

An art installation in a minimalist white room. A large, rectangular wall made of grey bricks is suspended horizontally by thin wires from the ceiling. Below the wall, a single white boot stands on the floor. The room has white walls, a concrete floor, and a ceiling with exposed wooden beams and hanging wires.

COME

NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FY 2007/08

A wider view of the same art installation. The suspended brick wall is the central focus. Several white boots are positioned on the floor around the base of the wall. The room's architecture, including the ceiling beams and floor, is visible.

A LONG WAY

VISION To develop Singapore as a distinctive global city for the arts **MISSION** To nurture the arts and make it an integral part of the lives of the people of Singapore

Singapore artists have gone to great lengths to gain overseas exposure and acclaim. More international productions are now making the long trip here. Whichever the direction, the arts has come a long way. Singapore has punched above its weight, defying the limits of its size. Not unlike Francis Ng, the Singapore artist featured in this annual report. A Young Artist Award recipient, he has turned heads with his convention defying works in Singapore and at the 50th Venice Biennale. Still, his promise, like the arts here, awaits full blossom.

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Excellence and engagement. Home and abroad. Not only should the arts play a bigger role in the lives of people in Singapore, it must also showcase our brightest talents on the international arts scene.

It is heartening to witness enough accomplishments in FY 2007 to give me optimism on both counts.

First up: renaissance with resonance. Since the launch of the Renaissance City Plan (RCP) in 2000, the number of arts activities has doubled to 27,000 a year, and the number of registered arts companies and groups touched 800 last year. The Esplanade alone attracted over 8 million visitors with more than 2,000 performances.

But it is not just about numbers. New institutions such as the School of the Arts, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts Asia and Sotheby's Institute of Art Singapore have gilded Singapore's reputation as a global arts city.

Then there is the effervescent international scene. A multi-agency effort of cultural diplomacy and arts marketing, the Singapore Season impressed many and struck a chord with audiences in Beijing and Shanghai. There is more good news: four local contemporary artists took centre stage at the Venice Biennale; and Singapore writers were invited to literary festivals in Indonesia, Sweden, Australia and the United Kingdom.

More can be expected as we look ahead. Over the next five years, the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts will invest \$115 million to implement the third phase of the RCP. Of this, \$80 million will go to the Council to focus on three critical areas.

Home-grown content takes precedence. The Council will introduce a fund to build up a body of works that reflect Singapore's distinctive multicultural identity and contemporary Asian setting. More resources will also be devoted to capability development initiatives and residency programmes for artists and arts groups.

Building up the arts ecosystem is the second priority. The Council will facilitate the growth of arts businesses in producing, presenting, distributing and marketing arts and cultural content. Support will also be given to the growth of arts education services and arts consultancies.

The third act is strengthening community bonds. The Council will be rolling out a nation-wide community engagement plan that hinges on the arts. A culture of life-long arts participation will be built by making the arts more pervasive and deepening artistic experiences.

The results will not happen overnight. I urge all our partners, sponsors, and patrons to give us your continued support. And with the whole-hearted participation of our Council members, the senior management and staff, I expect to see more Singapore artists exploding out of their home-grown comforts into the big league of international arts.

The stage, as they say, is set. Let's light up the arts scene here and abroad.



EDMUND CHENG

Chairman

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REVIEW

2007 saw the performing, visual and literary arts taking centre stage on national platforms, attracting attention at home and abroad. This was fuelled by NAC's provision of \$12.7 million to the various art forms through grants, scholarships and bursaries, commissions and arts housing subsidies.

The 30th anniversary of the Singapore Arts Festival presented world-class performances by both acclaimed and promising names, while commissions gave Singapore arts groups the opportunity to shine. Highlights include the formation of the resident Singapore Festival Orchestra; a spectacular open-air opening show at the Padang; and a 30th anniversary commemorative book. An alliance was sealed with the Edinburgh International Festival to encourage joint commissioning and mutual touring. The Tang Quartet became the first Singapore group to perform at this Festival.

The Singapore Art Show brought Singapore visual artists to the fore. More than 400 artists from various genres participated in multiple venues at the Show. With the introduction of the inaugural International Artist Residency Prize, artists were given the opportunity to participate in residency programmes and to raise their profile overseas.

The Singapore Writers Festival profiled Singapore writers and brought both well-known and rising international writers to Singapore, drawing a record attendance. Highlights include the presentation of new Asian writers; a poignant reading of the late Arthur Yap's poetry; and the homecoming of novelist Goh Poh Seng.

By taking the arts onto various media platforms, Noise Singapore engaged and saw growing support among young artists and audiences. It gave budding artists a unique opportunity to learn under the mentorship of creative professionals.

All these national events are essential to NAC's work in nurturing the arts and bringing it to Singaporeans. They catalysed Singapore's arts and audience development, and provided avenues for Singapore artists and arts groups to develop new work. Complementing these platforms are the popular NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park series; and the District Arts Festivals, which NAC partnered People's Association to bring them to the heartlands. The NAC-endorsed arts programmes enabled schools to promote high-quality arts education and experiences to the students.

On the international scene, the multi-agency Singapore Season in Beijing and Shanghai provided exposure to some

of our leading music, dance and theatre groups, as well as writers and visual artists. The positive reception to the Season helped boost our international reputation.

NAC's Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale showcased four contemporary Singapore artists at the world's biggest visual arts platform. At MIDEM in Cannes, the world's largest music trade fair, we showcased Andrew Lum and New Asia, and Corrinne May; and presented 11 Singapore music companies. Singapore writing in four languages was featured at NAC's inaugural participation at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

The Cultural Medallion, the highest recognition of artistic talent in Singapore, was presented to writer Isa Kamari and filmmaker Eric Khoo. The Cultural Medallion Grant was awarded to seven past Cultural Medallion recipients – Edwin Thumboo and Yeng Pway Ng for literature; Lynnette Seah for music; Han Sai Por and Tan Choh Tee for visual arts; Foo Tee Jun for photography; and Eric Khoo for film. They will undertake projects that will help to grow the body of Singapore arts content, as well as raise their national and international profile.

The Young Artist Award was presented to five young artists – Kuik Swee Boon for dance; Ting Kheng Siong for literature; Philip Tan for music; Natalie Hennedige for theatre; and Tan Kai Syng for visual arts.

