

# Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***The Universe and Art* inspires a sense of wonder at ArtScience Museum**

*Commissioned artwork and prized artefacts from Asian Civilisations Museum on display*

**SINGAPORE (30 March 2017)** – Come 1 April, visitors can embark on an artistic voyage through the cosmos with ArtScience Museum's latest exhibition, *The Universe and Art*. The new show weaves a rich constellation of Eastern and Western philosophies, ancient and contemporary art, and science and religion, to explore how humanity has constantly contemplated its presence in the Universe.

It is jointly curated and organised by Mori Art Museum in Tokyo and ArtScience Museum. Featuring over 120 original artworks, scientific artefacts and manuscripts, this exhibition presents visions of the Universe from across the globe and through the centuries. Exhibiting alongside masterpieces from around the world, are important artefacts on loan from Singapore's Asian Civilisations Museum, and a newly commissioned installation by British sculptor, Conrad Shawcross.

*The Universe and Art* unfolds in four parts. It begins with a focus on historical cosmologies from around the world, including religious art from the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain traditions, on loan from Asian Civilisations Museum. The birth of astronomy as a science is charted through a remarkable collection of artefacts from east and west, including masterpieces by Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton that are on show in Singapore for the first time. New scientific thinking on the Universe is examined in the second section of the show, in works by contemporary artists, including Björn Dahlem, Mariko Mori, Andreas Gursky, and the new commission by Conrad Shawcross. The third section of the exhibition explores the origin of life in the cosmos, through artworks by major figures, such as Pierre Huyghe, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Laurent Grasso, and Patricia Piccinini. The exhibition ends by pondering life in space, through the work of historical pioneer, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, and contemporary artists including Arthur Woods, Kitsuo Dubois, Takuro Osaka, and Dragan Živadinov.

"Humanity has always looked to art, mythology and philosophy in an attempt to fathom the Universe and its mysteries. *The Universe and Art* shows how these fields, when combined with the understanding generated by science, give us new insights into the cosmos. We see how the Universe has been an object of religious worship, a source of artistic and literary inspiration, and the basis of some of the most revolutionary scientific discoveries of all time. *The Universe and Art* is a potent confluence between the terrestrial and the celestial, the real and the fictional, the poetic and the technological. It is a place where art and science meet," said Honor Harger, Executive Director, ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands.

“We are pleased to welcome visitors to *The Universe and Art*. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to ArtScience Museum, Asian Civilisations Museum as well as artists for allowing us to exhibit their valuable artworks and materials. Without their unwavering support and cooperation, this exhibition would not have been possible,” said Fumio Nanjo, Director, Mori Art Museum.

**Key loans from Asian Civilisations Museum**

*The Universe and Art* at ArtScience Museum includes a collection of stunning artefacts on loan from Asian Civilisations Museum. These important works include religious artefacts, plus scientific manuscripts and instruments from across Asia. Religious art illustrates how the Universe was depicted in Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Daoism. Astronomical texts from ancient Persia and the Arab world demonstrate an advanced comprehension of the celestial world. Scientific instruments show the innovations made by Muslim scientists a millennium ago.

This is the first time that these prized artefacts are on display outside of Asian Civilisations Museum.

Opening the exhibition is the *Relic Stupa* from India. Hailing from the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Century, it is the oldest in the loan collection. A stupa is a monument built to consecrate relics of the Buddha. Ashoka the Great (r. 268 – 232 BC), who unified most of the Indian sub-continent for the first time, is said to have re-distributed the Buddha’s relics into 84,000 stupas across his empire. The spire on top symbolises the central pillar of the cosmos connecting Heaven and Earth.



*Relic Stupa*  
3rd or 4th century, India  
Collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore



*Jain Mandala* (Painting on cloth)  
17th or 18th century, Gujarat, India

Another intriguing piece of artefact loan on display is the *Jain Mandala*. Cosmological diagrams (mandalas) were used in Jain’s rituals and meditation. A sky-clan Jina, one of 24 teachers in the Jain pantheon, sits in the center of a grid of divinities. Inscribed with mantras and seed syllables, this painting manifests higher realms of existence in Jain cosmology.



