



Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



ARTWOW
亞和文化



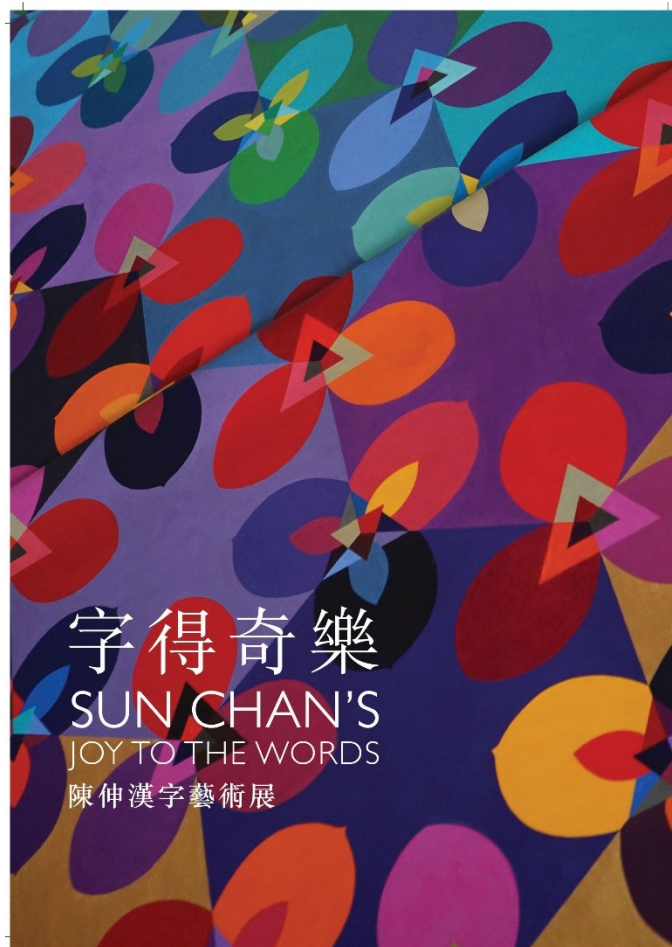
The RICE Company Limited



For Immediate Release

Playful Chinese-character artworks exhibition to mark the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong SAR

**Newest visual representations of one of humanity's
oldest scripts by late HK artist Sun Chan**



Singapore 16 June 2017 – The Chinese-character Artworks of Sun Chan 陈伸 (1932 – 2017) have been hailed for their originality and inventiveness, and have earned the late HK artist many fans around the world, both young and old. This July, to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, an exhibition of Sun Chan’s picturesque representations of the Chinese script, *Joy To The Words* 《字得奇乐》 (Zi De Qi Le) will be held in Singapore at The Arts House from 20 to 27 July, 2017. Co-presented by Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore and Artwow, a HK-based cultural enterprise, it will be the first showcase of the artist’s works since his passing in March this year.

Chan’s playful patterns of vibrant colors and distinctive forms can be appreciated simply for their visual appeal. Yet they also engage viewers who read Chinese characters in word-guessing games, while sparking curiosity and evoking flights of imagination in all others. Chan’s works have adorned wall murals, large-scale sculptures and stamps, and have been featured in a special collection of scarves, apparel and accessories by Hermès’ Shang Xia brand. His painting *TREBLE: Gold* was also sold at Sotheby’s New York’s Contemporary Art Auction in September last year.

The self-taught artist, who was born in Peru, grew up in China and lived in Hong Kong for years. He had exhibited his works in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Paris, and had been invited to show at the Ernst Hohl Cultural Foundation Appenzell in Zurich, and The National Arts Club in New York, among other institutions. This will be the second time that Chan’s works are shown in Singapore, having presented a well-received debut exhibition in March 2016, also at The Arts House.

The upcoming exhibition in July will feature over 40 selected pieces of Chan’s works, including his most recent and never-before-shown paintings. The audiences are invited to interact and to decipher his works, which will be displayed with QR codes, from which the embedded Chinese character(s) can be revealed.

Ms Hikoko Chan, Sun Chan’s daughter, who has collaborated with him on several of his exhibitions, says: “I’m most delighted when I see people having fun trying to solve my dad’s visual puzzles, just like the time when my sisters and I were competing to be the first to find the Chinese characters in our father’s drawings and paintings. It’s not just about art, language or culture, it’s also about love.”

