

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

peranakan MUSEUM

Singapore's Newest Museum Opens

*Showcasing the finest and most comprehensive
Peranakan collection in the world*

Singapore, 17 April 2008 – The new Peranakan Museum, which houses the world's finest and most comprehensive collection of Peranakan artefacts, officially opens to the public on 26 April 2008. The Museum is the first in the world to explore Peranakan cultures in the former Straits Settlements of Singapore, Malacca and Penang and their links with other Peranakan communities in Southeast Asia. The Peranakan Museum has been conceived and developed by the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), one of the national museums of Singapore.

The Peranakan Museum explores the main themes of Peranakan life in ten permanent galleries. They include the elaborate 12-day Peranakan wedding, the role of the Nonyas, prominent Peranakans in Singapore's history, as well as one of the favourite past times of Singaporeans – food and feasting. It also provides a glimpse of how modern-day Peranakans have evolved with their culture.

Work on the Peranakan Museum started just over two years ago at the end of 2005, when the old Tao Nan School building at 39 Armenian Street (which since 1997 had housed the first premises of the ACM) was closed for the renovation works. ACM staff have consulted academics and collaborated with members of the Peranakan community to bring the new Museum to life.

Dr. Kenson Kwok, Director, ACM said, “The Peranakan Museum is dedicated to showcasing this unique culture of our region. There is hardly any Peranakan material to be seen in museums outside Southeast Asia, and within the region, we are the first museum to provide a comprehensive showcase of the Peranakans. Anyone wanting to see these exhibits must come to us. We have been working very closely with local and regional Peranakan communities and interest groups to present our visitors with an authentic reflection of the Peranakan way of life, past and present. We would like the Peranakan Museum to become a regional centre for information and research on the Peranakans.”

Ms. Priscylla Shaw, Chairman, ACM Board, commented, “ ACM's Board Members and myself are thrilled that ACM 1 as it was first known, is being re-opened as the new Peranakan Museum. As a ‘living museum’, it will display not only priceless and perfect artefacts, but also everyday objects in a way that will resonate with many households in Singapore. For families and children, there will be unique interactive stations and handling opportunities. With ample car-parking and interesting restaurants adjacent to the Museum to round off a visit, we are confident that the new light and bright Peranakan Museum will be a popular culture and leisure destination for all Singaporeans. For tourists, to get a complete experience of Singapore, a visit to the Peranakan Museum is simply a must. It should be top of their list of places to see. “

Mr. Michael Koh, CEO, National Heritage Board (NHB) said, “We are delighted to unveil the Peranakan Museum, which is the newest member of NHB's family of museums. Showcasing their charming culture, the museum presents a pan Southeast-Asian perspective of the world of Peranakans, covering their unique history, colourful fashion, distinctive traditions and aromatic cuisine. Over time, the Peranakan Museum will become a focal point for this community to bond and celebrate the richness of their living heritage. For visitors, it will present a refreshing view of the fascinating Peranakan culture and how its influence spread across the region over the decades.”

To celebrate the opening of the new Peranakan Museum, a Peranakan Festival entitled *Mari Buat Lau Jiat!* (Let's Make Merry!), will be held over three weekends between 26 April and 11 May. The first weekend (26-27 April) kicks off with a focus on 'Peranakan Heritage'. The second weekend (3-4 May) promises a day of enjoyment for the entire family. The Festival finale, 'Peranakan Fusion' (10-11 May), draws attention to modern influences on Peranakan culture. Highlights of the festival include a commissioned impromptu drama entitled "Babas and Nonyas - Live Drama in the Museum!" by Dick Lee and a fashion parade showcasing the Peranakan style of dressing.

A guest-curated community project, entitled "Junk To Jewels: The Things that Peranakans Value", will also be launched in conjunction with the Official Opening of the Museum. This exhibition brings together loans from more than 35 Peranakans featuring everyday objects as well as finely crafted heirlooms and works of art. There is a fascinating personal story behind each exhibit, which provides a glimpse into the world of today's Peranakans.

Admission to the new Peranakan Museum and Opening Festival for the first weekend will be free, and at a special rate of \$2 per person (adult or child) for the second and third weekends.

- END -

We would like to thank the following for their generous support:

Benefactor:

Lee Foundation

Major Donors:

Mrs Tye-Tan Sok Cheng
JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

Conservation Project Partner:

BNP Paribas

Major Supporters:

Singapore Tourism Board
Epson Singapore Pte Ltd

Opening Ceremony & Festival

Main Sponsor:

Citibank

Official Tentage Sponsor:

KOSIN Structure Pte. Ltd.

Official Caterer:

Lavish Dine

Community Partners:

The Peranakan Association
Main Wayang

Note to Editors:

Annex I – Peranakan Museum Factsheet
Annex II – Peranakan Museum Star Pieces
Annex III – Opening Festival Programme

For media enquiries, please contact:

Communications DNA

Candy Li
Associate
DID: (65) 6327 7121
Email: candy.li@commsdna.com

Evelyn Neo
Senior Associate
DID: (65) 6327 7120
Email: evelyn.neo@commsdna.com

Peranakan Museum

Joice Toh
Manager, Marketing and Corporate Communications
DID: (65) 6336 2994
Email: joice_toh@nhb.gov.sg