

# Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary Art Auction in Singapore

**AUCTION** 23 Jan 2026 | By A&M

*Southeast Asian artists Anthony Poon, Pacita Abad, Jane Lee and more*

The first Modern and Contemporary Art auction of the year for Sotheby's in Asia will be held this Sunday, 25 January 2026 in Singapore. The works are on view at The Singapore EDITION from 21 to 24 January.



Installation view of preview of the Sotheby's Modern & Contemporary Art auction at The Singapore EDITION, showing a work by Anthony Poon. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.

This is the second time the auction is held during Singapore Art Week. Jasmine Prasetio, Managing Director, Southeast Asia, Sotheby's says, "We are excited to welcome collectors from all around the world to our first live auction of the year in Asia, taking place during this buzzing week-long gathering celebrating art, culture, and more." Prasetio also shares that since 2022, the number of new bidders from Southeast Asia participating in Sotheby's global sales has increased by 60%, saying, "We are seeing an increasing passion amongst collectors from



Installation view of preview of the Sotheby's Modern & Contemporary Art auction at The Singapore EDITION, showing works of Walter Spies and Raden Saleh. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.

This year, the sale is once again led by modern Indonesian artworks. *Die schlittschuhläufer (the ice skaters)* (1922) was painted by Walter Spies before he moved to Java and then Bali. Featuring a group of ice-skaters in a snowscape anchored by a cabin and surrounded by coniferous trees, it showcases the artist's visual imagination through a lively composition, and exemplifies his engagement with German Expressionism.

There are two works by the 19th-century painter Raden Saleh, who is widely considered the first Indonesian modern artist. *The Eruption of Mount Merapi, by Day* (1865), from a private European collection, is coming to auction for the first time, and features Mount Merapi, the most active volcano in Indonesia, located north of Yogyakarta. Another work is *Dutch Ship in Storm* (1836), is from a private Asian collection, featuring a turbulent seascape.



Installation view of preview of the Sotheby's Modern & Contemporary Art auction at The Singapore EDITION, showing works of Le Pho and Mai Trung Thu. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.

Modern Vietnamese artworks feature significantly in the sale, including silk paintings by Mai Trung Thu and Le Pho. From Mai Trung Thu are two artworks *Coquetterie* (1966) and *Le vent* (1945). The artist took inspiration from the well-known, anonymous work *Gabrielle D'Estrées et une des soeurs* (1594), using a similar composition to feature two Vietnamese female subjects in *Coquetterie*. And from Le Pho, a highlight among the five lots by the artist available in this sale is *Mère et enfant, fond fleurs* which shows a mother wearing an ao dai holding her child, against a delicate floral background.

A highlight is *Colour Waves* (1986) by Singapore modern artist Anthony Poon, from the collection of Raffles City, Singapore. Senior Specialist Michelle Yaw shares that the work was displayed at the shopping centre's lobby for a time, and that it is a part of Poon's *Wave* series, which blends colour-field painting and Op Art sensibilities to create the artist's signature style. Measuring 225 by 230 centimetres, this is the largest painting by the artist to appear on the market.



Pacita Abad, *Assaulting the Eye with Ecstasy*, 1984, fabric paint on canvas, appliqued with embroidery, buttons, mirrors, trapuntoed and hand-sewn, 222 x 210cm. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.

Standout lots the specialists have further identified are works by Southeast Asian female artists, including Pacita Abad and Jane Lee. Abad's oeuvre has been shown at multiple major shows in the past few years. One of the most recent is *Pacita Abad: Common Ground* at STPI, Singapore from October to December 2025. *Assaulting the Eye with Ecstasy* (1984) was acquired from the exhibition *Oriental Abstractions* presented by the Pai Sui Loong Galleries at the Hong Kong Arts Centre in 1986, and has been held in the same collection until now.



Close-up view of Pacita Abad, *Assaulting the Eye with Ecstasy*, 1984, fabric paint on canvas, appliqued with embroidery, buttons, mirrors, trapuntoed and hand-sewn, 222 x 210cm. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.

*Painting Is - 3 Phases* was acquired by the present owner from *Where is Painting?* at the Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Singapore, in 2022. The exhibition continued the artist's long-time inquiry into the medium. The triptych is rendered mainly white and blue, with visible flecks of pink, red and green under the layers of paint. It comprises a large work on the wall, followed by a smaller one beneath, with the smallest one placed on the floor. The uppermost work is presented on a wooden support, while the lower ones are created in acrylic and mixed media on sculpted canvas.



Jane Lee, *Painting Is - 3 Phases*, 2022, acrylic paint and mixed media on wood and canvas, 54.1 x 48.2 x 5 cm, 48.4 x 46.7 x 6 cm, 35 by 38 by 8.5 cm. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.

the leading figures of the Mono-ha movement, and Japanese contemporary artist Takashi Murakami, among others.

Back in August 2022, Sotheby's held its first auction in Singapore in 15 years, and achieved a sales total of SGD24.5 million. As part of Sotheby's 50th Anniversary celebrations in Asia, the Modern and Contemporary Art auction returned to Singapore in July 2023. The following year, the auction house announced a new fee structure, lowering the Buyer's Premium rates across all categories, which was implemented in the sale in June 2024. Since 2025, the sale has been held in January, to join the bustling Singapore Art Week calendar.

*The auction exhibition will be on view from 21 to 24 January at The Singapore EDITION, with the live auction taking place at 5pm on 25 January. More information [here](#).*

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