Chapter 3

GROW
DRIVING THE FUTURE

We believe that everyone can play a part in shaping our arts and cultural landscape. Through grant support schemes, partnerships, industry facilitation and arts housing, the Council helps artists in Singapore realise their creative aspirations. By celebrating all forms of support for the arts, we hope to foster a culture of giving that inspires our artists, and allows for more engaged citizens. The long-term alliances and partnerships forged with fellow government agencies and private organisations help strengthen our cause and promote Singapore as a culturally rich and diverse arts destination.

PARTNERSHIPS

We forge enduring relationships with other government agencies, private organisations, and the community at large, leveraging our resources to generate exciting programmes for the public.

With the aim of creating vibrant arts spaces islandwide, the Council collaborated with the Economic Development Board (EDB) to set up the Gillman Barracks Programme Office in March 2016. The Office will drive increased programming efforts and enhanced lifestyle offerings at Gillman Barracks, to further its vision of being one of Asia’s top visual arts precincts. We also partnered the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to celebrate street art at the Rail Corridor Art Space, jazzing up the area with arts and music events that have been successful in drawing crowds.

We will continue working with corporates to present our burgeoning talents to the public in high-traffic environments. For example, in collaboration with Orchard Central, we brought Noise Singapore to the mall atrium, where emerging musicians reached new audiences. A separate Noise Singapore collaboration with DBS also brought young artists to the DBS Marina Regatta 2015 through a live art installation showcase that expressed their interpretations of future Singapore on large art cubes.
CELEBRATING OUR ARTS LEADERS

We celebrated Singapore’s cultural icons, Chua Mia Tee, Haresh Sharma, Lim Hung Chang (Lin Gao) and Margaret Leng Tan by awarding them the Cultural Medallion, the nation’s highest honours in the arts. Seven young artists were also awarded the Young Artist Award for making a mark in the industry.

Beyond our shores, Singaporean artists did our nation proud by winning international accolades. Iskandar Jalil became the first Singapore artist to be conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette by the Emperor of Japan. Conductor Darrell Ang received a Grammy nomination for best orchestral performance for his first CD recording with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

As we build a legacy for generations to come, the Council hopes that these achievements will inspire and spur on the next generation of artists.
CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

Singapore’s most valuable asset is its people. In addition to promoting artistic excellence, the Council believes in equipping arts organisations with the right skills to steer and develop the arts scene.

As part of the NAC-British Council Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), NAC and the British Council Singapore co-organised ‘Lead The Way’, a course that addresses the importance of leadership and organisational development for arts companies. In partnership with the Centre for Non-Profit Leadership (CNPL), we will be implementing initiatives to bridge potential leadership capability gaps. The first of these is the Pulse Check programme, which aims to strengthen the capabilities of the arts organisations’ Board of Directors and management teams.

Participants of Lead The Way. The first component of the course was held from 14 to 17 January 2016 at the Singapore Management University.

Paul Tan (Deputy CEO, NAC) with Winifred Loh (Managing Director, Centre for Non-Profit Leadership (CNPL), National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)), commemorating the new partnership between NAC and CNPL/NVPC on 16 April 2016.

Chong Siak Ching (CEO, National Gallery Singapore), delivering a keynote speech for Lead The Way, on 14 January 2016 at Singapore Management University.

Staff of NAC, CNPL, and Certified Professional Facilitators from the Singapore chapter of the International Association of Facilitators commemorating the new partnership between NAC and CNPL/NVPC on the Pulse Check programme. Photo taken on 16 April 2016 at NVPC.
The Council welcomes diverse organisations and individuals to embrace the arts as advocates and partners. The 33rd edition of the Patron of the Arts awards set a new record for contributions, with 330 patrons being recognised for their donations amounting to $136m. During the ceremony, it was announced that the Cultural Matching Fund (CMF)’s lifetime dollar-for-dollar matching cap was raised from $10 to $15 million per organisation, encouraging greater giving to the arts.

To shed light on Singaporeans’ philanthropic attitudes and behaviours towards the arts, the Council conducted an inaugural arts philanthropy study among three different groups – the general public, corporates and arts groups. The findings will paint a more accurate picture of arts philanthropy in Singapore, and are intended to guide our approach to future arts philanthropy policies and initiatives.
INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLACEMAKING

To accommodate a rapidly growing arts scene in land-scarce Singapore, the Council continually strives to carve out new spaces for the arts. For example, the heritage shophouses at 54-58 Waterloo Street were redeveloped into a new arts centre, with spaces that allow for flexibility in usage and programming.