NAC's mission of promoting the arts was strongly supported by our partners in the private sector, which provided a total of \$39.1 million in cash and kind to the arts in 2007. Significantly, Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation started a new scheme by funding an arts adoption programme which will nurture five Singapore arts groups over three years.

To carry out its work effectively, NAC continued to give emphasis to improving its systems and processes. In Feb 2008, we attained the Singapore Quality Class certification, the national recognition for organisational excellence.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to our Council members, arts advisers and resource panellists, members of our various committees and many others who have contributed to NAC's work with passion and dedication. To our artists, arts organisations, sponsors and partners, my grateful thanks for making 2007 a rewarding year for the arts in Singapore. With your support, we look forward to doing even better in 2008.



LEE SUAN HIANG

Chief Executive Officer

**COUNCIL
MEMBERS**

(1 September 2006 – 31 August 2008)



**SENIOR
MANAGEMENT**

Lee Tzu Yang
Chairman,
Shell Companies in Singapore

Lim Neo Chian
Deputy Chairman & Chief Executive,
Singapore Tourism Board

Sarkasi Bin Said
Visual Artist

Vera Ong
Co-Owner & Art Consultant,
Art-2 Gallery Pte Ltd

Chua Thian Poh
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer,
Ho Bee Holdings Pte Ltd

Ng Cher Pong
Divisional Director,
Workplace Policy and Strategy Division,
Ministry of Manpower

Tan Boon Huat
Chief Executive Director,
People's Association

Seow Choke Meng
Executive Vice President,
Administration Division cum
Cultural Industry Promotion,
Chinese Newspapers Division,
Singapore Press Holdings Limited

Prof Jeremy Monteiro
Jazz Pianist,
Composer & Educator

Ong Keng Sen
Artistic Director,
TheatreWorks (S) Ltd

Edmund Cheng Wai Wing
Chairman,
National Arts Council
Deputy Chairman,
Wing Tai Holdings Ltd

Lee Suan Hiang
Chief Executive Officer

*Not in picture:
Elaine Ng, Director, Performing Arts Development*

Sharon Chang
Deputy Director,
Planning & Research

Dr Woon Kin Chung
Senior Director,
Corporate Development

Koh Pek Hoon
Deputy Director,
Corporate Communications
& International Relations

Teo Kian Giap
Deputy Director,
Singapore Season

Chua Ai Liang
Director,
Audience Development

Susan Loh
Director, Special Projects
(wef 21 May 2008)

Lim Chwee Seng
Director, Visual Arts,
Director, Resource Development

Pearl Samuel
Deputy Director,
Performing Arts Development
(till 31 August 2008)

Catherine Ho
Deputy Director,
Corporate Services

Goh Ching Lee
Senior Director,
Performing Arts,
Director,
Singapore Arts Festival

Khor Kok Wah
Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
Director, Literary Arts

Quek Yeng Yeng
Deputy Director, Festivals

Leela V
Deputy Director,
Marketing and
Partnership Development
(wef 23 April 2008)

Russell Lim
Deputy Director,
Resource Development

CORPORATE PROFILE

The National Arts Council (NAC) was set up as a Statutory Board in September 1991 to spearhead the development of the arts in Singapore. Its mission is to nurture the arts and make it an integral part of people's lives in Singapore.

Anchored on the twin strategies of excellence and engagement in the arts, NAC aims to build a vibrant arts sector by creating a conducive environment where the arts is accessible to all and artistic talents have the necessary resources and capabilities to excel and achieve sustainability in the long term.

The key strategic thrusts of NAC are to nurture and develop the arts, develop capabilities and resources, stimulate broader and more sophisticated audience demand, facilitate internationalisation and enhance global connectivity, and advocate the importance of the arts.

To develop artistic talents in the performing, visual and literary arts, NAC provides holistic support through grants, training, arts housing subsidies, commissioning of works and overseas presentations. Through this comprehensive approach to develop the entire value chain, from seeding arts start-ups, nurturing and developing artists, arts groups and arts businesses, to internationalisation, NAC is a key driver in the growth of the entire arts industry.

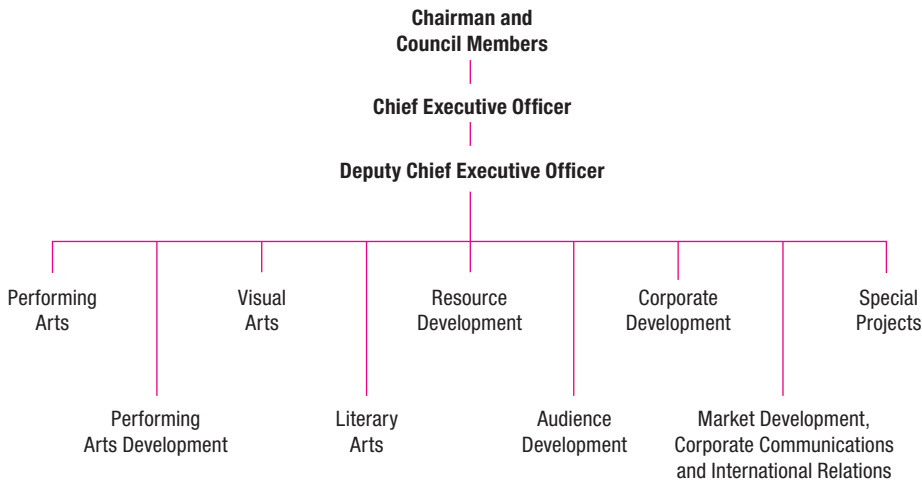
NAC organises major festivals, events and competitions to showcase local and international talents, as well as to identify new talents. On the international stage, NAC also collaborates with other government agencies to promote Singapore arts, in the bid to enter new emerging markets and cultivate international audiences. Arts awards are given annually to artists in recognition of artistic excellence and to patrons in appreciation of their arts sponsorship.

To build new audiences and broaden arts participation, NAC engages the wider community in the arts through outreach programmes such as the Concerts-in-the-Park series and District Arts Festivals, and endorses arts education programmes in schools.

NAC helps build the capabilities of arts practitioners, professionals and arts business by playing an active role in cultural exchanges and international platforms. It also plans for the long term use of arts infrastructure and carries out research and surveys to support advocacy programmes.

