

FEAST AND FORM

— singapore food, architecture and design, and a little from other countries across the world —

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THE SINGAPORE SHOPHOUSE ARTIST



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Singapore, Visual Art – French expat NATHALIE LAOUÉ creates beautiful visual art of these vernacular buildings

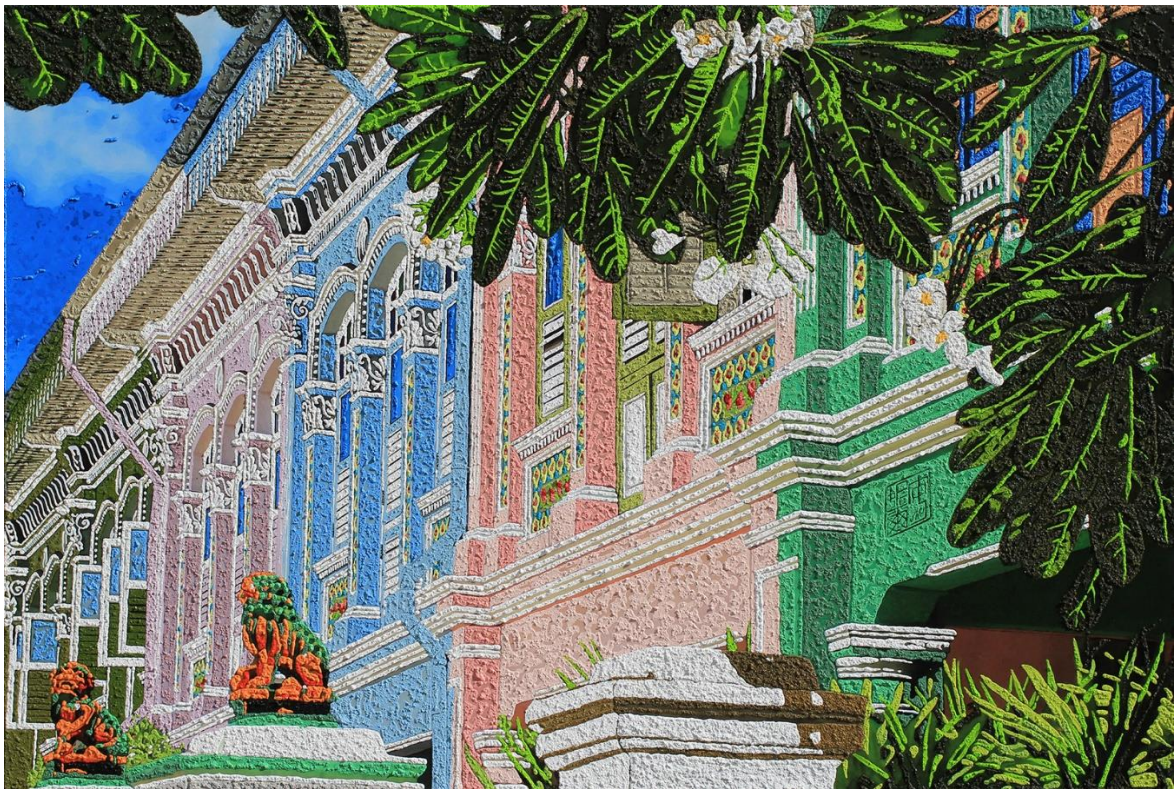


A Walk along Tembeling Road in the East Coast



Nathalie Laoué:

One of my greatest pleasures is wandering through the streets looking for great light and great colours to take pictures that inspire me. This is how I discovered the shophouses. It was love at first sight! Since then, I look out for them wherever I go. They became my main source of inspiration. In my opinion, shophouses are the true legacy of Singapore."



Windows at Koon Seng Road.

