-1.2.60.9.1?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Russian's Exhibition Opens At Y. W. C. A". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 13 June 1938, p. 9. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19380613-1.2.68?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Singapore Art Club". *Malaya Tribune*, 23 March 1932, p. 7. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19320323-1.2.45?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- "Singapore Art Club". *The Straits Times*, 26 March 1932, p. 19. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19320326-1.2.104?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Singapore Art Exhibition Opens Today". *The Straits Times*, 26 Oct. 1947, p. 7. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19471026-1.2.70?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Singapore Artist's Exhibition". *Malaya Tribune*, 11 June 1938, p. 12. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19380611-1.2.93?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Singapore Child Art Display Awards". *The Straits Times*, 12 Aug. 1947, p. 4. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19470812-1.2.40?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Singapore's First 'Skyscraper' In The Making". *Malaya Tribune*, 10 July 1939, p. 5. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19390710-1.2.190.11?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Singapore Needs An Art Gallery". *The Straits Times*, 19 Oct. 1947, p. 7. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19471019-1.2.73?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "S'pore Art Club Has 20 Members". *Malaya Tribune*, 5 April 1947, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19470405-1.2.90?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "S'pore Artist to Study In US". *Sunday Tribune (Sunday)*, 21 Sept. 1947, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/sundaytribune19470921-1.2.54?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Social and Personal". *The Straits Times*, 19 June 1926, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19260619-1.2.28?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Societe Des Artiste Chinois". *Malaya Tribune*. 18 Aug. 1939, p. 11. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19390818-1.2.49?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Society and Personal". *Malaya Tribune*. 8 June 1928, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19280608-1.2.29?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Syonan Artists To Seek Official Sanction To Form Association". *Syonan Shimibun*, 11 Nov. 1942, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/syonantimes19421111-1.2.14?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "The Language of Plastic Beauty". *The Straits Times*, 5 Aug. 1932, p. 10. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19320805-1.2.31?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].

- "The way to live—by Mr Low, 88". *New Nation*, 18 Nov. 1977, p. 3. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/newnation19771118-1.2.11?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Three Big Exhibitions In Singapore's Town Hall". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 6 Sept. 1941, p. 5. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19410906-1.2.64?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Three Local exhibitions". *The Straits Times*, 6 Sept. 1941, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19410906-1.2.49?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Tributes To Retiring Municipal President". *Malaya Tribune*, 30 Sept. 1939, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19390930-1.2.39?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Untitled". *The Straits Times*, 2 June 1922, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19220602-1.2.44?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Untitled". *Malaya Tribune*, 27 Feb. 1930, p. 8. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19300227-1.2.42?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Untitled". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 March 1931, p. 20. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepressb19310305-1.2.152?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Untitled". *Malaya Tribune*, 20 March 1937, p. 15. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19370320-1.2.119?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Untitled". *Morning Tribune (Singapore)*, 11 March 1939, p. 3. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19390311-1.2.21?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- "Wednesday, October 26, 1927". *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (Weekly)*, 2 Nov. 1927, p. 277. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepresswk19271102-1.2.39?ST=1&AT> [accessed March 2020].
- Wulschlager, Jackie. "Russian Portraiture: Icons of Early Modernism". *FT.Com*, 18 March 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/1607f08a-eabd-11e5-bb79-2303682345c8> [accessed March 2020].