FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than 300 spectacular Peranakan jewellery pieces on display at Baba Bling: The Peranakans and Their Jewellery

Highlights include 12 rare sets of kerosang

SINGAPORE, 27 May 2009: Feast your eyes on some of the finest Peranakan jewellery at the Peranakan Museum’s latest special exhibition, Baba Bling: The Peranakans and Their Jewellery. This is an exhibition originated and curated by the museum, featuring more than 300 pieces from the collections of local and overseas Peranakan families, private collectors, as well as the Peranakan Museum. The exhibition opens on 29 May and is on show through to 13 December 2009.

Highlights of Baba Bling include 12 spectacular sets of kerosang owned by the local Peranakan community. The kerosang is a set of three jewelled brooches, used to fasten the Peranakan woman’s (Nonya) tunic or blouse. It is also the most prominent piece of jewellery worn – with the best pieces reserved for special occasions like weddings and birthdays. These days, it is rare to see the kerosang in full sets, as most of them have been split into individual pieces over time. Some of the kerosang on display have been re-assembled from different owners specially for this exhibition.

Baba Bling is a celebration of the Peranakans’ love for jewellery. Visitors can marvel at the evolution of Peranakan jewellery designs from the late 19th century to today. Like the Peranakan culture, the rich fusion of different cultures from the region and beyond is
reflected in the designs and materials used. They include gold, diamonds, silver, pearls and jade.

Dr. Kenson Kwok, Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum (which also manages the Peranakan Museum) said, “Baba Bling is our Peranakan themed exhibition for this year. Last year’s Peranakan themed exhibition was the inaugural exhibition *Junk to Jewels: The Things that Peranakans Value*. While the current exhibition focuses on jewellery, both feature the things that Peranakans hold dear. *Baba Bling* is also a community project that sees 41 Peranakan families and private collectors coming forth with their heirlooms and treasures. This is an overwhelming number – the largest number of lenders to any exhibition we have organised – and points to the strong support the community is giving us, as well as the huge interest in this subject.”

Peranakan jewellery serves both functional and symbolic roles, often accentuating meanings to traditional family rituals like weddings and mourning. It was also an indicator of family wealth and status. During the economic boom from the late 19th to the mid 20th century, the kerosang and other jewellery types became larger, as did the diamonds on them. Silver belts, buckles, keyholders and anklets were replaced with solid gold ones.

While the women displayed their husband’s wealth through gold, silver and precious stones, Peranakan men (*Babas*) usually only wore jewellery during the traditional 12-day Peranakan wedding. *Babas* sometimes pinned a kerosang to their wedding headdresses or to their Western style jackets. The rising levels of wealth during this period were also reflected on children. Jewellery worn by Peranakan children included anklets. With bells attached, adults were able to know their whereabouts in the house.

Besides being an adornment and status symbol, Peranakan jewellery was a source of financial security. It was carefully stored and kept in a variety of containers, and often lined with silk, cotton or velvet to prevent abrasion. Visitors will be able to learn the Nonyas’ methods of safekeeping their family heirlooms in the section on “Against Theft and Tarnish”, as well as learn how Peranakan jewellery was made.
Dr. Kwok added, “The Peranakan Museum has had a very successful opening year. As we move into our second year of operations, we would like to thank all those who have played a part in supporting us to ensure that success. We hope that everyone will enjoy what the community and the museum have put together in *Baba Bling*.”

*Admission charges to Baba Bling: The Peranakans and Their Jewellery are $6 for adults, and $3 for senior citizens and full-time students.*

- MORE -

**About the Peranakan Museum**

The Peranakan Museum explores the culture of Peranakan communities in the former Straits Settlements of Singapore, Malacca and Penang and their links with other communities in Southeast Asia. It is a boutique museum with the finest and most comprehensive collection of Peranakan artefacts in the world. Three floors of permanent galleries illustrate important rituals, practices and the material culture of the Peranakans, as well as how this unique fusion culture is viewed today.

The Peranakan Museum provides an enjoyable and educational experience for all, with intricate displays innovatively presented in ten galleries, children's interactives and special merchandising in two shops. Two temporary exhibition galleries will present a programme of special exhibitions throughout the year.

For more information on the Peranakan Museum, please visit [http://www.peranakanmuseum.sg](http://www.peranakanmuseum.sg).

- END -

For media enquiries, please contact:

**Joice Toh**  
Manager  
Marketing & Corporate Communications  
Tel: +65 6336 2994  
Email: joice_toh@nhb.gov.sg

**Clara Kwan**  
Senior Officer  
Marketing & Corporate Communications  
Tel: +65 6332 7592  
Email: clara_kwan@nhb.gov.sg