For her art, Nathalie uses a mixture of acrylic resin and mineral powders with vibrant pigments to produce a unique effect of depth



Five-foot way at Blair Road

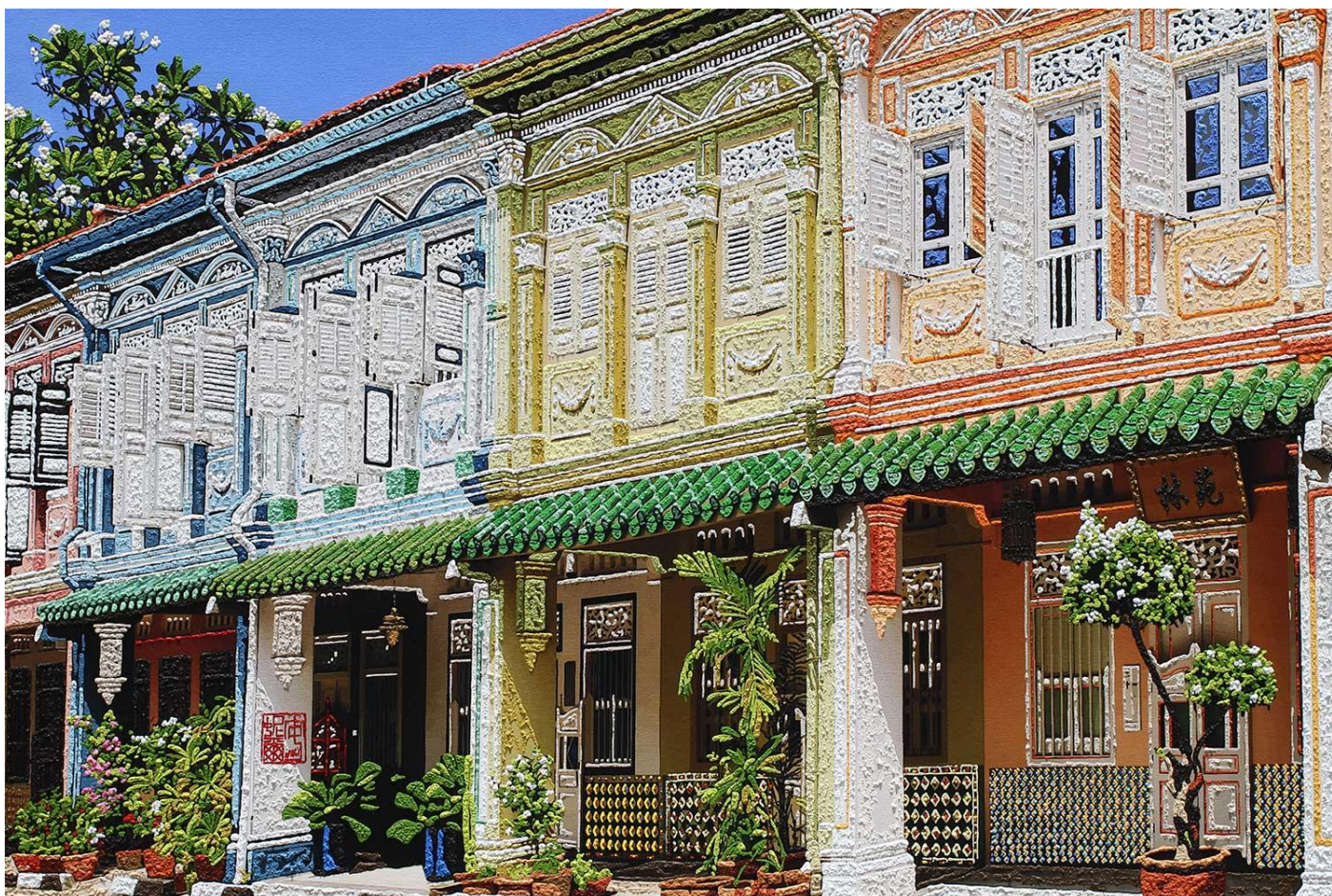
IF YOU ARE AN ART STUDENT or art enthusiast you must visit the online **Art Gallery of Nathalie Laoué**. Not only does she display and sell her visual works here, she also goes into detail about medium, technique, culture. What is Giclee Print? What type of paper works best?