Meanwhile, existing arts spaces opened their doors to families and children for arts events. For example, the Arts House Limited and its tenants at the Goodman Arts Centre and Aliwal Arts Centre brought the arts to the public through family-friendly programmes like Tanjong Goodman and Aliwal Arts Night Crawl. Such public events attracted nearly 18,000 visitors to the two arts centres in 2015.

Together with our partners the National Parks Board and Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Council embarked on efforts to revitalise the historic Civic District. Stakeholders such as the Asian Civilisations Museum, the National Gallery Singapore and the Esplanade - Theatres by the Bay were involved in envisioning the Civic District brand identity, launched on the first Car Free Sunday in February 2016.

By activating outdoor spaces with more regular programming, we will continue working closely with stakeholders to make the Civic District come alive as a home for arts and culture.
Envisioning the future and identity of the Civic District with the opening up of more green spaces for arts and culture programmes.

Unveiling of the Civic District brand identity in February 2016, in conjunction with the first edition of Car Free Sunday at the Civic District.

NAC and NParks jointly organised a stakeholder visioning workshop in February 2016, bringing together some 40 private and public stakeholders to come up with identity components of the Civic District and brainstorm ideas of how to activate the precinct.

Jean Chua from The Arts House gives children a hand at making art during Tanjong Goodman, a family-centric open house at Goodman Arts Centre organised by Arts House Limited, held in conjunction with Singapore Art Week 2016.

Children are enthralled by Uncle Rajah’s storytelling on his flying carpet, during a programme by arts tenant Word Forward, held as part of the annual Aliwal Arts Night Crawl.
INTERVIEW: ANTHONIA HUI

Tell us about your journey with the arts. Why is it an important part of your life?

Growing up, my priority was to make a better living. Anything else, such as going to the movies or eating out with friends, was a luxury. Prior to arriving in Singapore, I worked in London and Paris. My workplaces were situated within artistic districts, where I experienced multiple art forms that enriched my life. I saw the ballet, a lot of musicals, plays and concerts. Theatre and performance arts resonated with me the most, making me realise that life is not just about making a living. However, I never felt so close to the arts until I returned to Asia and started working in Singapore. Being immersed in the theatre scene here made me feel at home. It helped me to understand the nuances of Singapore’s society better, and as a result, I felt more comfortable and settled down quickly. I believe that the arts can give people different perspectives, yet leave them free to make their own conclusions.

Why give to the arts?

Although I was heavily exposed to the arts during my time in London and Paris, I had no idea what I was experiencing. I felt somewhat intimidated, as I was unable to relate directly. When I started working in Singapore, I saw BOEING BOEING by W!LD RICE at the Raffles Hotel Theatre in the year 2000. I was pleasantly surprised and overwhelmed. Even though the script was international, the show felt homely. It helped me to understand Singapore and people’s perceptions of Singaporeans a lot more. I overcame my earlier impression of the arts being intimidating. I am a shining example that the arts need not be reserved to a specific demographic.

Over the years, Singapore has evolved into a cultural destination. Naturally, I want to contribute and be a part of the Singapore arts scene because I want it to continue thriving. I was asked to join the W!LD RICE board last year, as they wanted me to give them my perspective, alongside other diverse members of the board. By offering my time and expertise, I hope to bridge the artistic community and the public sector to enable both sides to see from different perspectives – the way I did.

What are some of the steps that people can start taking to give to the arts?

Corporations, such as banks, can consider engaging in arts events as a meaningful, personal and differentiated way of interacting with their clients. Taking clients to art shows can elevate relationships. It can be very impactful, without costing too much. In fact, one does not necessarily have to be a sponsor, or book the whole theatre. Buying tickets is a way to give back to the arts scene. When I take my foreign clients to homegrown art shows, they are often very grateful. Our conversations become softer as they can see the unique scene that I am deeply entrenched in. It is not all about business. When more corporations tap into art shows, we will drive momentum in enabling more people to experience the arts and be advocates of the arts’ ability to enrich their lives. This is a small but important step to help artistic practitioners sustain their work.

Recognised as a Patron of the Arts by NAC in both 2015 and 2016, Anthonia Hui is the co-founder of AL Wealth Partners. Originally from Hong Kong, Anthonia holds a special affinity for the arts, which has helped to strengthen her sense of belonging in Singapore. By giving to the arts regularly, Anthonia hopes to contribute to a sustainable arts climate for Singapore, spurring on homegrown practitioners to place Singapore on the global map. She tells us about her journey with the arts and the small steps one can take to contribute to the arts scene.

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