The Director of Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore, Mr Bruno Luk, said: “The *Joy To The Words* exhibition is a tribute to the late Hong Kong artist Sun Chan, whose works offer an interesting and fun way to experience the exquisite Chinese characters. I believe the exhibition will allow people to appreciate the Chinese

language in a new way, and hopefully will also inspire everyone to look at their own cultural heritage with fresh eyes.”

In addition to the art exhibition, the public can also sign up for a 50-minute guided tour plus Chinese characters playshop conducted by the curator of the exhibition, Anthony Yu. The programme is free and open to the public, especially for parents and their children who are eight and above. The event partner for the exhibition is Singapore arts and culture organisation The RICE Company Ltd.

Annex A: About the artist Sun Chan

Annex B: Download links for artworks

Annex C: About the organisers

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## **Exhibition**

*Joy to the Words 《字得奇乐》 : Visual Playground of Chinese Characters II*

Date: 20 – 27 July, 2017

Time: 10am – 9 pm

Venue: Gallery 2, The Arts House

1 Old Parliament Lane. Singapore 179429

Free admission

## **Opening Reception**

Date: 21 July, 2017 (Fri)

Time: 7pm – 9pm

Venue: The Blue Room, The Arts House

By invitation only

## **Guided Tour + Chinese characters Playshop**

For parents and kids aged 8+

Date: 22 July, 2017 (Sat)

Session 1: 2pm – 3pm

Session 2: 4pm – 5pm

Venue: The Council Room, The Arts House

Free by reservation only. To reserve, please contact Ivan Chia at e. [ivan\\_chia@therice.sg](mailto:ivan_chia@therice.sg) / t. +65 6323 0384 before 1 July, 2017.

~End~

For more information about the exhibition, please contact:

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## **Annex A: About the artist Sun Chan**

Sun Chan 陈伸 (1932 – 2017) was a self-taught artist who is known for his unique Chinese character motifs. Born in Lima, Peru, in 1932 to an overseas Chinese family, he was brought back to Foshan, Guangdong in China to study the Chinese language at the age of five. At this time Chan first became fascinated with Chinese characters. He had always loved calligraphy and painting, but was unfortunately deprived of an education after the second grade due to the breakout of the Pacific War. He went through considerable hardship in the subsequent years and later moved to Hong Kong, where he worked his way from the ground up and established himself as a successful entrepreneur.

As a great admirer of Chinese characters since childhood, Chan had studied the Chinese writing on his own for years. Decades ago he began making innovative artworks with Chinese characters merely to get his young daughters interested in their roots. What started out of an act of love had grown into his lifelong passion. Despite his lack of formal training in art, Chan went on to explore with new visual representations for Chinese characters, and created various series of artwork throughout the years. With clean lines and vibrant colors, he transformed the Chinese script back into its pictorial form but as entirely new graphic emblems.

Chan's early works are mostly small drawings in pen and ink, color pencils, pastels and markers on paper. He constantly educated and refined himself in skills, and had switched to large-scale acrylic paintings in his later works. Chan's artistic creations have been exhibited in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Paris, and he was invited to showcase his works at the Ernst Hohl Cultural Foundation Appenzell in Zurich, Switzerland.

Chan's Chinese-character artworks have been made into unique wall art and installed at prestigious institutions, such as the Innovation Tower of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the International School Academy of Hong Kong. They have also been adapted into large-scale public sculptures, stamp designs as well as fashion/lifestyle products of Hermès' brand Shang Xia. The first book about Chan's works "Sun Chan – Word into Art" ISBN: 978-9889938482 was published in September 2016.

### **Reviews**

*"There is a coherent pattern to be decoded, and an underlying dynamic at play in Chan's work that traverses the boundaries between art and language, image and text."*

– Dr Wenny Teo, Manuela & Iwan Wirth Lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Asian Art, The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

*"To me, Chan's innovative works are on par with that of the renowned Xu Bing who also focuses on artistic creations with Chinese characters!"*

– Dr Lesley Lau, Head of Art Promotion Office in Hong Kong

*"Like the Alice in Wonderland story coming alive before my eyes, except it is a wonderland of Chinese characters!"*

– Dr Leo Ou-Fan Lee, Professor of Chinese Culture of Faculty of Arts, City University of Hong Kong; Academician, Academia Sinica Taipei

