

## Pulling out all the Stops in Singapore, Global City for the Arts

by Michelle Chin

Singapore is set to become a Global City for the Arts. It is a city plugged into the international network where the world's talents and ideas naturally converge and multiply. Strategically located at the crossroads of Asia and the West, Singapore is in a unique position to present the arts of the world to the region and the region's arts to the world.

Singapore is modern, cosmopolitan, vibrant, full of diversity and creative synergy - all of which is fertile ground for the arts. The diverse confluence of cultures in Singapore has turned the city into one of the leading cultural capitals of the 21st century.

Pulling out all the stops to further its image as a global city for the arts, October 2002 will be a great time for art lovers to visit Singapore. Sotheby's will hold its *Southeast Asian Paintings* auction on 6 October; *ARTSingapore - The Contemporary Asian Art Fair* will be held from 11-15 October; and *Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay* performing arts centre will grand open on 12 October on a scale never before experienced in the history of Singapore's arts and culture scene.

Sotheby's auction of *Southeast Asian Paintings* in Singapore attracts art lovers, collectors, dealers and artists from all over the region and further afield. For this reason, on the same weekend in Singapore one can attend previews of Christie's *Southeast Asian & 20th Century Indian Pictures* and Larasati-Glerum's *Pictures of Indonesia* auctions which are held later in the month in Hong Kong and Jakarta.

Art auctions are open to the public and free. The auctions provide an excellent opportunity to view an immense range of art which otherwise could only be seen at museums, galleries or private collections all over the world. At the three auction preview exhibitions, there is a total of five hundred or more paintings: one can see rare works by Indo-European painters such as Walter Spies, le Mayeur, Rudolf Bonnet and Willem Gerard Hofker, as well as numerous modern and contemporary artists from all over Southeast Asia. Paintings by Indonesian artists such as Raden Saleh, Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, Popo Iskandar, Widayat, Djoko Pekik and Srihadi Soedarsono are in great demand. It can be very exciting to witness the proceedings, especially when a painting achieves a selling price of several hundred thousand dollars, and in some cases over a million dollars.