The Patron of NAC is the President of Singapore, S R Nathan. The Council comprises 18 members from the private and public sectors. It is supported by a team of arts advisers and resource panel members who provide feedback and advice on the initiatives taken to realise its vision of making Singapore a distinctive global city for the arts.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE





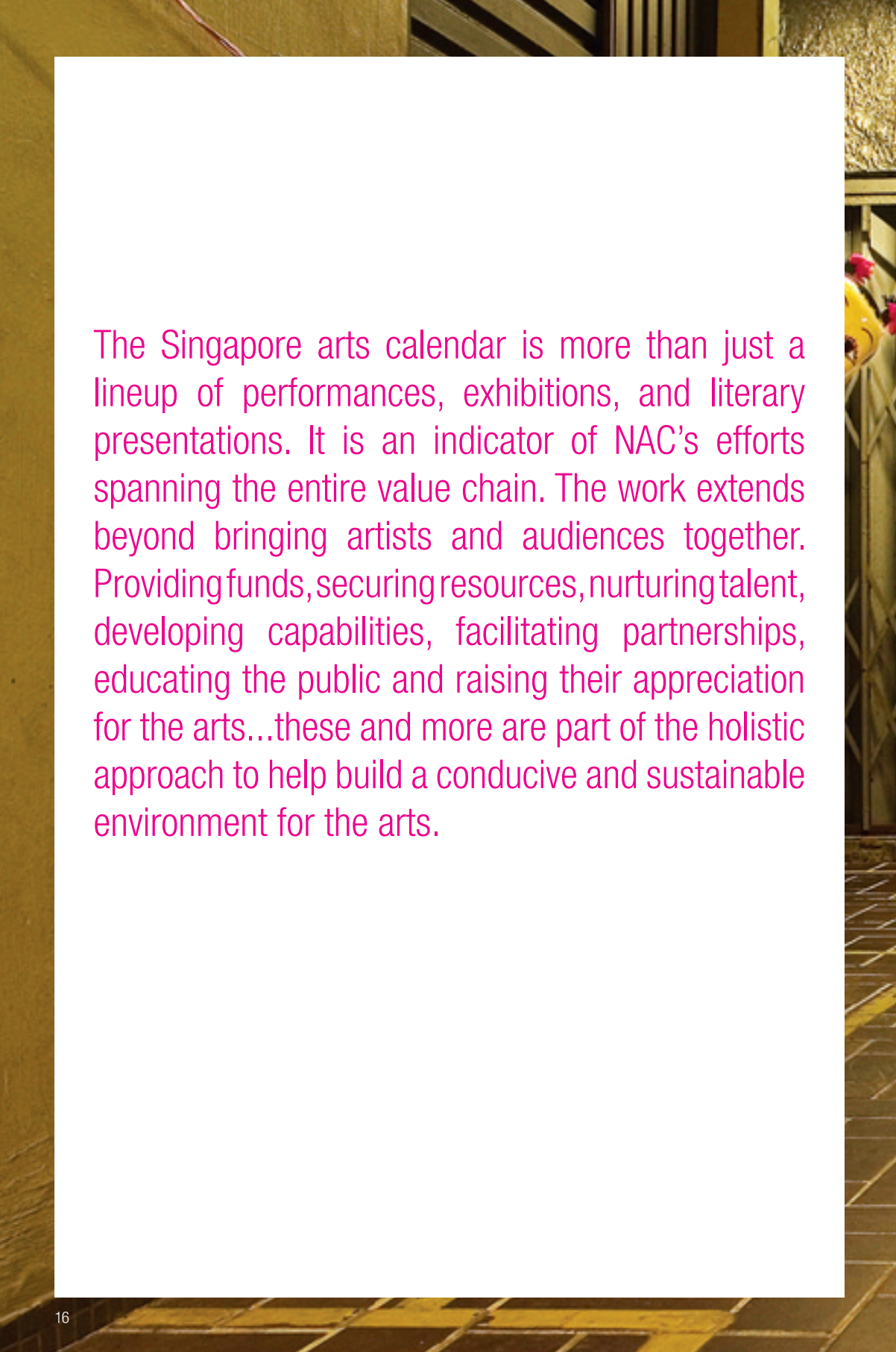
AT A



STAGE

NEAR

YOU

The background of the slide features a yellow sculpture of a smiley face with a red bow on its head, positioned on a staircase. The scene is dimly lit, with the sculpture being the primary light source.

The Singapore arts calendar is more than just a lineup of performances, exhibitions, and literary presentations. It is an indicator of NAC's efforts spanning the entire value chain. The work extends beyond bringing artists and audiences together. Providing funds, securing resources, nurturing talent, developing capabilities, facilitating partnerships, educating the public and raising their appreciation for the arts...these and more are part of the holistic approach to help build a conducive and sustainable environment for the arts.

SHOWCASING THE ARTS

NAC organised strategic platforms – Singapore Arts Festival, Singapore Arts Show, Singapore Writers Festival and Noise Singapore – to energise the scene, add buzz to Singapore, and give Singapore artists opportunities to shine. These festivals serve to raise the profile of the arts, engage the community, showcase Singapore to the world and enable Singaporeans to enjoy quality arts events at home.

SINGAPORE ARTS FESTIVAL

The Singapore Arts Festival 2007 was a landmark event celebrating the Festival's 30th anniversary. Over the last three decades, the Festival has been a catalyst and a driver of arts development in Singapore. It has broadened, deepened and raised the sophistication of our audiences, provided new opportunities for Singapore artists and arts groups to develop and present new works, and raised the international profile of Singapore as a vibrant arts city.

The 2007 Festival featured more than 2,300 artists from over 27 countries performing in 22 main productions and 440 free performances, exhibitions and special events. Among these were six world premieres and five Asian premieres. The Festival had a successful run from 25 May to 24 June 2007. The opening show at The Padang drew some 24,000 people with the aerial spectacle *Dreams in Flight*. A third of its 48 ticketed performances was sold out and the average house reached 81.2 per cent. In total, the Festival was attended by over 718,000 people.

Arts luminaries in the Festival included composer Tan Dun, choreographers Saburo Teshigawara and Bill T Jones, theatre director Lee Breuer, and dance icon Sylvie Guillem with star dancer-choreographer Akram Khan.

The Festival also commissioned new works by Singapore groups. The Finger Players performed *Wong Kar Wai Dreams* while Checkpoint Theatre staged *Cogito*. Mark Chan and The Arts Fission Company created the multidisciplinary *Dreaming of Kuan Yin, Meeting Madonna*, while Singapore's "King of Swing" and Cultural Medallion recipient Jeremy Monteiro took to the stage with star jazz musicians Jimmy Cobb, Jay Anderson, Bob Sheppard and Roberta Gambarini.

