

March 2023

## **‘Encounters’ by the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka Closes**

‘Encounters’ curated by the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka (MMCA Sri Lanka) closed on 19 March, at its premises on the Ground floor of Crescat Boulevard, Colombo 3. The exhibition opened on 10 February 2022, and featured 59 loaned artworks by 15 artists from across the country and Berlin.

Each of the six displays in ‘Encounters’ revolved around and responded to a specially chosen painting drawn from the John Keells Holdings or George Keyt Foundation Collections. The exhibition included paintings, drawings, performances, installations, and photographs from the 1950s to the present by Abdul Halik Azeez (b. 1985), Aubrey Collette (1920–1992), Martin Wickramasinghe (1890–1976), Senaka Senanayake (b. 1951), George Keyt (1901–1993), Pradeep Thalawatta (b. 1979), Asai Rasiyah (1946–2020), the Afro-Asian Writers’ Bureau, the Permanent Bureau of Afro-Asian Writers, Richard Gabriel (1924–2016), Susiman Nirmalavasan (b. 1982), Firi Rahman (b. 1990), Gamini Ratnavira (b. 1949), Ismeth Raheem (b. 1941), A. Mark (1933–2000), Nelun Harasgama (b. 1959), and Janani Cooray (b. 1974).

Speaking of ‘Encounters’, Sharmini Pereira, Chief Curator of the MMCA Sri Lanka noted that, “By rotating displays, we showed what we could do in a small exhibition space, without compromising on content. Each of the six displays provided a wide array of subject matter catering to many different interest groups.” She further said that “The imperative behind ‘Encounters’ was to show how the modern and contemporary can be seen hand in hand, and how in turn, research based curatorial displays and exhibition design can bring about ways of seeing that raise new questions about the familiar and unknown.”

Groundfloor, Crescat Boulevard  
89 Galle Road  
Colombo 03

Registered Address:  
117 Sir Chittampalam A. Gardiner Mawatha  
Colombo 02  
Sri Lanka

[info@mmca-srilanka.org](mailto:info@mmca-srilanka.org)  
[www.mmca-srilanka.org](http://www.mmca-srilanka.org)

‘Encounters’ attracted over 20,000 visitors who enjoyed the artwork on display and the museum’s public programmes for free. The MMCA Sri Lanka also curated 132 free public programmes which included 20 Gallery Talks, 30 Workshops, 30 Curator’s Tours, three sessions of the MMCA Sri Lanka’s first Poetry Club, four Poetry Readings, 10 Exhibition Tours by Visitor Educators and Museum Associates, and 40 special events including Puzzle Days, performances and film screenings. The museum’s outreach programmes facilitated a further 40 Guided Tours for groups that included 887 students from schools and universities. The MMCA Sri Lanka also conducted a four sessioned Writing Workshop with Kanya d’Almeida in March 2023.

“We are extremely thankful to the European Union, Nations Trust Bank, the Foundation for Arts Initiatives, and the John Keells Foundation for supporting the MMCA Sri Lanka’s Education and Public Programmes,” said Pereira, adding that “Public engagement with the museum’s activities is essential as we develop greater visibility and support for building a permanent museum of modern and contemporary art for the country.”

Over the coming year, the MMCA Sri Lanka plans to open two more exhibitions. Curated by Sandev Handy and Sharmini Pereira, ‘The Foreigners’ will open in early May featuring a collection of contemporary Sri Lankan artworks by artists such as Imaad Majeed (b. 1989), Nina Mangalanayagam (b. 1980), and the Musicmatters collective. Following which, the MMCA Sri Lanka will open an exhibition focussed on Sri Lankan architect Minnette De Silva in October 2023, curated by Sharmini Pereira and Ritchell Marcelline.

The MMCA Sri Lanka is an education-led initiative that aims to establish a public museum dedicated to the display, research, collection, and conservation of modern and contemporary art for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public, schools, and tourists.