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MBC II ART TRAIL
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BETWEEN MAPLETREE
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A TEACHER AND STUDENT GUIDE TO THE ART TRAIL MBC II – WAYS OF SEEING AND EXPERIENCING ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

What is art in public space? This question requires a multi-faceted answer. Public art comes in many different shapes, sizes, colours, and forms. It is created from an artist's vision, but it is best activated through the public's participation in viewing and sensory interactions with the artwork in space. Public art can stand apart from its surroundings or be integrated into the natural or urban landscape. The relationship of the work to its environment encourages viewers to think about the importance of a specific place and its surroundings when installing an artwork in public spaces. It also promotes reflection on its meaning within a broader social, historical and economic context, as well as its ability to create community. Interactive encounters with public art merge the artist's view of the world with our own, helping us discover new perspectives related to our personal and community identities, as well as giving us an appreciation for contemporary art.



Tomás Saraceno's work revolves around concerns for the loss of sustainable habitats for humans, animals and plant life on earth. Through his study of the physical structures and functions of spider webs, he has been inspired to create prototypes for possible airbourne dwellings of the future. His installation work *Stillness in Motion - 3 Airbourne Self-Assemblies*, draws on his multi-disciplinary knowledge from the fields of art, architecture, and science. In this

THE ARTWORKS

Mapletree, in collaboration with curatorial expertise provided by NTU-CCA Singapore, commissioned a series of public artworks for the MBC II site. The chosen artists took into consideration the unique urban and architectural spaces at MBC II when planning their installations. Through their artworks they show us new ways of seeing and experiencing public art, as well as how public space can be transformed with artistic engagement.



Dan Graham used special two-way-mirror glass surfaces to create his *Elliptical Pavillion*. Visitors can walk through the transparent maze-like installation, physically and visually engaging with layered mirages of themselves and others being playfully reflected onto the surrounding garden and architectural landscape via the artwork. Graham creates the experience of a mirrored 'fun-house', all the while encouraging us to rethink where the physical and perceptual world begins and ends as well as to question if what we see is real or just an illusion.

suspended installation featured at MBC II, a series of geometric-shaped pods using reflective surfaces echo the surrounding greenery and manmade environment, while drawing the gazes of the viewers into his futuristic world as well. His artwork inspires dreams of new possibilities for living and interacting on our planet.

Zulkifle Mahmud explores sound as an art form to draw attention to the ever-changing urban environment. At MBC II he recorded the sounds found in the vicinity and remixed them to create his *Sonic Pathway* installation, made with copper pipes, 512 solenoids, microcontrollers, and speakers. His installation is suspended from a rain shelter roof over a busy public pathway. The movement of passers-by triggers the solenoids to transmit electric current to produce new orchestrations of sound, creating an acoustic dialogue. The merging of the sounds with the experience of navigating the passage from one space to the next becomes a form of aural architecture. Pedestrians are challenged to renew their awareness of the sounds in their environment when exercising familiar routines.



A broad historical perspective related to the theme of 'identity' is conveyed in *Wind Sculpture I*, 2013 by Yinka Shonibare, MBE. His work explores the exchange of people, ideas, and goods between Indonesia, Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa through maritime trade over the centuries.

His hand painted sculpture references traditional batik patterns, which through the trade of textiles linked these diverse societies together. The artist uses the wind as a metaphor to express the idea of multi-layered identities and cultural influences being carried to opposite corners of the globe through economic, cultural, and social exchange. Perched opposite Shonibare's sculpture sits the original Fullerton Lighthouse. Its placement dialogues with Shonibare's work, reminding us of Singapore's role as an important port in the history of the region.



PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES: QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Prior to the MBC II ART TRAIL site visit, discuss the questions below as related to where and how you usually encounter artworks.

1. Encounters with Art

- Where do you usually encounter artworks?
- Do you enjoy viewing or interacting with art?
- What kind of art do you prefer?
- Which artworks that you have seen would you like your friends and family to see too?

2. Artworks in Your Neighborhood

- Is there any public art in your neighborhood? If so, describe it.
- Where is it located in the public space?
- Do you enjoy having artworks displayed in your community?
- How can public art speak for a community? Give specific examples, such as 'urban graffiti', etc. Be ready to explain your ideas.