The Festival saw the inauguration of the Singapore Festival Orchestra, led by music director Chan Tze Law. It was designed to meet the Festival's specific programming needs and to help diversify its programming. The orchestra gave its inaugural performance in the Asian premiere of *PLAY! A Video Game Symphony*. The production featured award-winning music from popular video games and accompanying video images. It packed houses, attracting young game enthusiasts, many of whom were first-time concert goers.



La Fura dels Baus at the opening of Singapore Arts Festival at the Padang

Outreach has always been an integral part of the Singapore Arts Festival. There were programmes such as Arts on the Move, Asian Showcase and a new initiative called Family Funfest. The Festival also partnered Timbre as the Festival Club with a month-long series of arts and music activities.

A notable development was the signing of a three-year strategic agreement between the Singapore Arts Festival and Edinburgh International Festival in June 2007. The alliance serves to encourage joint commissioning and mutual touring. At the same time, it demonstrates the reputation that the Singapore festival enjoys in the international festival circuit.

Arising from the alliance was *Optical Identity*, a collaboration between the UK's Theatre Cryptic and Singapore's T'ang Quartet, premiered in both festivals. The T'ang Quartet became the first Singapore group to perform at the Edinburgh International Festival. *Optical Identity* is one of 20 Festival commissions and co-productions that, since 2000, have graced the stage in over 30 cities around the world, including New York, London and Paris.

The high attendance rate, the new audiences reached, and the positive critical reviews garnered made the 2007 Festival one of the most successful on record. To mark the anniversary, the Festival published *Making Visible the Invisible: Three Decades of the Singapore Arts Festival*, a commemorative publication by Venka Purushothaman that detailed the Festival's history and development.



Clockwise from left: Signing of the strategic agreement between the Singapore Arts Festival and Edinburgh International Festival; RAISED, Singapore Art Show; Winner of the International Artist Residency Prize, Jane Lee; Street Art Carnival at Little India; PLAY! A Video Game Symphony by the Singapore Festival Orchestra

SINGAPORE ART SHOW

After the Singapore Arts Festival, the curtains rose on the second Singapore Art Show, a national platform to showcase works of both established and up-and-coming visual artists. It also promotes public appreciation of the diverse visual arts practices found in Singapore.

Held from 2 August to 8 October 2007 across 47 venues, the Art Show comprised the Singapore Art Exhibition as the anchor programme, with 31 partner programmes and five satellite events. The two-month event attracted over 616,000 visitors.

The Singapore Art Exhibition, held at the Singapore Art Museum, was curated by Low Sze Wee and Seng Yu Jin. In the open section, works from promising and emerging artists were culled from over 700 entries received. In the invited section, 20 Singapore artists were selected based on the theme *Imagining the City* and they included Chua Ek Kay, Goh Beng Kwan, Tan Choh Tee, Lim Tze Peng, Foo Tee Jun, Hong Sek Chern, Raymond Lau, Francis Ng and Michael Lee.

An International Artist Residency Prize was launched in conjunction with the Singapore Art Exhibition. Offered as a career development initiative, the residency allows the recipient to develop her practice at an international level and provides opportunities to work with relevant groups of professionals overseas. The prize provides a grant of up to \$50,000 and was won by Jane Lee for her work *Purple Drape and Wrap*. The grant would be used to fund

a residency at a reputable international art organisation or institution of her choice.

Partner programmes included the exhibitions *The Best of UOB* which presented the winning entries from 25 years of the UOB Painting of the Year Award, and *Chua Ek Kay's street scenes: A Gift of History*, a showcase of 30 paintings by Cultural Medallion recipient Chua Ek Kay. The annual exhibition of the Singapore Watercolour Society, *Bridging Ties With Watercolours*, featured works from members such as Ong Kim Seng, Chew Piak San, Loy Chye Chuan and Seah Kam Chuan.

There were a number of site-specific works as well. *Word of Mouth* was a series of video installations in VivoCity, while *The Last Wayang* revisited the historic Capitol Theatre with old films and new video performances.

Other events included *The SAS Unconference*, a bus tour of art galleries, performance arts showcase *Future of Imagination*, and The Esplanade's *Play*.

The Singapore Art Show was a multi-faceted event that effectively conveyed the sheer diversity and energy of the visual arts scene in Singapore.

SINGAPORE WRITERS FESTIVAL

The biennial Singapore Writers Festival, from 1 to 9 December 2007, aims to present major literary talent from around the world to Singapore, and promote new and emerging Singapore and Asian writings to a larger audience. This was the first time NAC co-organised the Festival with The Arts House.



Clockwise from left: Graphic novelist, Kurt Busiek, Singapore Writers Festival; Launch of the Noise Singapore Festival Showcase; Bags designed by Noise apprentices; Dr Goh Poh Seng, Singapore Writers Festival

The Festival involved over 100 Singapore and international writers as well as other players in the publishing industry. Well-known names included Jung Chang, Bei Dao and Goh Poh Seng, graphic novelists Kurt Busiek and Gail Simone, and up-and-coming Asian writers such as Tash Aw, Madeleine Thien, Tan Twan Eng and Teo Hsu-Ming. Singapore writers such as Isa Kamari, Daren Shiau, Yeng Pway Ngon, Suratman Markasan, and Suchen Christine Lim were also profiled in the Festival.

Under the theme CROSSINGS!, the Festival offered 158 events, ranging from familiar activities like readings and book signings to newer activities such as film screenings, visual arts exhibitions, music and theatre programmes.

For the first time, the Festival had programmes that paid homage to Singapore's rich literary tradition and pioneers. Enjoying much spotlight was pioneer writer, Goh Poh Seng, a 1982 Cultural Medallion recipient, who returned to Singapore after an absence of over 20 years. Another highlight was an exhibition of the artworks of the late Arthur Yap, who while best known as a poet, painted as well.

NAC also organised a symposium, *The Business of Books* that brought together publishers and book industry players. In total, the festival attracted over 20,000 attendees.