*Astrolabe (Abd al-A'immah)*  
Ca 1700CE. Isfahan, Iran  
Collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore

An astrolabe hailing from Iran demonstrates the extraordinary innovations pioneered by scientists from the Islamic world. Astrolabes represent the rotations of three-dimensional celestial spheres in a two dimension format. The astrolabe on show in the exhibition displays features originally developed by Muslim scientists from the ninth century, including shadow squares for solving trigonometry problems and a movable straight edge used to measure the altitude of celestial objects.

“The Asian Civilisations Museum is grateful and very excited to be collaborating with Mori Art Museum and ArtScience Museum on this exhibition. In juxtaposing premodern artefacts of cultural astronomy with contemporary works of art, we hope visitors will come away with an insight into how people across cultures and times have thought about the cosmos,” added Kennie Ting, Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum.

#### **Commissioned work by Conrad Shawcross**



*Slow Arc inside a Cube VIII* by Conrad Shawcross.  
Commissioned by ArtScience Museum, 2017.

The second part of the exhibition explores more recent scientific concepts. A key centrepiece is *Slow Arc inside a Cube VIII* by British artist, Conrad Shawcross, commissioned for the exhibition. Thanks to extraordinary advances in technology, radical new theories, and vast international science endeavours, we are now living through a golden age of discovery in astronomy. Yet despite this progress in our scientific understanding, much is still unknown.

Scientists now believe that 95% of the Universe is comprised of mysterious substances and forces, called dark matter and dark energy, which defy current explanation. Known for his kinetic sculptures inspired by science, Shawcross has created an artwork that invites us to ponder these mysteries.

A moving light within a metal cage projects mesmerising geometric shadows onto walls of the gallery. The artwork is inspired by the Nobel Prize winning biochemist, Dorothy Hodgkin, who developed crystal radiography. Hodgkin spoke about crystal radiography being like, “trying to work out the structure of a tree from seeing only its shadow.” This calls to mind the process of how astronomers work out the structure of invisible celestial phenomena, such as dark matter. The process of ‘gravitational lensing’, is much like crystal radiography, in that it gives astronomers a tool to detect invisible dark matter, by looking only at the gravitational effect it has on ordinary matter and light.

This is ArtScience Museum’s second collaboration with Shawcross. In 2014, his artwork, *Projections of a Perfect Third* was featured in *Da Vinci: Shaping the Future*.

### **Programmes**

Visitors can participate in a series of unique and engaging programmes, commencing the opening weekend of *The Universe and Art*. These programmes are specially developed by the museum to generate different contexts for a better understanding of the exhibition.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date and timings</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Conversations: You are the Universe	1 Apr (Sat), 2pm	ArtScience Museum L4, Expression Gallery	Humanity has always sought to catalogue the heavens and make the invisible forces we yearn to understand visible. Nothing beckons us like the mystery and majesty of the Universe in our quest to grasp our place in it.  Turn your imagination to the cosmos and hear from speakers of diverse disciplines and backgrounds as they investigate the Universe from the perspective of art, cultural history, philosophy and science.	Free admission.
Insights/Public/ Mandarin – guided tours	For the comprehensive list of specific dates and timings, please	ArtScience Museum L3	Who are we? What is our place in the Universe? How do cultures, art and technology play a part in	Complimentary to ticket-holders of <i>The Universe and Art</i> .

	visit <a href="http://MarinaBaySands.com/ArtScienceMuseum">MarinaBaySands.com/ArtScienceMuseum</a>		understanding the cosmos?  Join us in this enlightening tour as we journey through time and space to ponder some of the Universe's deepest mysteries.	
Make your own Cyanotype Universe (Workshop)	7 and 21 Apr, 5 and 19 May, 2 and 30 Jun  4.30pm – 5.30pm	ArtScience Museum B2, Rainbow Room	Join us in <i>Cyanotype Universe</i> where participants use one of the oldest printing techniques to create beautiful photographic blueprints of space.	\$8/participant and up to 20 participants on a first-come, first-served basis.
<i>ArtScience on Screen: Look at the Earth from the Universe</i>	For dates and timings, please visit <a href="http://MarinaBaySands.com/ArtScienceMuseum">MarinaBaySands.com/ArtScienceMuseum</a>	ArtScience Museum L4, Expression Gallery	A screening programme of single-channel video works curated by Reiko Tsubaki (Associate Curator, Mori Art Museum) that examines the modern human society from a cosmic viewpoint, explored through the lens of artists.	Free admission.

