

## LIST OF THEMES FOR EXHIBITION PANELS



### 1. Costumes (3 Panels)

Clothes, they say, can tell you much about the wearer. And the costumes worn by Singapore's various races do indeed indicate a great deal about their respective histories and cultures. While the traditional costumes of the various races differ greatly in style from one another, they do share some common elements, such as elegance and vibrancy. This theme touches on the origins, form and use of the colourful ethnic costumes unique to each major ethnic group as well as draws connections between them.

### 2. Traditional Medicine (3 Panels)

Although when it comes to healing the body and mind, all cultures have their own approaches to diagnosis and treatment, they also share many universal medicinal practices. These practices stem from factors relating to the universal human condition and can hence serve as a method of demonstrating the commonalities among the races. The 4 races also share certain commonalities in terms of medical practitioners. The theme of traditional medicine, folk medicine and physical treatments that have been used since immemorial to treat common illnesses and demonstrates that the traditional medicine of the major ethnic groups is based on many shared fundamental principles.

### 3. Games (3 Panels)

Many of the games and pastimes that Singaporeans of all races play or engage in these days have been handed down generations after generations by their forefathers. While each community has its own unique games and pastimes, many of these recreational activities have a common element: They aim to cultivate closer ties, family bonding and a sense of belonging among the participants. This theme introduces the popular pastimes of the different races while at the same time showing that many of the games we thought were unique to a particular ethnic group are actually played and enjoyed by all.

### 4. Heroes/Pioneers (3 Panels)

The early pioneers of Singapore came from different parts of the world but they shared similar aspirations and hope. While the pioneers have long since left us, the spirit of philanthropy, mutual help and kinsmanship remains strong. It is now part of the Singapore society. Regardless of race, language or religion, the never say die spirit, sense of selflessness and willingness to do their part for the community continues to thrive among many ordinary Singaporeans. This theme traces the achievements of our early pioneers and highlights the deeds of our present day "everyday heroes" to lead an audience to the conclusion that courage, generosity and compassion are qualities that know no boundaries of colour and gender.

### 5. Performing Arts (3 Panels)

No matter what the culture is, when it comes to the performing arts; such as dance, operas, and music – discipline is the key to the mastery of the field. Dance movements do have something in common; They often reflect the history,

legends, literature and religious values of their respective cultures. This theme touches on the origins, form and music of many dance movements and songs associated with each major ethnic group as well as demonstrating that whatever the origins and forms, on thing cannot be denied; Good music, dance movements know no language or cultural barriers.

#### **6. Weddings (3 Panels)**

Hunyin. Perkahwinan. Thirumanam. Whatever one calls it, marriage remains a cherished institution in Singapore. The wedding ceremony – be it Chinese, Peranakan, Malay, Indian or Eurasian – is a time for much joyous celebration with the radiant bride and happy groom bedecked in colourful costumes and glittering jewellery. While detailing the many rituals and traditions accompanying the marriage ceremonies of the different ethnic groups, this theme eventually reaches the understanding that no matter how a couple say “I DO”, all the races in Singapore share a common belief; That the marriage institution is something to be revered and preserved.

#### **7. Sutra Chanting (1 Panel)**

Chanting sutras, which are holy teachings, is encouraged in order to help cleanse sins and cultivate wisdom. The word sutra is also used in Hinduism. Members of the general public who want to take part in the ceremony sit in the back rows. They must dress respectfully. If necessary, they can borrow sarongs and shawls at the entrance of the temple.

#### **8. Friday Prayers (1 Panel)**

It is a religious obligation upon every Muslim to perform the five times daily prayers. It is also obligatory upon every male Muslim to go to the mosque for the congregational Friday prayers. The prayers follow a series of movements and recitations taught by the Prophet Muhammad, who received the divine revelations from God known as the Quran around 1,400 years ago. Here, the men are in prostration with their forehead, nose and palms to the ground to show their humility and submission while praying God. Women may also join the prayer in a separate section of the mosque.

#### **9. Flower Shop (1 Panel)**

Little India was once a prominent location for the business of cattle trading due to its location along the Serangoon River. Today, we don't see live cattle in Little India. In its place are rows of shophouses selling textiles, spices, gold, electronic equipment and of course, flowers. However, road names such as Buffalo Road and Kerbau Road, (which means buffalo in Malay) bear witness to Little India's history of cattle trading.

#### **10. Baptism (1 Panel)**

Baptism is a time for Christians to show that they want to be followers of Jesus, the founder of the faith. Baptism is to signify two important things. First, the person's decision to die to his or her sinful nature in exchange for the new life given by Jesus. Second, it signifies unity and equality as one people regardless of racial background and social-economic status.

### **11. Chinese Opera (1 Panel)**

Chinese Opera was a major source of entertainment for Chinese immigrants in the days before television and cinema. Chinese opera is publicly staged in formal Chinese opera houses, and during the lunar seventh month Chinese Ghost Festival as a form of entertainment to the spirits and audience. The characters fall into four main categories namely Sheng (male), Dan (female), Jing (painted face) and Chou (clown). The actors' makeup and costumes reveal the rank and status of each character.

### **12. Jewish Kosher Shop (1 Panel)**

A kosher shop sells products that are in line with Jewish laws. The food items that are sold are those that comply with the regulations of Jewish dietary laws. The panel also showcases the Star of David which is a popular Jewish symbol representing the shield of King David who had united the people of Israel.

### **13. Arab Street Carpet Shop (1 Panel)**

This shop is on Arab Street, named after Arabs who gathered there in the early 19th century. They were major traders and merchants. Other streets in this area also honour Singapore's links with Western Asia: Baghdad Street, Kandahar Street and Muscat Street are named after cities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Oman, respectively. Not far away, Aljunied Road is named after Syed Sharif Omar bin Ali Aljunied, an important businessman from Yemen who was welcomed to Singapore by Stamford Raffles in 1819.

### **14. Kristang Dance (1 Panel)**

The Kristang Cultural Troupe is performing the "Branyo", a popular dance brought by the Portuguese to Malacca. It is performed during celebrations or festivals. The Kristangs, also known as Portuguese Eurasians, are part of Singapore's Eurasian Community. They are a result of intermarriage between the Portuguese and other Asian races who were present in Malacca when the Portuguese arrived in 1511. Kristang songs and dances are usually accompanied by Western musical instruments like the guitar, the ukelele and the mandolin.

### **15. Taoist Funeral Wake (1 Panel)**

Taoists make up one of Singapore's largest religious groups. For a Taoist funeral, an altar is set up in front of the casket for friends and relatives to pay their last respects. A Taoist funeral usually lasts for an odd number of days, from three to seven days.

### **16. Catholic Gift Shop (1 Panel)**

This shop sells gifts, decor items and other products for Catholics, one of the main Christian groups in Singapore. Christianity was born in the Middle East but was brought to Singapore mainly by Europeans in the 19th century.