NOISE SINGAPORE

Youths need a showcase and that is what Noise Singapore is all about – a media-based arts festival for young people,

by young people. Held from July to December 2007, Noise Singapore engaged youths in creative expression and enabled them to reach audiences through media platforms such as magazines, television, radio, the Internet and outdoor advertising. In addition, there was an exhibition, concerts and a compilation CD of original music.

Noise Singapore saw an unprecedented 6,060 works submitted by 1,200 youths for its Festival Showcase in December 2007. The Showcase at The Heeren Shops included an exhibition *Extreme Artworks!* which required Noise participants to collaborate and create site-specific works. The two-week long exhibition attracted 26,000 visitors.

A significant component of Noise Singapore was The Apprenticeship Programme which saw 41 budding talents in the fields of art & design, music and photography, selected to learn from 11 professionals in the creative industries. These youths had the opportunity to work with their mentors on commercial projects.

SUPPORTING ARTISTIC ENDEAVOURS

NAC provides a sound and sustainable environment where artists and arts organisations can flourish. It disburses grants to artists in the performing, visual and literary arts to help them develop to their full potential.

In FY 2007, the Council disbursed \$4.5 million in grants to artists and arts organisations in the performing arts. Six



From left: Arts Awards recipients with President S R Nathan; Nothing by NAC grant recipient Cake Theatrical Productions

of Singapore's top arts companies received a total of \$2.2 million under the Major Grant scheme. They were Singapore Dance Theatre, The Necessary Stage, The Theatre Practice, TheatreWorks, Singapore Repertory Theatre and Wild Rice. The grants helped meet part of their operating expenses, and supported the development and presentation of artistically excellent works such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Good People*, *If There Are Seasons* and *The Flying Circus Project 2007*.

Thirteen performing arts groups received \$1.2 million in funding under the Annual Grant scheme. They were Action Theatre, The Arts Fission Company, Bhaskar's Arts Academy, Chinese Theatre Circle, City Chinese Orchestra, Dance Ensemble Singapore, Drama Box, Singapore Lyric Opera, T'ang Quartet, Teater Ekamatra, The Finger Players, Toy Factory Productions Ltd and the Young Musicians' Society.

To support the development of literary arts, NAC disbursed about \$150,000 in general grants. In addition, the National Book Development Council of Singapore received an annual grant of \$67,000 to help meet part of its annual operating expenses. Part of the grant was used to develop an online resource called the Singapore Writer's Centre, and publish a *Writer's Resource Kit*, a handbook which offers useful advice and contacts for emerging and established authors.

Publishers, Lingzi Media and Pustaka Nasional, also received grants to publish works of established writers such as Mohamed Latiff bin Mohamed and Abdul Ghani bin Hamid, and emerging writers such as Andrew Tan and Noor Hasnah Adam.

NAC disbursed about \$900,000 in grants to support visual artists and art societies. The Chinese Calligraphy Society of Singapore, Sculpture Square, The Substation and Plastique Kinetic Worms received funding under the Annual Grant scheme. ARTSingapore, the contemporary Asian art fair in Singapore, also received funding from NAC.

DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES

Talent needs to be identified, nurtured and given opportunities to grow. NAC recognises the importance of developing talent and has devoted resources towards this end.

The Council awarded \$1.2 million worth of local and overseas scholarships and bursaries to 84 recipients. FY 2007 marked the end of the Shell-NAC Arts Scholarship after 16 years, and NAC is now looking for sponsors for the arts scholarships. Various performing arts groups also received short-term training grants totalling \$102,770.

The biennial National Piano & Violin Competition provides a national platform to cultivate young musical talent in Singapore. Held from 5 to 15 December 2007, the event attracted 270 entries. New initiatives included an expanded concerto list offering more choice and variety for the contestants, and the renaming of the "Open" category to "Artist" category. For the first time, finalists of the Artist Category were accompanied by the newly commissioned Singapore Festival Orchestra.

The Golden Point Award 2007 is Singapore's premier and only national creative writing competition that celebrates new writing in the four major languages. Comprising poetry and short story categories, the Award provides an opportunity for emerging writers to showcase their talent. The biennial competition was opened only to unpublished writers for the first time in 2007. A total of 769 entries were submitted by 720 Singaporeans and Singapore permanent residents.

Aspiring writers in Singapore benefitted from the Mentor Access Project, an 18-month programme to have budding writers mentored by more established ones. Mentors in the 2007 programme include well-known Singapore writers, poets and playwrights like Robert Yeo, Lee Tzu Pheng, Anuar Othman, Meira Chand, Ovidia Yu, Felix Cheong, Aaron Maniam, Daren Shiau, Desmond Sim, Colin Cheong, Tan Chee Lay, Tan Tarn How, Cyril Wong, Yeng Pway Ngon and Yeow Kai Chai.



From left: Pasar Theatre in Chinatown, Singapore Arts Festival; South East District Arts Festival

To enhance the qualifications of people working in the arts, NAC is working with parties such as the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, Workforce Development Agency and Media Development Authority to develop a Creative Industries Workforce Skills Qualifications framework. The next step is to develop and validate the competency standards and trainers' guide.

An important part of developing capabilities is to recognise outstanding achievement. In FY 2007, the Cultural Medallion, Singapore's highest honour for artists, was accorded to literary artist Isa Kamari and filmmaker Eric Khoo. The Young Artist Award was given to Kuik Swee Boon (Dance), Ting Keng Siong (Literature), Philip Tan (Music), Natalie Hennedige (Theatre), and Tan Kai Syng (Visual Arts). To document and publicise Cultural Medallion recipients, NAC is working with the National Library Board to incorporate their works in the Online Repository of Artistic Works.

ENGAGING AUDIENCES

A global city for the arts cannot exist without a strong audience base. To fortify this foundation, NAC worked hard to stimulate a broader and more sophisticated demand for the arts. The work has two main prongs: outreach and education.

In addition to the major festivals, NAC brings quality arts performances to the community through specific outreach platforms such as the NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park. Last year, the concert series featured, among others, Superband Mi Lu Bing, Arts Fission and Heartbeat Percussion. In addition, the fringe element was expanded to include activities like colouring contests, storytelling and drumming workshops. All these helped to drive more people to the concerts and increased their exposure to the arts. In FY 2007, a total of 180 free events were organised and supported, reaching some 200,000 audiences.

