

Gods, Heroes and Clowns: Performance and Narrative in South and Southeast Asian Art

IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA

1 MAY – 30 AUG 2015



This exhibition explores South and Southeast Asian visual and performative art inspired by the many narratives that pervade the region, including the great Hindu epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, and ballads describing the exploits of local folk heroes and historical and romantic tales.

Works on display come from India, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia and Cambodia and include storyteller's cloths, shrine and temple hangings, manuscripts and paintings, masks and puppets. Historical and contemporary works are linked through their use of narrative as a means of exploring emotions, morals, and responses to contemporary events. The works were used in a wide range of contexts, including community processions and displays associated with religious festivals, as painted backdrops to storyteller's performances and in lively puppet plays.

Contemporary works include a Krishna *patachitra* (painted narrative textile) from Orissa, India, a sculpture by Indonesian artist Entang Wiharso inspired by wayang kulit puppet performances, and a commissioned 'soft sculpture' by Cambodian artist Svay Sareth which critiques the message of the Buddhist Vessantara tale.

Niranjan Maharana

Patachitra depicting scenes from the life of Krishna (c. 2004) (detail)
tamarind seed gum, chalk, conch shell, elephant apple gum, natural pigments on cotton
166.5 x 487.2 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2007
2007.395

Student Programs

Exhibition introduction

All levels

View and discuss storyteller's cloths, shrine and temple hangings, manuscripts and paintings, masks and puppets. Explore the many different ways these works of art have been used to tell stories in South and South East Asia.

Cost \$7

Experience South and South East Asia

Recommended for Years 4 – 6

Thu 30 Jul, 10am–2pm

Explore performance art, puppet making and storytelling. Experience ways narratives have long been performed in South and South East Asia. The program will include performance and art making workshops, an introductory lecture and a self-guided viewing to the exhibition *Gods Heroes and Clowns*.

Cost \$25

Powerful masks workshop

Recommended for Foundation – Year 4

In South and Southeast Asia, masks are considered extremely powerful and have been used in narrative plays for hundreds of years. Inspired by the many gods, demons, heroes and clowns depicted in the exhibition, students will use a variety of materials to create their own masks ready for storytelling back at school.

Cost \$16 (2 hours)

Mysterious puppets workshop

Recommended for Years 5–12

Wayang is the Javanese word for shadow theatre or performance and is commonly associated with puppets from Indonesia. Drawing inspiration from the wayang kulit and wayang golek puppets featured in the exhibition make your own shadow puppet using a variety of materials.

Cost \$16 (2 hours)

Virtual Excursion

All levels

A videoconference introduction to *Gods, Heroes and Clowns* for school groups who are not able to attend the exhibition. This interactive illustrated introductory talk with an NGV Educator will explore key works and themes in the exhibition and will be tailored to the level of the participating students. For information about how to participate in an NGV Virtual Excursion via videoconference please contact our Education Booking Office.

Cost \$110 (45 mins)

Professional Learning

Gods, Heroes and Clowns webinar for Primary teachers

Thu 7 May, 4–5.15pm

Join NGV Educators for a free online professional learning program. Programs include an overview of the exhibition, and interactive discussion about resources and learning activities related to the exhibition.

Cost Free

Art making online resource for Primary Teachers

A resource for Primary Teachers featuring art making activities relating to artworks exhibited in *Gods, Heroes and Clowns* will be available online.

Bookings and enquiries

03 8620 2340, 12–5pm weekdays

edu.bookings@ngv.vic.gov.au

ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/education/programs/make-a-booking/

