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TITLE: Installation by renowned artist Lee Mingwei to open at Peranakan Museum

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Visitors to the Peranakan Museum will soon have a smashing time -- with a new installation by internationally renowned artist Lee Mingwei.

SINGAPORE: Visitors to the Peranakan Museum will soon have a smashing time -- with a new installation by internationally renowned artist Lee Mingwei.

Born in Taiwan and currently living in New York, Lee received a Masters of Fine Arts from Yale University.

He has staged solo exhibitions at major museums, including Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

His works have been featured in biennials such as Venice, Sydney, Lyon and Taipei.

Collections of ceramics are usually well-protected at museums, but the Peranakan Museum is inviting visitors to toss ceramics from the third storey.

It is part of an installation titled "Luminous Depths".

Visitors can buy a ceramic object for S\$5. Five thousand of these objects were made for the installation.

Visitors can then step onto a platform on the third floor and toss the object through a hoop.

Lee hopes the act will inspire visitors to think about objects, memories and how they are preserved.

He said: "My hope and wish as an artist -- I really want people to enjoy the work and also after they participate in the work, I often tell them 'Now you own an original Lee Mingwei, not through monetary means but through experiential means'.

"So when you go home, hopefully, I want you to have a different way of looking into your own world and your own history, and particularly about 'who I am?', or something like 'what is art?', 'is that an artwork or is it something else?' or 'could art be everything we do and experience?'.

"Hopefully, these are some of the questions that people will walk away with."

Lee said the installation is the most complex project he has undertaken in the last 17 years.

He said: "It's a size-specific project that is embedded in a historical building. We wanted to be respectful in terms of the physical building but also the mental memory of this building.

"Second thing is that of the safety issue. We have incorporated a safety net into my design of this particular installation -- that is 100 per cent safety-proof.

"Also, when we work with a local fabricator, the person who looks after the safety of this installation is always with us, and giving us advice on how is the best way to do it."

Dr Alan Chong, director of the Asian Civilisations Museum, said: "Museums are repositories of memory. They are also repositories of objects. And this project I hope will also help people question what it means to preserve something.

"Does the act of destruction necessarily mean that you've lost it? Or can you actually re-build something from it? For example, we'll collect the shards that result from this particular exhibition, use it for other purposes.

"We'll use the funds that are generated by these ceramics to purchase something new for the museum, so there'll be a continuous circle of regeneration, which I hope will also be interesting."

The exhibition runs from 21 June to 22 September 2013.

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