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PRESS RELEASE

Singapore Management University receives a significant Gift of Art from artist Chua Ek Kay

Singapore, 18 October 2006 – Distinguished local artist and cultural medallion winner Mr Chua Ek Kay has presented the Singapore Management University with a generous gift of his own art works.

The “Street Scenes Collection” is a culmination of twenty years of Mr Chua's artistic practice. It consists of 30 pieces of work, which portray Singapore's heritage with depictions of old shop houses, narrow alleyways, historic sites and other memories. Through Mr Chua's distinctive style, the paintings invoke nostalgia and pay tribute to Singapore's history.

To be housed in the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, the “Street Scenes Collection” is valued at S\$302,000 and personifies Mr Chua's unique artistic vision. The collection also attests to Mr Chua's prominent reputation and recognition among art contemporaries and cultural bodies in Singapore and around the world.

In presenting his gift of art, Mr Chua said, “When I was first told of SMU's interest in my work, I was delighted. That SMU's intentions are to develop their Visual Arts Initiative through collecting and exhibiting contemporary Southeast Asian art sealed my desire to reciprocate their interest through this donation. I hope, through this donation, to share the Street Scenes series with SMU's campus body. I have discovered much of Singapore 's heritage while exploring its streets, and I hope that SMU's students might come to discover and appreciate both art and our past through my paintings. For a while now, I've been hoping to invite a critical examination of my Street Scenes series. It is a theme I've been developing for more than twenty years. I am very happy that SMU will take up this project through a publication of commissioned essays.”

On receiving the generous donation, Professor Howard Hunter, President of SMU, said “We are deeply grateful and would like to express our sincere thanks for this unprecedented gift of art by Mr Chua Ek Kay. The works that comprise this gift represent the highest standards of devotion to training, to study, and to seeking a better understanding of the human condition. We hope his works will give pleasure to the eyes and challenges to the intellects of those who see them.”

He added, “Mr Chua's donation also signifies his firm support for our Visual Arts Initiative. Through this initiative, we hope to encourage and cultivate creativity among students and imbue the campus body with the rich artistic and cultural life of the precinct. In receiving Mr Chua's gift of art, we have received more than just paintings.

We have received a piece of cultural heritage filled with social and historical relevance as they represent an important connection to our past. It is now our responsibility to ensure that this generation and the others that follow will embrace and expound the meanings within.”

SMU will publish a critical review of the collection to honour Mr Chua's gift. The launch of the book is scheduled for next year and will coincide with a public exhibition of the artworks.

Mr Chua, 59, is one of Singapore's foremost artists and has made tremendous contributions to developing the local arts scene. His personal influence strides beyond his art and he has enriched our understanding and appreciation of art extensively. In the ultimate recognition to his esteemed contributions to developing Singapore's cultural standing, he was conferred the prestigious Cultural Medallion by the Singapore government in 1999.

About SMU's Visual Arts Initiative

SMU has also launched the Visual Arts Initiative on 12 January 2006, with the aim to fill every corner of the new campus with art and artistic activities such that its students and the public will be enriched and enlivened by artistic aesthetics and creativity. Through this initiative, SMU will develop and host exhibitions and enrichment programmes and will develop an institutional collection of contemporary art, with Southeast Asian art as the principal focus.