



THE SINGAPOREAN IDENTITY

5-17

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

We have a common interest in photography and we wanted to promote Singapore's identity through its architecture and design. In addition, we also felt that Singapore was unique and special in its own way and we wanted to portray Singapore's unique features and iconic architecture through the lens of a camera.

1.2 Objectives

To capture the uniqueness and identity of Singapore through photos, by exploring different locations and architectural designs that help define Singapore.

1.3 Ideation

Originally, we planned to focus on Singapore's Identity through the everyday interaction between people. However, with Covid-19, such social interactions have been discouraged, and many of our plans were disrupted. We thus shifted our focus to Singapore's Identity in terms of its architecture and design, through exploring different locations that carry significance and portray Singapore's Identity through the years. We explored this blend of different cultures, different races and even a contrast between the western and eastern, the traditional and modern.

2. RESEARCH

2.1 Inspirations

Before embarking on this project, we did some research on a few photographers, mostly Singapore-based, to get a brief idea of the quality of photos that we should produce. Through this, we were inspired to come up with new ideas for the photos we took and were able to pick up on various photo-taking tips and tricks.

Nikko Pascau



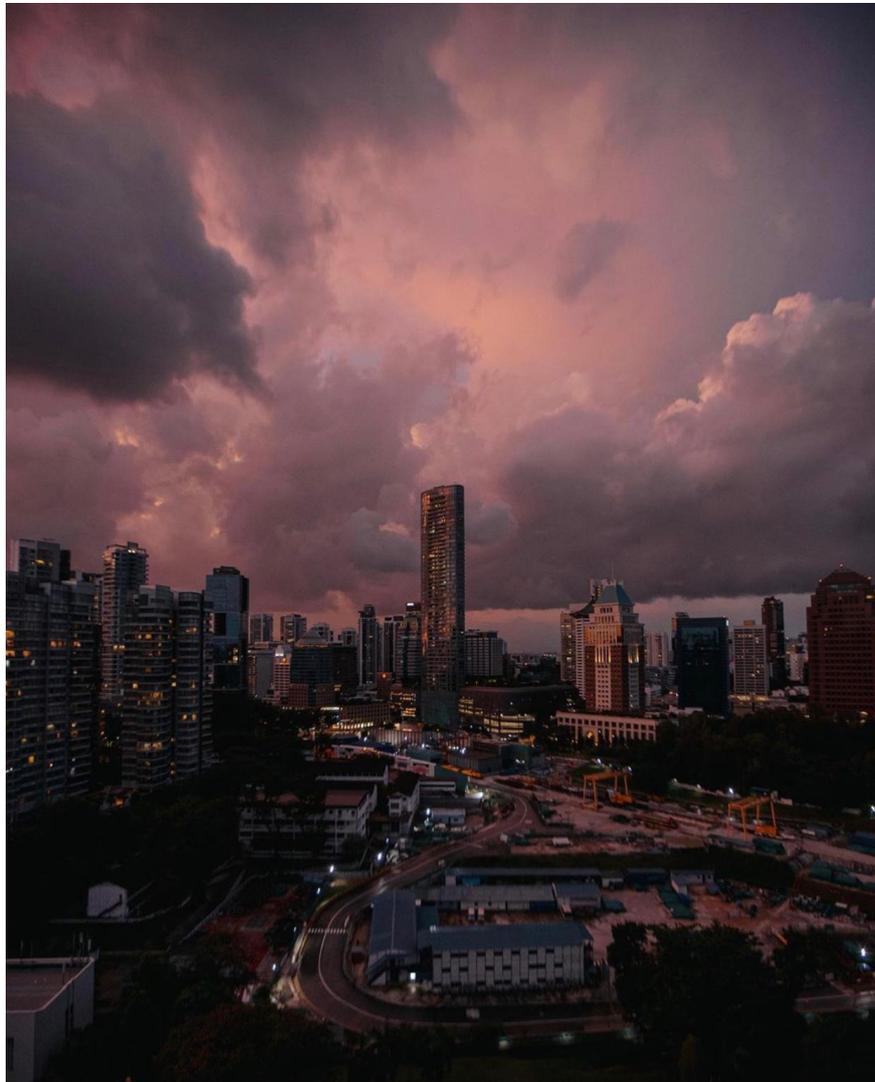
His photos gave a humble and honest look into the life of the average Singapore, portraying the daily Singaporean life in a very simple yet meaningful manner.



Yik Keat



Firstly, his photos always capture simple places through different angles, which really provided a different perspective on things. Secondly, we also realised how his photos were actually quite plain and bland before his editing process. He himself has mentioned before, that the real magic happens when editing a photo.



Peter McKinnon

He is a very experienced photographer based in Toronto, Canada, and he also has a presence on youtube, where he posts different videos that relate to photography, such as tutorials and lessons. From him, we gained more technical knowledge and skills, to find more unique angles and frames to better capture our photos. We also learnt to better edit our photos on software such as Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop.



Through their social media pages, which had tutorial videos on how to produce photos of good quality, we learnt to be more creative as from their photos we realised that we could view a whole different side of Singapore just by positioning the camera at different positions and angles. We also learnt various techniques both in photography and editing to make the quality of the photos top notch and looking aesthetically pleasing.

2.2 Locations

During the research phase of our project, we looked up on some of the iconic places in Singapore that we could travel to take photos of. We chose these places based on their value of significance to the country, and the architecture behind these locations, which aligns with the main topic of our project, the Singaporean Identity.

