

# Singapore Sketchbook

By Janette Maxey

One of my surprise inspirations while exploring Singapore was to learn about one of its obsessions – food. Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans spend a considerable amount of time in search of the boundless delights found in hawker centres. Much energy is used to seek out one's favourite. Countless places are written about, dreamed of and eaten at. As an artist I am very curious and inspired to explore hawker centres for bodily and artistic nourishment. The central themes of my artwork involve studies of place, portraits of individuals and the mundane accoutrements of people's lives. I use these to tell the story about the everyday that is often overlooked.



Watermelon juice, watching and waiting

*Taking a break from the studio in the sweltering heat of an afternoon, I head to my local hawker centre down the street. It's especially busy on this particular day. I go for my usual, a refreshing watermelon juice 'da bao' (to go). Suddenly rain and thunder hit and I am without an umbrella, so I sit and wait for the rain to pass, watching my fellow hawker-goers queuing up for their specialties. I see a riot of colour around me – the place is filled with photographs of hawker delights and drawings of prawns, pork and the containers to cook them in. I notice that the rhythmic patterns and colours almost echo the beat of the rain and thunder.*



Auntie's popiah unequalled

*I head over for lunch in Joo Chiat for one of my favourites - popiah. It is a special dish to me because it is filled with mostly familiar foods, but constructed in a delightfully unique way. The woman at the counter knows me by sight and starts to make my 'popiah' just the way I like it. I say "hello Auntie" and she gives me a beautiful glowing smile as she hands me my lunch. Auntie's popiah is inspiring. It warms my heart and fills my stomach.*

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**Janette Maxey** is an American artist and a grateful FOM member who has been living and painting in Singapore since 2009. For more information on Janette's art, please go to [www.jrmaxey100.wordpress.com](http://www.jrmaxey100.wordpress.com)

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