**Does Sabah merit ASEAN’s attention?**

(Continued from page 11)

**EYE-TO-EYE STILL?**

Another factor is whether the Malaysian response is judged to be reason-
able and proportionate in accordance with international law and human rights standards. This is especially so as the ASEAN Charter upholds goals in human rights and promises more emphasis on the peoples of the region, and not just the governments.

But the third and perhaps key factor remains whether the Malaysian and Philippin governments continue to see eye to eye.

Some suggest that Malaysia’s tough stance is motivated by Prime Minister Najib Razak’s efforts to gain leadership in the run-up to the general election. In contrast, Mr Aquino — although he has faced strong opposition — faces no such pressure to protect Filipino citizens, especially with barangay elections coming up for his party candidates.

ASEAN has many issues on its agenda, from economic integration to terror issues such as the South China Sea. Provided that Malaysian actions are sufficiently constrained and the Aquino administration continues to cooperate, the group would do well to defer to the two governments and not to visibly intervene.

Yet continuing attention must be given to the Sabah conflict so that ASEAN remains a relevant presence that, if circumstances shift, can be readily available.

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**ART AND THE CITY**

**What will make S’pore a world arts hub**

SUNDARAM TAGORE

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goinga’s art scene is a post-

modern experiment, in that

the Government has helped to

jump-start it. And when the Govern-

ment moves, it is at lightning speed.

In March last year, it announced that it would spend S$874 million over the next five years to develop arts and culture, and it has done a remarkable job of presenting art in a serious con-
text, achieving something similar to what grew organically in New York City’s SoHo and Chelsea arts districts, and in the 78 district in Beijing.

The Affordable Art Fair and Art Stage Singapore are both established on the Singapore art calendar, as was ARTSingapore before them. There are more and more galleries and muse-

ums opening all the time, and that means more jobs for everyone. In 2005, Singapore counted 50 visual arts exhibitions over the year; this jumped to 999 in 2010.

In Asia, the buying and selling of contemporary art — which has a long tradition in the West — is a relativ-

ely recent phenomenon. Even so, Sin-
gapore, Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei now produce higher sales volumes than traditional marketplaces such as Par-

is, Berlin, Milan and Geneva, accord-

ing to art information source Artprice.

According to Artprice’s Art Market Trends 2011, Singapore posted 22 per cent growth in auction receipts for 2011.

**AN EAST-WEST DIALOGUE**

We were invited to start our gallery in Singapore not too long ago. We had

opened our first gallery in New York in 2000, followed by locations in Beverly Hills and Hong Kong, and we are among the tiny percentage of galleries with multiple locations.

I always knew there was tremen-

dous potential in Singapore, and I

(Continued on page 17)

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**SIM Interest Group Activities**

- **17 April, 7.30pm – 9pm**
  
  SIM Strategy Group
  
  Breakthrough Strategy of Traders
  
  Come and hear the successful route laid out by TradersTalk!™ and its focus on specialisation: skills and capabilities.

- **19 April, 2.30pm – 4.30pm**
  
  Innovation & Quality Management Group
  
  Visit to Singapore Customs
  
  Discover the Singapore Customs’ ISO journey from good to great and take a tour of the BC Academy – the centre of excellence in customs knowledge and competences that reaches out to the local trading and logistics community to help them understand customs requirements.

- **20 April, 2pm – 5pm**
  
  SIM II Treasurer’s Club
  
  Challenge Your Brain
  
  Improve your relationship building capacity and learn to communicate more effectively within yourself and with others in challenging situations. During this workshop you will witness a revealing ‘surgical procedure’ where brain functionality is visualised, thus enabling you to engage and utilise your brain more effectively.

- **26 April, 7.30pm – 9pm**
  
  Organisation Development Group
  
  Everything You Wanted to Know about OD but Didn’t Know Where to Start
  
  Gain a better understanding of the principles and practices of OD in this interactive and engaging session, which can be helpful in whatever role you play in your organisation.

- **27 April, 2pm – 5pm**
  
  SIM I Treasurer’s Club
  
  Speaking Your Way to Success
  
  Acquire the art and hone your speaking skills to get your messages across with clarity and brevity to your target audience at this workshop.

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**Sundaram Tagore Gallery**

Sundaram Tagore is the owner and curator of Sundaram Tagore Galleries in Singapore, Hong Kong and New York City.

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What will make S’pore a world arts hub

Continued from page 15

It is also time to set up additional institutional infrastructure—a multi-cultural, East-West dialogue. We developed that idea in 1996 before the term “globalisation” was even in circulation. It was a natural outgrowth of my living in the West but coming from the East, and multiculturalism was my reality. I wanted to bring together a global community of artists, with the basis of intercultural exchange. That is what I felt globalisation was—that point of intersection where the energy exists. The same energy exists in some of the art that our gallery represents—for example, the sound installations by Mr. Taylor Wimberley, a traditional Asian instrument—the gong, and trying to preserve it, but not in a static sense. He brings in robotic technology, so that a tradition-tension exists, and that is why it becomes interesting and unique.

With a large number of local and expat collectors, a powerful collector base is taking shape in the city. There is already a global community here, and now world-class artistic infrastructure as well in the form of Gillman Barracks, a cluster of international galleries which opened late last year.

By importing an international artistic presence and curatorial knowledge, the bar for artistic presentation in Singapore has been raised. That is the power of having art galleries gathering together in a central hub; it is a rich resource that will ultimately draw people.

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM?

Now that the Government has been doing its part, the local and international galleries must do their part. A gallery is just bricks and mortar. It is what is inside that is important. Galleries must mount shows that have strong and interesting points of view and a narrative built around the art. They need to provoke thought and dialogue.

Do you have creative people? Are they pushing the envelope? Art exists in creative ferment. It does not flourish in a corporate environment, so there must be will and space to support that.

The community must be supportive as well, and not just in the purchasing of art. Parents must be as willing to schedule family visits to Gillman Barracks as they would be to bring their children to watch the latest hit movie. They must say: “This is of value to us.” It should be commonplace to have young students stopping by. The interest in the intellectual side of the story should be just as strong as the enthusiasm for popular culture.

The art world is vast. When will Singapore be an international art hub? When people come from all over the world to look at the art here. Singapore is not yet part of the equation but can gain ground quickly if it makes the right decisions. It is definitely getting close to achieving this status, but everyone has to play his or her part.