NAC collaborated with the People's Association (PA) and

five Community Development Councils under the PA-NAC Memorandum of Understanding to develop District Arts Festivals to showcase community artistic talents. Held throughout the year, these five festivals involved residents, schools, community groups, professional artists and arts groups, and drew an audience of more than 138,000. Two training workshops on arts marketing, publicity and stage presence were organised to help community centre-based arts groups build up their capabilities.

The outreach efforts also involved other government agencies and private corporations. In FY 2007, NAC worked with NParks, the Central Narcotic Bureau and Singapore General Hospital. The Council supported Nanyang Technological University's annual Nanyang Arts Festival and Raffles City's Arts in the City programme, targeted at the busy lunch-time crowds. The various arts activities attracted more than 100,000 people. The engagement of the Singapore populace in arts creation will be taken further with the introduction of the Community Participation Grant scheme in April 2008.

Outreach helps to expose more people to the arts but education makes the demand more sophisticated. In 2007, some 2,500 NAC-endorsed quality arts education programmes were taken up by primary and secondary schools, junior colleges, centralised institutes and polytechnics. More than 330,000 students experienced the arts through performances by professional artists, hands-on workshops by arts educators, and excursions to performances and exhibitions at various arts venues.

The arts education programme in school was subsidised by the Tote Board Arts Fund, which contributed some \$6 million in FY 2007, an increase of 50 per cent over the previous financial year. The programme was also expanded to include 22 special education schools.

NAC also partnered The Esplanade and arts groups to develop a series of Excursion programmes which aims to draw students into purpose-built arts venues. Students were



From left: Launch of APB Foundation Inspire Programme; Wang Haijie, top pianist at the National Piano & Violin Competition

able to watch performances and go on backstage tours. The Artist-in-School scheme allowed more than 4,000 students from 10 schools to interact with professional artists and experience the creative process. Shuqun Primary School enjoyed an extensive dance education programme, Bedok North Secondary School had a theatre programme integrated with its literature programme, and Park View Primary School had a visual arts education programme with a strong focus on Singapore art.

To acknowledge schools in their efforts to set up a sustainable arts education structure, the National Arts Education Award was set up in 2003. The award for primary schools alternates with that given to secondary schools, junior colleges and centralised institute. The 2007 Award attracted 33 applications from primary schools, of which 16 were new participants. Haig Girls' School was the first primary school to receive the Gold Award which was presented by RADM (NS) Lui Tuck Yew, Minister of State for Education.

BUILDING RESOURCES

For the arts to thrive, artists and arts companies need homes, a place to practise, rehearse and work. In FY 2007, NAC provided arts housing assistance worth \$3.1 million to 65 arts companies and 27 artists. The Council upgraded three properties along Trengganu Street in Chinatown and the property at Kampong Eunus. NAC also leased the space at 90 Goodman Road to the School of the Arts for use as an interim campus pending the completion of its premises at Kirk Terrace.

The Council also played the role of matchmaker, helping artists and arts groups find housing facilities with other space providers. The NAC helped The Junior Pop Academy, a subsidiary of The Old Parliament House, to find space within Paradiz Centre. The space was provided by the developer, LendLease.

The Council runs two major arts venues, the Victoria Theatre and Drama Centre. Major Singapore Arts Festival

performances such as *Dreaming of Kuanyin*, *Meeting Madonna*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Bones in Pages* were performed at the Victoria Theatre. In all, the Victoria Theatre hosted 139 performances from 88 groups and had a utilisation rate of 82 per cent.

The Drama Centre, a 615-seat mid-sized performance space, was also popular. Local arts groups such as Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble, Wild Rice, The Finger Players and Drama Box were among the groups that used the Drama Centre in FY 2007. The utilisation rate for the theatre was 67 per cent while that for the black box was 35 per cent.

SPONSORING THE ARTS

The development of Singapore's arts scene would not be possible without the support of the private sector. In 2007, arts sponsorship in Singapore totalled \$37.4 million. NAC received \$5.7 million in cash and \$3.7 million in-kind for its various festivals, competitions, scholarships and outreach programmes.

The 2008 Patron of the Arts Award was presented to 293 individuals and corporations in recognition of their contributions to the arts. Of this, 20 were Distinguished Patrons, 13 Patrons, 47 Friends and 42 Associates of the Arts. The Arts Supporter Award was given to 171 individuals and organisations.

As part of efforts to raise private sector support for the arts, NAC initiated the Arts Adoption Scheme so that businesses may adopt arts organisations. In 2007, the scheme received a boost from the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation with the launch of its APB Foundation Inspire Programme. The Foundation adopted five arts groups for three years with a grant of \$450,000 to support their development. The five arts groups were Apsaras Arts, Angkatan Sasterawan '50, Ding Xiaoyan Ruan Ensemble, Cake Theatrical Productions and Sculpture Society.



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IT

GOES

Artists in Singapore have developed a distinctive identity and voice that has been shaped by Singapore's historical experience and cultural milieu. As they venture into the world and win accolades, they raise Singapore's profile and burnish the image of Singapore as a global metropolis brimming with talent, excitement and creativity. Our artists abroad are ambassadors, opening the eyes of others to the potential and the possibilities of Singapore. Through showcasing artists and arts groups abroad, leveraging on strategic alliances and promotions in arts fairs and events, NAC helps Singapore artists go as far as they can go.



Clockwise from left: Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Jatinder Singh Bedi, Singapore Season; Reading by Edwin Thumboo, Singapore Season; Hawk Suburbia Lawn by Vincent Leow, Venice Biennale; Singapore Season outreach performance by PA Talents

OVERSEAS VENTURES

In FY 2007, the highlight of our internationalisation efforts was the staging of the second edition of the Singapore Season. The Singapore Season is cultural diplomacy at work, showcasing Singapore as a global city, and simultaneously, building bridges to people living in key global cities elsewhere. Following the success of the first Singapore Season in London in 2005, the second edition was staged in Beijing and Shanghai from 12 October to 10 November 2007. Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong is the Patron of the Singapore Season.

The Season in China was a multi-agency effort led by the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, and NAC. It was built around 30 arts events, and a business and lifestyle component featuring seminars and exhibitions by Singapore's economic and financial agencies and institutions.