*The Universe and Art* will run from 1 April to 30 July 2017.

Tickets are available at all Marina Bay Sands box offices and website. Terms and Conditions apply. Tickets prices as follows:

		<b><i>The Universe and Art</i></b>	<b><i>The Universe and Art + Future World</i></b>
<b>STANDARD TICKET (SGD)</b>	Adult	\$17	\$28
	Seniors (65 years and above)	\$14	\$24
	Child (2-12 years)	\$10	\$17
	Family package (2 kids & 2 adults)	\$44	\$73
<b>SINGAPORE RESIDENT (SGD)</b>	Adult	\$14	\$24
	Seniors (65 years and above)	\$11	\$20
	Child (2-12 years)	\$7	\$12
	Family package (2 kids & 2 adults)	\$35	\$60

For more information on the exhibition, please visit  
[www.marinabaysands.com/ArtScienceMuseum](http://www.marinabaysands.com/ArtScienceMuseum)

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#### **About Marina Bay Sands Pte Ltd**

Marina Bay Sands is the leading business, leisure and entertainment destination in Asia. It features large and flexible convention and exhibition facilities, 2,560 hotel rooms and suites, the rooftop Sands SkyPark, the best shopping mall in Asia, world-class celebrity chef restaurants and an outdoor event plaza. Its two theatres showcase a range of leading entertainment performances including world-renowned Broadway shows. Completing the line-up of attractions is ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands which plays host to permanent and marquee exhibitions. For more information, please visit [www.marinabaysands.com](http://www.marinabaysands.com)

#### **About ArtScience Museum**

ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands is Southeast Asia's leading cultural institution that explores the interrelationship between art, science, technology and culture. Featuring 21 galleries totalling 50,000 square feet, the iconic lotus-inspired building has staged major exhibitions by some of the 20th century's key artists, including Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol and Vincent Van Gogh, as well as major exhibitions which explore aspects of scientific history.

#### **About Mori Art Museum, Tokyo**

Mori Art Museum, located on the top floor of Roppongi Hills Mori Tower skyscraper, a noted landmark of Tokyo, is a pivotal and pioneering contemporary art museum that has been introducing diverse artistic practices from around the world. The Museum since its establishment in October 2003 has developed its own distinctive approach to art - by embracing the concepts of "contemporary" and "international" - and is committed to making contemporary art more accessible to all people by presenting a wide range of exhibitions and learning programs that feature cutting-edge visual arts, architecture and design in a global perspective. Its continuing "Art + Life" principle is to realize an enriched society where art relates to all aspect of life. For more information, visit: [www.mori.art.museum/eng](http://www.mori.art.museum/eng)

#### **About the Asian Civilisations Museum**

The Asian Civilisations Museum is the only museum in region devoted to exploring the artistic heritage of Asia, especially the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans. The museum has launched two new wings with new galleries in late 2015 and early 2016. Founded in 1993, and in its present building by the Singapore River since 2003, the museum's collection grew out of the 19th-century Raffles Museum. The ACM spotlights the long historical connections between the cultures of Asia, and between Asia and the world.

Objects on display tell stories of the trade and the exchange of ideas that were the result of international commerce, as well as the flow of religions and faith through Asia. Singapore's history as a port city that brought people together from all over the world is used as a means of examining the history of Asia. Special exhibitions bring magnificent objects from around the world to our Singapore audience. Programmes like the annual River Nights encourage visitors to connect more closely with culture and the arts. For more information, visit [www.acm.org.sg](http://www.acm.org.sg).

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