

Museum goes high-tech with digital gallery

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SINGAPORE – If you were at the National Museum of Singapore (NMS) in December, you might have been pleasantly surprised when you wandered into a gallery and found yourself surrounded not by physical artefacts, but larger-than-life video projections that you could interact with and immerse yourself in.

These are “housed” in the museum’s newest gallery, Gallery10, which is also its first digital gallery.

NMS’ director Angelita Teo said the move to employ digital technology in the art scene is very much part of the growing effort in museums to stay relevant and enhance the stories they want to share with visitors.

“The National Museum has always wanted to be relevant to what’s happening today. You cannot deny that we are in a digital age, with social media, the Internet and everything. I think all museums are very active in employing a digital approach on how they want to tell their stories and provide experiences enhanced with digital technology,” she said.

The digital gallery currently features Art of the Rehearsal — an immersive video installation showcasing traditional dancers from different ethnicities rehearsing their performances against the backdrop of various back alleys all over Singapore.

It is a permanent showcase by Singaporean multidisciplinary artist Sarah Choo Jing in collaboration with commercial cinematographer Jeffrey Ang, with performances by dancers from traditional arts organisations Apsaras Arts, Era Dance Theatre and Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Dance Theatre.

The new space follows NMS’ launch of Story of the Forest, an interactive digital-art installation by internationally renowned Japanese digital-art collective teamLab, at the revamped Glass Rotunda in December last year.

“With the Story of the Forest, it was a difficult space, and we used an established artist collective, teamLab, to do the work. Here, it’s more of a lapsed space where we can try new things we have not done before. We put in a lot of technology, like lighting, which was state of the art, so that we can work with creative people,” said Teo.

“We don’t want to limit ourselves to just artists — we want to open ourselves up in the creative industry (and to) new ideas they want to try out, and we want to allow them to work with us in this space and test it out,” she added.

● Gallery10 is located at the National Museum of Singapore, Level 1. Open from 10am to 7pm daily.



Art of the Rehearsal at the National Museum of Singapore’s new digital gallery is an immersive video installation that depicts dancers of various ethnicities practising their craft along back alleys in cultural districts all over Singapore. PHOTO: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE



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