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Singapore as a hub for Southeast Asian art



There were two events in Singapore in January that had people talking about its role as a regional arts hub – the **inaugural edition of ART SG** and **S.E.A. Focus**, a local boutique art fair initiated by STPI Creative Workshop & Gallery and the National Arts Council (and in partnership with Art Basel).

Reporting on the event, [ARTnews](#) explains that S.E.A. Focus, in its 5th year, presents mostly galleries from Singapore and Southeast Asia. Often described as a **platform rather than an art fair**, S.E.A. Focus originally launched in 2019 as an alternative to Art Stage Singapore. It moved to its current location, during the pandemic and adapted a booth-less exhibition format with a curatorial theme for each edition.

Emi Eu, executive director of STPI and project director of S.E.A. Focus, told *ARTnews*, “It is great to finally have more **international dialogue on Singapore’s role in the global art market and as a hub for Southeast Asia**. We hope that this will translate to stimulating the region’s art market, and in turn catapult Singapore’s standing as a global art market player.”

The latest edition of the smaller fair also includes the launch of the **SAM S.E.A. Focus Art Fund**, a new programme involving a jury selection of outstanding works at the fair which will be donated to the Singapore Art Museum’s collection. The inaugural works acquired through the fund are a series of **13 works by Indonesian artist Agung Kurniawan** presented by **Jakarta-based gallery ROH Projects**; and *Mercurial Inscription* (2022), a video work by **Malaysian artist Tan Zi Hao**, presented by **Kuala Lumpur-based gallery A+ Works of Art**.

Malaysian artist Tan Zhi Hao, presented by Kuala Lumpur-based gallery Art Works of Art.

ART SG fair has also been making waves as a much-anticipated event in the region. More than 160 local and international galleries were present at the city’s iconic Marina Bay Sands convention centre. As reported in [Artsy](#), a strong contingent of collectors from neighbouring **Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand** flew in for the event, as well as buyers from **Australia, mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Europe**. Having recently gathered at Frieze Seoul, many collectors saw Art SG – which is organised by international fair conglomerate The Art Assembly – as a complementary destination for contemporary art in Asia.

Read the full review of [S.E.A. Focus here](#) and an overview of the best booths at [ART SG here](#).

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