*"With a childlike heart, Chan breathes new life into Chinese characters."*

– Chen Yongqiang, Director of Chinese Artists Association; Curator of Memorial Hall of Ling Nan School of Painting; Vice-chairman of Guangdong Artists Association

*"Mr Sun Chan's work is a wonderful integration of art, script and riddles."*

– Mariana de Brévannes, Comtesse de Brévannes (Countess of Brévannes, France)

### **List of past exhibitions**

2016

*Au Delà Des Mots - La passion des caractères chinois - L'art de Sun Chan (Chen Shen)*, China Cultural Centre, Paris, France

Opened by Mr. Jean Piere Raffarin, former Prime Minister of France; Mr. Guan Jian, Minister of Chinese Embassy in France, and Mariana de Brevannes, Countess of France.

*More Than Words – Visual Playground of Chinese Characters*, The Arts House Singapore

Opened by Mr. Bruno Luk, Director of Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore

2014

*Back to The Picture – a Visual/Verbal Interplay of Chinese Characters*, HK Visual Art Center, Hong Kong

Opened by Dr Lesley Lau, Head of Hong Kong Art Promotion Office

2013

*Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture (Hong Kong) – Beyond the Urban Edge*, Kwun Tong Promenade Kowloon East Expo Site, Hong Kong

Opened by Mr. C.Y. Leung, CE of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

*The Talking Art – Chinese Character as Image*, Pier 2 Art District, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Opened by Mr. Shih Che, Director General of Kaohsiung Bureau of Cultural Affairs

2012

*The Talking Art – Chinese Character as Image*, Wanchai Visual Archive, Hong Kong

Opened by Mr. Alvin Yip, Director of Jockey Club Institute of Social Innovation, Hong Kong Polytechnic University

## **Annex B: Download links for artworks**

|                                  |                                                  |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Sun Chan Mirage 1152             | <a href="http://goo.gl/yIkZLB">goo.gl/yIkZLB</a> |
| Sun Chan Parade 1                | <a href="http://goo.gl/5NOqdo">goo.gl/5NOqdo</a> |
| Sun Chan Rainbow 13              | <a href="http://goo.gl/N3y388">goo.gl/N3y388</a> |
| Sun Chan Two Character Rainbow 7 | <a href="http://goo.gl/F6Ufqy">goo.gl/F6Ufqy</a> |
| Sun Chan Treble 11               | <a href="http://goo.gl/8CYOEW">goo.gl/8CYOEW</a> |
| Sun Chan Photo at work           | <a href="http://goo.gl/AU0h2y">goo.gl/AU0h2y</a> |

## **Annex C: About the organisers**

### **Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore**

Set up in 1995, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore is one of the two representative offices of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the ASEAN region (the other office is located in Jakarta, Indonesia). It aims to enhance understanding and strengthen the bilateral relations between Hong Kong and six of the 10 ASEAN member countries, namely, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. It provides information to and support corporations and individuals looking to start or expand their businesses in Hong Kong or in Mainland China via Hong Kong. In addition, the Office also aims to promote cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and the six ASEAN member countries.

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore collaborates regularly with two Hong Kong statutory boards – the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourism Board to promote Hong Kong as the best location for business and a must-go tourist destination in Asia.

**Artwow Group Co., Ltd.**

Bestowed with the “Chinese Excellent Innovation Enterprise” title in year 2010, Artwow Group is a Hong Kong based cultural enterprise that strives to develop, present and promote art, design and creations based on innovative re-interpretations and re-inventions of Chinese cultural elements. The firm has presented art exhibitions in major cities around the world and has published multiple-awards-winning games based on the Chinese language.

**The RICE Company Limited**

The RICE Company Limited is a not-for-profit organisation that harvests the potential of the arts and culture for the development of human lives and connecting communities in Singapore with the world. Its core areas of expertise lies in enlivening places and spaces through place making and content creation; building cultural capital through the engagement of arts with business; and developing linkages with communities around the world.

It currently manages two social funds (The Business Times Budding Artists Fund and Sing50 Fund), three creative spaces (The Little Arts Academy, 10 Square at Orchard Central and The Pavilion at Far East Square) and two subsidiaries (Global Culture Alliance and Millet Holdings).

More information is available at [www.therice.sg](http://www.therice.sg)