Baroque shophouse at Emerald Hill



Baroque windows at Duxton Hill



Refined Rococo shophouses along Blair Road

For Nathalie's Singapore Shophouse Collection, architecture and design lovers will love how she delves into Peranakan culture, architectural styles through history; Baroque, Victorian, Rococo; pintu pagar, ceramics, tiles, symbolism; the origins of Chinatown and Stamford Raffles. You certainly pick up a few very interesting facts.

Her creations in her Shophouse Collection are visually stunning, as she captures vivid colour and bright light, ornamental details, structural forms and geometries, and the surrounding landscape of alleyways, flowers and greenery.

Born near Cognac, in France, Nathalie began to paint when she moved to Singapore in 2002. She does work in painting, mixed media and graphic design. Her latest work is exploring Singapore heritage and culture through the quaint charm of Peranakan architecture, along with the cutting-edge infrastructure of the new Singapore.

She has exhibited in several art fairs in France and Singapore, including the 2018 Affordable Art Fair Singapore with Blue Lotus Fine Art. She sells her work online, and also does bespoke art commissions.



The versatility offered by acrylic is stunning. Acrylics can be applied in thin layers to create effects of glazing and also be used to build thick layers to create paintings with sculptural relief features.”

You like creating art visuals of Singapore shophouses. What medium do you use to paint or create them?

I like to create images on canvas using different media including collage and hand-painted additions with brushes and knives. I use a mixture of acrylic resin and mineral powders with vibrant pigments which produce a quite unique effect of depth and demarcation to enhance the beauty of the architecture and pop up every little detail on the shophouse’s façade.

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What makes these buildings attractive to you?

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What buildings do you love back in France?

I love all the old buildings, especially those that reflect the roots and the history of people; the coloured shacks of the fishermen on the island of Oleron in South West of France, the

beautiful classic style of the buildings in Paris or Bordeaux. I like buildings that tell us the story of mankind.

What art style influences your work and what artists do you admire?

I admire many artists, but I have a soft spot for Vincent Van Gogh and Amadeo Modigliani. They spent their lives in misery despite their art and talent.

Even though I like many art styles, I feel that popular culture, comics and Pop Art have an impact on my work. I love the striking play of light and bright colours, the powerful contrast against the outline of the shadows and silhouettes.

Did you go to art school? How did you learn how to make art?

I'm a self-taught artist. Although my original training was more focused on physical measurements and industrial design, my passion and talent are expressed through painting and photography. I worked hard, made a lot of mistakes, tried and tried until the techniques became second nature to me.

What's always in your bag?

My camera!

In Singapore, there are treasures waiting right round the corner.

You're walking along and suddenly a majestic row of shophouses well preserved or restored. You just have to look up and shoot. And sometimes it is not as big as a row of shophouses, but details and ornaments. Look closely, as there is beauty in the small, little things.

What Singapore food do you enjoy? How do you relax after a hard day at work?



Kaya toast with kopi does the trick during morning break

As I wander through streets and alleys around the neighbourhood in search of inspiration, my favourite moment in the morning is to take a break, and have kaya toast with kopi at the

local coffeeshop or food court. I also enjoy a nice Hainanese chicken rice with an iced lime juice for lunch. If I have to do a photoshoot in the afternoon, I enjoy a break with a kopi peng (iced local coffee).

If a young student wants to be an artist like you what advice would you give?

Never stop believing. Go ahead, there is no fate, just do what you want to do. Do not look too much to others for help, you have to create your own opportunities. If at first you don't succeed, you must work hard and try again and again until you find your way. Every difficulty, every failure makes you stronger, so keep trying and working.

Story by Carol Kraal. Photographs by Nathalie Laoué