

Artist Features: Zadok Ben-David (Israeli, London-based)
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New Mazda6 better
buy than BMW 320i
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Over 100 shows in China
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life!

Life!

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ART IS ALL AROUND

Displays of art works
are popping up in
unexpected places
like coffee houses
and hotels



Tay Suan Chiang

THE latest hangouts for art lovers are no longer just art galleries and museums.

Now, there are at least five other venues – from a bar to a coffee chain to a hotel – to check out, and even buy pieces.

Take, for example, the Majestic Bar in Bukit Pasoh Road, which officially opened last month. Owner Loh Lik Peng will not reveal figures but says he has spent a lot injecting art installations into his bar, located next to his New Majestic Hotel.

He spent "more than \$1 million" buying the shophouse in which the bar is located.

Outside the bar stands a 7.6m-tall steel sculpture of a man by Israeli-British artist Zadok Ben-David. If you see arteries "growing" within it, they are actually outlines of tree branches.

Inside the bar are more art installations by local artists such as Donna Ong, Jason Lim and Sandra Lee.

Lee, a visual artist, created an LED-lit faux night sky on the third-floor ceiling of the bar. None of the art installations is for sale as they are all site-specific.

Mr Loh also gives space to art pieces in New Majestic Hotel and another boutique hotel, 1929, in Keong Saik Road.

Over at the Marina Mandarin hotel in Marina Square, its Artist-in-Residence programme selects an emerging artist – Singaporean or permanent resident – to spend six months working on an exhibition in a studio on its premises.

The works are displayed in the hotel for a month. The scheme, which started in 2006, has yielded two exhibitions.

The most recent one, which ended

on Thursday, was by visual artist Joshua Yang who did 120 drawings of continuous lines and clocks.

Ms Lim Ee Jin, the hotel's director of marketing communications, says the programme hopes to give the local arts scene a brush-up in terms of vibrancy and recognition.

All the works are for sale and the hotel works with Asian Art Options, an art consultancy firm. Yang's works cost from \$580 to \$8,800 and 38 pieces were sold.

The hotel takes a 10 per cent commission to fund the production and printing of marketing material.

Ms Lim notes "a small but significant percentage" of hotel guests buy the works. "It is a great form of exposure for the artist judging from the number of international guests we have."

That is a bonus for Yang, who also teaches art at the NUS High School of Maths and Science. He previously exhibited at art galleries such as Art Seasons Gallery where the crowd "goes specifically for the art".

The exhibition at the hotel has seen him getting more commissions from art curators and private clients.

At the coffee connoisseur, or tcc as it is better known, customers can also enjoy art while they sip their cuppa.

Of the initiative which started in 2004, tcc's marketing communications manager Henry Tan says: "We want to bring art closer to guests where they can dine in a fine and cosy ambience and appreciate great art at the same time."

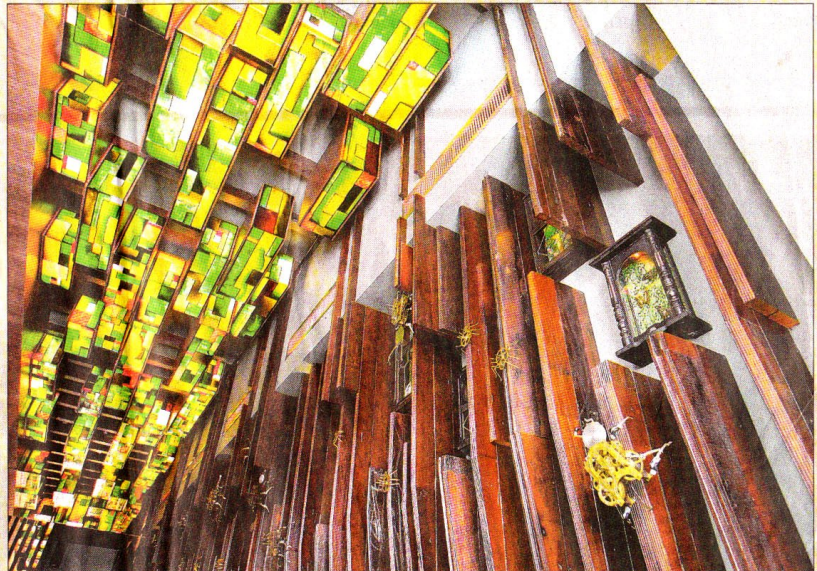
tcc has 29 outlets, of which five – in Circular Road, Raffles Exchange at Raffles Place MRT station, The Pier @ Robertson, Robinson Road and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts – have been turned into art boutique cafes.

It appoints a company called art-management.com to handle the exhibitions. The Circular Road outlet currently features abstract paintings by Italian artist Ian Castronovo. The exhibition runs till April 12 and all pieces are for sale.

Says financial consultant Frances Lee, who frequents that branch: "Viewing art in a cafe is a more relaxing experience and it may inspire me to buy one off the wall."

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WHERE TO



PHOTOS: ALAN LIM, DESMOND FOO, BOOKSACTUALLY, HOUSE

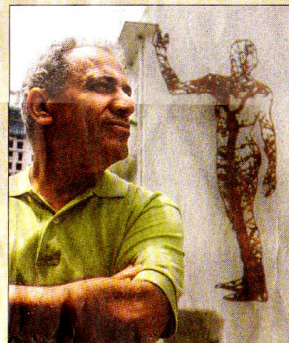
Majestic Bar

41 Bukit Pasoh Road

You cannot miss the 7.6m-tall steel sculpture of a man done by Israeli-British artist Zadok Ben-David outside this bar.

Owner Loh Lik Peng commissioned several local artists' installations. Donna Ong's installations for the walls of the bar on the first floor consist of antique wall-mounted clocks.

Jason Lim's chandelier called Another Dharmas hangs in the bar.



TREE'S COMPANY (above): Artist Donna Ong's wall installation by the first-floor entrance of The Majestic Bar mimics a tree trunk, and is accompanied by artist Yuki Chong's stained-glass ceiling aimed at evoking a forest's canopy.

IRON GIANT: Outside the bar is a 7.6m-tall steel sculpture of a man by Israeli-British artist Zadok Ben-David (left). The pattern that is veining out inside the sculpture is actually an outline of tree branches.