SINGAPORE: The inaugural Singapore Biennale on contemporary art will be the anchor cultural event when Singapore plays host to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank meetings.

The art pieces are all centred around the idea of "Belief".

And that is why many religious locations, such as St Joseph's Church and Sri Krishna Temple, will feature as venues for these art works.

But other 'temples' - such as Orchard Road as a temple to consumerism and the Singapore Management University as a temple to education - will also host art works from 39 countries.

One other important venue is City Hall, a historic location.

While it has been designated as an art gallery, this is the first time a major art show will be shown there.

Another place is another historic location, just across the street, the Padang.

Fumio Nanjo, Artistic Director, Singapore Biennale 2006, said, "All these locations is where daily life is going on, and we insert art into these places so they will naturally see art. Maybe they think it's just rubbish - I don't know - but in this way, we can start dialogue with ordinary public."

One way to start that dialogue is to call a dedicated number from your cell phone and an audio guide will talk about the art works.

Some of the 85 international artists who checked out the locations - some as ordinary as an HDB flat - were impressed.

Shahidul Alam, a photographer from Bangladesh, said, "I find it very interesting that Singapore has had some sort of sterile reputation, but the places that we have gone to here are military camps and malls...I think it will be very difficult for people to be inert to the presence of this festival...because of the way it is being presented - in your face."

The Singapore Biennale will run from September 4 to November 12.

And in an unprecedented move, the Singapore Biennale will be promoted in conjunction with two other Asian Biennales, held in Shanghai and Gwangju. - CNA/ms