We chose to visit Marina Bay Sands (MBS) because it represents the modern side of Singapore along with portraying a strong and powerful image. Built in 2010, it now serves as a defining icon of Singapore. Other locations we visited were marine parade and old airport road which are residential areas, characterised by hawker centers and Housing Development Board (HDB) buildings. Unlike MBS, it provided a humble look into everyday Singapore that defines Singapore, yet often goes unnoticed. We also visited Chinatown, where historically, has been a residential area for the chinese. However, modern day Chinatown has learned to combine the past with the present, is now an apt representation of the combination of tradition and modernity in Singapore. We researched on the significance behind these locations, especially in their design, and mainly focused on, and brought forth these ideas when planning different shots.

3.1 Planning

We wanted to capture the significance of Singapore as seen through design and architecture, and we saw this significance to be mainly revolved around the concept of mixture and balance. We saw 2 main aspects pertaining to this concept, the contrast between the past and present, and the balance between greenery and modernity. In most of our photos, we portrayed these different aspects of Singapore's architecture and design.

Photos taken from Marina Bay mainly focused on the modern side of Singapore, and photos taken from Marine Parade and Haji Lane were able to present the traditional influences that has shaped the design behind those locations, while photos taken from Clarke Quay and Chinatown saw both past and present elements, and drew a contrast between the two. Next, photos taken from Changi Jewel also portrayed the balance between greenery and modern architecture in Singapore, boosting our title of a green city.

Thus, at these locations, we had some ideas of photos we wanted to capture based on these aspects after researching. We framed different shots we wanted to take to ensure that this mixture and balance between the past and the present, greenery and modernity could be captured.

3.2 Photo Taking

Initially, we planned to do more location scouting and on site research on the different angles and vantage points we could find to frame our shots, but especially during a pandemic, we wanted to avoid the crowds and tried to do more research on these locations and possible shots we could take beforehand. We planned 3 different trips to these locations to take our photos. First, we went to Clarke Quay, Marina Bay and the downtown area, we played with different angles to give an alternate point of view, and we also tried shooting our subjects through other surrounding elements such as leaves and greenery. These techniques were able to give our photos a unique look that set them apart from regular tourist-like photos, especially in an area commonly visited by tourists. Because of this, our shots had a more professional look to them.



Here, we shot these photos from a low angle, to provide an alternate view on our subject, while also portraying a strong and towering image of these buildings.



In these two shots, we made use of leading lines, to draw attention along the roads. This created a strong visual impact, by forming depth and symmetry in the composition of this photo.

3.3 Post-Production

To edit our photos, we used Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. We already had some prior knowledge on photo-editing, but took this as an opportunity to further research and learn about different technical skills involved in such post-production works.

On Photoshop, one main skill we picked up was to remove unwanted details from our photos such as large crowds or other distractions. We removed them using photoshop, mainly using 2 functions, the clone stamp and the content-aware fill. With this, we were able to ensure that our photos had a clean look to them, especially in locations that were more crowded.

Using Adobe Lightroom, we learnt to play with the different colours and tones, to bring out certain colours, while drawing attention away from others. When we first started, we experimented with many different edits that gave the photos a different feel. Once we found our desired edit, we applied it as a preset to other similar photos, and continued to make edits from there. Thus, most of our photos have a similar look to them.

For example, for the photo below that we took at Chinatown, we recognised the colour and vibrancy in the design of the shophouses, and we wanted this photo to pop more, thus we played around with different colours, specifically yellow and blue, turning up the saturation and brightness of those colours, and the exposure of the photo as a whole. We also used Adobe Photoshop to remove the buildings in the background. While they did draw a contrast between modern architecture and traditional design, they also served as a distraction to the main focus of the photo.



before editing



after editing

4. RESULTS

4.1 Final Product

Our final product is an online gallery with all our photos arranged in different locations, accompanied with brief descriptions of the different places. The main objective of our website is to capture the uniqueness of Singapore through exploring different locations and architectural designs, in hopes that our readers will have a deeper understanding of the Singapore culture. In essence, what we want our readers to take away from looking through our website is a greater knowledge on the history of the various iconic locations of Singapore and a few pleasant memories. We hope that these photos will be the first thing that will come to people's minds when these locations are talked about.

<https://181722e.wixsite.com/pw2020>

5. CONCLUSION

The Singaporean Identity is defined by the transition to modernity while maintaining features of Singapore's past, a mixture of culture, and a balanced combination of greenery and modernity. Ultimately, Singapore, as evident in its design, has integrated many different influences into its growth, guiding Singapore to what it is today.

6. REFLECTIONS

Lin En

Throughout this whole project, we've gone around Singapore and explored different locations and Everyday aspects of Singapore from a different point of view. It helped me realise how special Singapore's mix of culture, balance between the old and new, and the coexistence of greenery and modernity has shaped Singapore's especially through its design. This project has also served as an opportunity for me to explore my passion in photography, and treat it as a serious pursuit.

Gavin Ong

Overall, this project really provided me with a fun and enjoyable experience. Being able to travel around Singapore while taking pictures with my group mates, allowed us to be more bonded and developed our friendship. With that being said, this project was also not all fun and games as there were various lessons and points that could be taken away. This project allowed me to take a look at Singapore's heritage and culture from a more complex perspective, thickening my understanding of the various buildings/landmarks that define Singapore. This project also opened up a new world of photography to me as it allowed me to have a hands on experience with professional cameras.

Zechariah Hioe

Through taking pictures of the architectures in Singapore, it has helped me to further understand how Singapore's identity has been defined by the smallest of details that we don't really pay attention to like the shophouses and hawker centres which are preserved to remind us how it has bridged the gap from Singapore's past to its present.

7. REFERENCES

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