The arts showcase comprised 20 performances by 10 arts companies, five literary arts events, three visual arts exhibitions as well as two talks held in conjunction with the exhibitions. In all, over 300 artists, performers, creative professionals and production crew were involved. Arts companies included the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Singapore Dance Theatre and Drama Box. Exhibitions showcased works of Chen Wen Hsi, Goh Beng Kwan, Wong Keen, Vincent Leow and Chua Soo Bin. Singapore literature was presented by an 11-member

delegation of English, Chinese and Malay luminaries – Wong Yoon Wah, Edwin Thumboo, Wong Meng Voon, Dan Ying, Yeng Pway Ngon, Chua Chee Lay, Xi Ni Er, You Jin, Isa Kamari, Lim Denan and Han Han. Outreach programmes featured pop singer J J Lin, People's Association Talents, Wicked Aura Batucada and The Nuradee Brothers.

The Season was presented in conjunction with two major arts festivals in China, the Beijing Music Festival and China Shanghai International Arts Festival. Singapore was the first Asian country to be presented as the "Guest Nation" under the Culture Week of the Shanghai Festival.

The Season achieved success on many levels. It gave Singapore artists unprecedented exposure in China's two most important cities, Beijing and Shanghai. Almost 80,000 people attended the various arts programmes. The Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Singapore Dance Theatre played to near full houses. On average, performances enjoyed an 84 per cent house. The literary arts events attracted full attendance at the Shanghai Library, while the three art exhibitions drew over 20,000 visitors. In addition, several arts groups such as the two national orchestras and Singapore Dance Theatre took the opportunity to stage performances in other Chinese cities during the same period.

The Season also helped to deepen artistic exchanges between Singapore and China. It catalysed a collaboration between the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center and Singapore's



Just Dharma by Jason Lim, Venice Biennale

Drama Box leading to the world premiere of *Drift*. In visual arts, the Singapore Art Museum and National Arts Museum of China presented the exhibition, *Encounters and Journeys: Singapore Artists*.

The Singapore Season in China is a prime example of the potential for the arts to raise Singapore's profile abroad. It enhances Singapore's reputation as a global arts city and as a creative and dynamic place to live, work and play.

The other major overseas showcase of Singapore talent was at the 2007 Venice Biennale, the oldest and arguably the most prestigious arts event in the world. Singapore's offering, entitled *Figments, Fictions and Fantasies*, was curated by Lindy Poh and featured the works of four artists: performance artist, Da Wu Tang; multimedia artist, Vincent Leow; ceramicist, Jason Lim; and sonic artist, Zulkifl Mahmod. These four were chosen to represent the beginnings of contemporary Singapore art in different fields.

The site-specific works of the four artists were installed in the Singapore Pavilion, sited in the 15th century Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti, a beautifully restored neo-gothic palace alongside the Grand Canal. This was Singapore's fourth showing at the Venice Biennale. The Singapore Pavilion provided excellent exposure for our artists, and was a showcase of the diverse and exciting contemporary arts scene in Singapore. The Pavilion received almost 50,000 visitors between June and November 2007, one of the highest for a country pavilion outside the main exhibition area.



The Necessary Stage performing *Good People in Malaysia*

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Our Singapore artists continued to enjoy an increasingly higher profile by clinching top awards in competitions around the world. In FY 2007, Gabriel Ng became the first Singaporean violinist to be awarded the Grand Prize at the XIV Andrea Postacchini International Violin Competition in Italy. He also won the first prize in the intermediate category at the competition. Abigail Sin topped the Junior category in the Viardo International Piano Competition in USA, while Darren Ang took home the Grand Prize, Audience Prize and Best Conductor award in the 50th Besancon International Competition for Young Conductors in France.

Damon Chua won the Best World Premiere Play for Film Chinois at the Los Angeles Stage Alliance Ovation Award 2007 in the United States. The Ovation Award is the only peer-judged and highest-profile award for professional theatre in Los Angeles.

The International Photography Awards 2007 held in USA saw six Singapore photographers win prizes in different categories like sports, fine arts, special effects and advertising. Stan Wong emerged first prize winner in the Professional Photographer (Special Effects) category amidst tough competition from internationally acclaimed photographers.

GLOBAL PRESENCE

Singapore artists and arts companies were supported by NAC to showcase in key international arts and cultural events throughout the year. Such participation enables them to establish collaborations and opportunities with the international arts community.

On the literary front, Singapore writers had active exposure at major festivals overseas. Poets Catherine Lim and Cyril Wong took part in the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, while Toh Hsien Min, Yong Shu Hoong, Heng Siok Tian and Yeow Kai Chai, were featured in the Ars Interpres Poetry



From left: Maya Dance Theatre, Adelaide Fringe Festival; Billy Koh (right), panel speaker at MIDEMNET

Festival in Sweden. Alvin Pang became the first international guest at the Big Sky Writers Festival and Sprung Writers Festival in Western Australia. Yong Shu Hoong attended the British Council's 30th Cambridge Seminar on Contemporary Literature at Cambridge University.

The Singapore Dance Theatre performed at the Tianjin Grand Theatre as part of its China Tour 2007. The Arts Fission Company collaborated with TranzDanz Contemporary Dance Company of Hungary in a performance, Ghost Exchange Series I and II. It was staged in both Singapore and Hungary. Newly-formed Maya Dance Theatre collaborated with Indonesian dancer-choreographers on Atma, which debuted at the 5th International Arts Festival in Bali. Fourteen dancers from the Youth Dance Team Singapore represented the country at the 10th Seoul International Youth Dance Festival in Korea.

The Singapore Chinese Orchestra performed in the Macau International Music Festival, as well as in Guangzhou, Zhongshan and Shenzhen in China.

Drama group The Theatre Practice was invited by Black Tent Theatre (Japan) to collaborate on the TOSCA PROJECT, along with PETA from The Philippines. The production was staged in Tokyo and Singapore. Playwright Lin Yi-Sheng represented Singapore at World Interplay, the largest international festival of young playwrights in the world. Playwright Haresh Sharma's piece, Eclipse, premiered at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh and subsequently toured to various theatres in Scotland including the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow.

Kok Heng Luen, Artistic Director of Drama Box was in Hong Kong in July 2007 to present a paper at the 6th World Congress of the International Drama, Theatre and Education Association and to speak at the World Creativity Summit.

Singapore visual artists like Ana Prvacki, Sherman Ong, Paul Lincoln and Francis Ng participated in well-known international exhibitions, workshops and symposiums.