3. Sketch a picture of your favorite artwork, either displayed at home or in a public space in Singapore. Draw it in relation to everything around it. Share your sketch with a friend and talk about why you like this piece of art in this space.

ACTIVITY #2: ENTERING AN ARTWORK

In small groups of 4, visit Zulkifl Mahmod's *Sonic Pathway* and Dan Graham's *Elliptical Pavillion*. As you enter each of these artworks, physically experience the activated spaces through engaging as many of your senses as you can, e.g. sight, hearing, touch, smell. Take pictures and make recordings of yourself and your group interacting as they walk through these public art installations.



After you have finished engaging with each work, jot down any words or ideas on your activity sheet that describe how you felt when you interacted with the installations. Did your perception of the artworks change after your physical or sensory encounter with them?

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES!

Activity #1: Debate and Create Spaces for Public Art!

(Required materials: cardboard boxes, paper, coloured paper, acrylic paint, poster paint, oil pastels, paint brushes, thumbtacks, string, glue, Smartphone with recording device and camera, etc).

Review and reflect upon your visit to MBC II's public art installations in a group of 4. Answer the following questions within your group:

- Did you feel connected to the artworks or separate from them?
- Did you feel a sense of shared experience with your classmates when interacting with each work? Explain your answer.
- Were each of these installations integrated or isolated from its surroundings?
- Which installation would you like to have in your school or neighborhood? Why?
- How would you integrate your preferred installation into your own community space?
- What would you like people to think about if you had the chance to create an artwork in a public space?

Activity #2: Match the Artwork with Its Artistic Concept

(Draw a line connecting the artwork to the most appropriate concept.)

<i>Elliptical Pavillion,</i> Dan Graham	aural architecture
<i>Sonic Pathway,</i> Zulkifle Mahmud	identity and history
<i>Stillness in Motion – 3 Airbourne Self-Assemblies,</i> Tomás Saraceno	reality vs. illusion
<i>Wind Sculpture I,</i> Yinka Shonibare MBE	futuristic living

Activity #3: Recreating Space

Cut out and paste together the 3-D cube template of the sketches you made during your visit to ART TRAIL MBC II in Activity #1: "Public Space Transformed into Artistic Engagement". Compare them with three of your friends' sketches. Working with your group, recreate your sketches by painting them onto the corresponding sides of a large cardboard box. Include every detail that each person saw. When

dry, stack your box with your other classmates' boxes to create a new public sculpture located in a special spot in your school. Be inspired by the installations you saw at MBC II! How do these installations create community or a shared experience between you and your classmates?

Draw a sketch of the installation that you plan to make in your school

Activity #4: Exploring Themes through Art in Public Spaces

Choose your favorite art installation in MBC II. Reflect upon its theme: reality vs. illusion, aural architecture, identity and history, futuristic living. Get together in a group of 6 and plan a public art installation in your school. Relate one of these themes to your own public space. What kind of community connection do you aim to create? How will the artwork change the way you see your daily environment? Feel empowered to make an installation in your school for all to enjoy!



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Its strategic focus is to invest in markets and real estate sectors with good growth potential. By combining its key strengths, the Group has established a track record of award-winning projects and delivers consistent and high returns across real estate asset classes.

These properties include VivoCity, Mapletree Business City, and STT Tai Seng 1 in Singapore, as well as mixed-use developments in the region such as Mapletree Business City Shanghai and VivoCity Shanghai, and Nanhai Business City in China.

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Located in Gillman Barracks, the NTU CCA Singapore is a national research centre of Nanyang Technological University, supported by a grant from the Economic Development Board. The Centre is unique in its threefold constellation of research & academic education, international exhibitions and residencies, positioning itself as a space for critical discourse and diverse forms of knowledge production. The Centre focuses on *Spaces of the Curatorial* in Singapore, Southeast Asia, and beyond, as well as engages in multi-layered research topics.

Since its inauguration in October 2013, the NTU CCA Singapore has developed into an influential platform encompassing research-based artistic practices of international scope, curatorial education, and public programmes to delve into the complexities of the contemporary art field.

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