



**Fremantle Art Review features
“The Singapore Connection”**

“In the office of Singapore’s Minister of Information and the Arts is a small sculpture, a set of bronze shoes arranged on wooden steps. It evokes change in Singapore; fancy new shoes alongside old rope sandals as family embers shed their footwear to attend, as the work’s title indicates, *Second Aunty’s Birthday Party*. (sic)

“But behind this sculpture, created by Singapore’s foremost sculptor Chong Fah Cheong, is another story. The bronze was cast in Western Australia and the wooden steps are made of jarrah. The work is the literal embodiment of cooperation and goodwill between artists from two countries.

...

“The linchpin to this ‘Singapore Connection’ is artist Ron Gomboc who, with his wife Terri, runs a sculpture gallery set among the vineyards of Middle Swan, an hour’s drive outside Perth. Gomboc Gallery opened in 1984 and has a pivotal role in promoting and exhibiting Western Australian artists, particularly sculptors; ...

...

“And while politicians and bureaucrats continue to mouth sentiments about linking with Asia, Ron and Terri Gomboc have nurtured genuine and creative bonds with artists in the island state of Singapore. It began when a Singaporean art teacher ... asked Ron Gomboc if he would visit his school, which turned out to be Singapore’s prestigious La Salle College of the Arts.

“ ‘I said I’d love it’, Ron recalls. ‘And then I and the director of the school, Brother McNally, worked out that in the two weeks I was there we could set up a small foundry and actually produce about thirty small bronze pieces.’

“ ‘... It was very effective and successful and I established an ongoing friendship with the lecturers there.’

Among those lecturers were two of Singapore’s top sculptors, Chong Fah Cheong and Ng Eng Teng. Both men visited Gomboc Gallery in ensuing years, for varying lengths of stay.

-- an excerpt from an article entitled “The Singapore Connection” by Vicki Laurie, p.8, in *Fremantle Arts Review*, August/September 1992