

# Paintings, prints and parrot magic

**CLARISSA TAN** checks out some of the performers and artists on Marine Parade Promenade this weekend

**E**EKEE is one of the few birds in Singapore – indeed, the world – that requires anti-stress medicine. The 30-cm tall Ekeetus male parrot is the star of a magic performance by its owner Chandran Supermaniam, who says Eekee needs something to soothe his nerves after every show.

"After every act, Eekee gets a bit stressed," says the 28-year-old magician, who will perform this Sunday at Singapore Arts Street, a weekend festival that will bring visual arts and performance art to the streets of Marine Parade. "I have to give him this specially formulated solution that calms his neurons so he goes back to his normal happy self."

Chandran says his is the only magic act that uses parrots in Singapore, and that there are only 10 to 15 parrot magicians around the globe. "Most magicians use doves," he explains. "Magic is a competitive business and you have to find a niche if you are to be profitable. Parrots create an element of surprise. Plus, they add colour."

### Hard to train

Doves are probably more peaceable than parrots, though. "Parrots are hard to train," notes Chandran. "They don't just peck, they bite. A parrot can bite your hand so that the fingers snap off. You have to be very patient and not get angry. You have to adopt positive reinforcement training."

Chandran, who goes by the stage name of "Blaze" and also performs fire magic, will be one of many performers and artists on Marine Parade Promenade this weekend. Other entertainers include comedy stunt man Alan Extreme, tap-dancing duo the

Rhythm Nation Tappers and Trib-albeatz, a group that performs "cross-cultural drumming", according to the festival brochure.

Established visual artists such as Cultural Medallion recipient Chng Seok Tin and UOB Painting of the Year winners Low Tho Seng and Min Eng Fern will be exhibiting their works as well as sharing their artistic experiences with the crowd.

### Printmaking for seniors

Printmaker and sculptor Chng held workshops earlier this month in which she showed a group of elderly people from Tung Ling Community Services the art of printmaking.

The elderly enthusiasts, aged 60 to 88, created some 50 impressions on small printing plates that were then assembled into one plate measuring 2m by 2.4m. Called *Monster Print*, the giant plate will be displayed on Singapore Arts Street.

Children can also enjoy hands-on fun at Stick-An-Art, where they create artworks using small stickers, and Crayon Do-Doodling, where they will be given a wall on which to crayon to their hearts' content.

On the wackier side of things, the students of MacPherson Primary School will display a work of "toast art" – a large sepiatinted, figurative mosaic composed of pieces of toast burnt to varying degrees.

For those who've always wanted to recreate the *Mona Lisa* on a roadside kerb, there will also be a demonstration and hands-on session on Italian pavement art.

Singapore Arts Street, which last year drew 20,000 people to its Hougang and Clarke Quay venues, is this year jointly organised by the Singapore Arts Street team and the South East Community



**The colourful and the wacky:** (Clockwise from above) Chandran (seen with Eekee) says his is the only magic show that uses parrots in Singapore; a clown act, which will be a part of the Singapore Arts Street; the students of MacPherson Primary School will be displaying a work of 'toast art'



TUNG YUE NANG

Development Council. The festival's stated aim is to "garner support and awareness for local artists by bringing them right to the doorsteps of the people".

When you're performing that close to the public, it is important to look your best. Chandran the magician says that Eekee uses a special shampoo called Feather Fancy so the parrot's appearance will have that extra sheen during his 20-minute performance.

"The shampoo's got plumage care and skin conditioner, as well as rainforest moisturisers," says

Chandran. "It brings out the blue, green and red of the feathers. On Sunday, I'm going to bring out a lot of colourful birds, and at the end of the act, they will transform into something else."

Singapore Arts Street 2009@South East will be held at

Marine Parade Promenade on Saturday from 11am to 8pm and on Sunday from 11am to 6pm. Parrot magic act – 'Chandran Supermamian the Magic Dude' – will be performed on Sunday at 12.35 pm. Free admission to all events. www.singaporeartsstreet.com

**BLUESKY FESTIVAL 2009**  
Supporting entrepreneurship  
PAGES 16 & 17

**MUSIC**  
When DJs spin  
PAGE 29

**WINE**  
Wine-tasting goes high-tech  
PAGE 25

## THE BUSINESS TIMES

551 00 online at <http://www.businesstimes.com.sg> A SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS PUBLICATION CO REG NO 198402868E MICA (P) 197/08/2008 Friday, July 10, 2009

### Govt clears air over tax on property gains

Ministry says proposed change aimed at giving certainty and is not a move against property speculation

By EMILYN YAP  
SINGAPORE has the market worked up a storm in a tearup over a suggested change to income tax laws on gains from property sales? Keen to quell rumours about an anti-speculation drive, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) clarified yesterday that the proposal is unlikely to lead to more individuals being taxed.

Still, some industry watchers believe that the potential change is enough to worry property investors – many of whom have returned to the market only recently.

Currently, property sellers do not pay tax on gains unless the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) sees them as traders and treats the gains as income. The IRAS makes its decision on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as why the properties were sold.

MOF's statement, just "a small number of individuals" have been taxed on gains from property sales in the past.

There are individuals who want greater clarity on whether their gains will be taxed, MOF said. Responding to feedback, it proposed last month a condition that would guarantee no tax. An individual who sells a property on or after Jan 1, 2010 will not be taxed on the gains if he has not sold any other property in the previous four years.

This is actually "a relaxation of income tax treatment aimed at giving certainty of non-taxation to individuals who do not sell properties frequently", MOF explained.

The proposal does not mean that those who sell more than one property within a four-year period will definitely be taxed on the gains. In line with existing rules, the exact number of individuals who have been taxed on gains from property sales, but it said in an email to BT: "If the proposed change is implemented, MOF does not expect the number of cases to increase. This is because the change does not involve a tightening of the rules."

In fact, "the number of cases may fall if all things remain constant" after the change, it says.

Rumours that the government was trying to curb speculation in the property market gained ground after news of the potential change got round. Property sales have been buoyant since February this year, and selling prices in some projects are said to have risen by a few per cent. Some market watchers attributed the improvement in part to the return of speculators.

In its statement, MOF emphasised that the proposed change is not an anti-speculation measure. It also reiterated that Singapore does not have a capital gains tax.

MOF's clarification has soothed the market somewhat. On Wednesday, fear that investors could exit the property market and perhaps confusion over the proposal had pushed prices of several property counters down. The selling pressure eased notably yesterday. City Developments, for instance, gained 43 cents to close at \$8.31, while Capitaland rose 12 cents to \$3.50.

Despite the official reassurance, there are still nagging worries that the potential change to income tax laws could hurt investor sentiment, particularly in the prime property sectors.

"Demand for mass-market homes should hold, backed by HDB upgraders, while mid to high-end segments may experience slower take-ups from reduced speculative interest," said AmFraser Securities analyst Lau Wei Chong in a note yesterday.

There are also industry watchers who stand by the anti-speculation theory. "We remain believers of the idea that the government may be sending out a signal through this proposal to cool property transactions, especially in the high-end," said CIMB analyst Donald Chia in a note.

To curb speculation in the property market in 1996, the government had imposed income tax on gains which individuals made from selling properties within three years of purchase. It lifted the rule in 2001.

► Vikram Khanna: Making sense of the proposed amendment. Page 2

Raffles Conversation, in BT WEEKEND tomorrow.

Frank J Benjamin's SUCCESS STORY  
The making of a retail maestro

### Mega deal puts Rotary Engineering in big league

Singapore  
ArtsStreet™  
MEDIA FEATURES