ARTS MARKETS AND FAIRS

International arts markets and fairs provide another important platform for Singapore arts to reach out to the world. NAC along with the Media Development Authority and IE Singapore presented the Singapore Pavilion at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2007. This was NAC's first foray at presenting Singapore literature in a major book fair. NAC met publishers, literary agencies and literary organisations at the fair and promoted Singapore literature by distributing a book on Singapore writers and their writings called Literature in Singapore.

NAC supported the Singapore Pavilion at MIDEM, the world's largest music trade fair held in Cannes, France in January 2008. The Singapore delegation included 11 Singapore music companies. Billy Koh, Singapore's leading music producer and founder of Ocean Butterflies Holdings, was a panel speaker at the music forum MIDEMNET. A Singapore showcase was also presented at MIDEM featuring Corrinne May and Andrew Lum & New Asia.

In February 2008, NAC took part in the 8th Australian Performing Arts Market which was held at the same time as the Adelaide Fringe. Maya Dance Theatre and Ramesh Meyyappan performed in a double-bill at the Fringe. It was the first time that Singapore artists have taken part in the Adelaide Fringe.

Besides profiling Singapore artists, it is important to lay the groundwork for greater global connectivity. NAC participated in two regional literary festivals, the Kuala Lumpur International Literary Festival in March and the Utan Kayu International Literary Biennale (UKILB) held in Indonesia in August 2007. At both these events, NAC was able to network with the literary community, and learn about the operating and funding models of other festivals and arts councils. NAC also met with young authors and poets from around the region, including Indian poet Sharanya Manivannan, Indonesian publisher and poet Sitok Srengenge,



From left: Renewal of NAC-Arts Victoria MOU; Optical Identity by T'ang Quartet and Theatre Cryptic toured Scotland

and Taiwanese author Lan Po-chou. Sharanya, Sitok and Lan were subsequently invited to take part in the Singapore Writers Festival.

These events will pave the way for greater exposure for Singapore writers. For example, as a result of attending the UKILB, the Jakarta Arts Council and the organising committee of the UKILB have asked for a list of authors who write in Malay. Separate discussions are underway regarding the translation of Singapore works.

CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Assisting the effort to promote Singapore artists on the global stage is the forging of international alliances. FY 2007 was fruitful in that regard. In June 2007, NAC and the Scottish Arts Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to encourage artistic development, collaboration and exchange. This MOU paved the way for storyteller Roger Jenkins to perform *Croc Doesn't Eat Chicken* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2007. In the same month, NAC signed a fresh three-year agreement with the National Council for Culture and Arts of the United Mexican States.

One of the most active and longstanding alliances that NAC has entered was reaffirmed, with the renewal of the NAC-Arts Victoria MOU in Melbourne in November 2007 for another five years. Among the MOU initiatives is *And the Difference Is*, a group exhibition involving artists from Victoria and Singapore, presented by the Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces. The exhibition will be presented in Singapore in end 2008 and return to Melbourne in March 2009.

At the regional level, NAC worked with organisations close to home to build arts capabilities of practitioners and strengthen cultural relations. The Council nominated two Singapore artists, Vivienne Koh and Nicholas Li, to participate in the ASEAN Design and Technical Theater Workshop in Manila in April 2007. NAC also represented Singapore in manpower development programmes in the culture sector, including the ASEAN Working Group on Human Resource Development in Kuala Lumpur in March 2007 and the Next Generation Leader's Program for Southeast Asia Region in Korea in April 2007.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

Singapore is the main focus project coordinator and secretariat for the Asian Chapter of the International Federation of Arts Councils & Cultural Agencies, which is headed by Chief Executive Officer of NAC, Lee Suan Hiang. In FY 2007, Singapore initiated the *Handbook on Arts Funding Policies in Asia* which aims to provide a platform for mutual learning and sharing of best practices for improving arts funding policies.

Our efforts in promoting Singapore as an ideal place for international arts events and meetings are showing results. Singapore will host the International Symposium on Electronic Art 2008, Singapore International Band Festival 2008 and the Genée International Ballet Competition 2009.



GOING THE EXTRA MILE

As the torchbearer for the arts, NAC recognises the importance of building a world-class organisation where the systems and processes are highly efficient and integrated, and where its staff will be able to maximise their potential and realise their aspirations. NAC constantly revitalises itself, empowers its team of professional and creative staff, and provides a stimulating environment for them to go the extra mile in promoting the arts.



From top: A day out at Drama Centre; Having fun at the bowling alley

ORGANISATION EXCELLENCE

To realise its vision of Singapore as a global arts city, NAC needs to be a dynamic organisation, staffed by talented people who are engaged in their work, receive quality training and are proactively able to contribute to the success of the organisation.

In February 2008, NAC was awarded the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) certification by Spring Singapore in recognition of its overall organisation excellence.

During the year, NAC geared itself up for the certification. The journey not only created opportunities for greater bonding among the staff, it further streamlined business processes and ensured alignment to our strategic thrusts. Staff were also encouraged to participate in PS21 innovation initiatives such as the Staff Suggestion Scheme and Work improvement Teams in NAC. For two years running, NAC has submitted the highest average number of suggestions within the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts.

Organisation excellence requires an organisation to cultivate and develop its people. NAC aims to be a choice employer that is able to hire and retain the best. The re-certification of NAC as a People Developer Award organisation for the third time is a recognition of our commitment in attracting, developing and retaining human capital.

In the year under review, our investment on people development was about \$390,000, which translates to more than eight days of learning and development opportunities for each officer.

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

New employees naturally need a period of guidance before they can perform their roles effectively. To shorten the learning curve, the NAC's Arts Administration Modular Programme was re-designed into an Arts Foundation Course. This allowed us to induct new officers and equip them with the basic knowledge about arts administration within a shorter timeframe.

Ongoing training was also conducted for our employees. For example, our theatre crew attended a two-day workshop on Theatre Risk Assessment and Working At Heights to enhance their technical expertise. A core learning programme titled "Managing The Purchasing Function" was organised to help all staff acquire an in-depth understanding of the procurement framework. This was part of our effort to improve corporate governance within the organisation.

We strengthened the link between pay and performance by devising a more rigorous and objective performance management system with clear links between organisational goals and individual work plans. This system will be implemented in the next financial year.

Our staff continued to excel in their performance. Koh Pek Hoon, Deputy Director of Corporate Communications & International Relations, received the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) in recognition of her dedicated service; while Mona Tan from the Audience Development Division and Cindy Tan from Victoria Theatre won the National Level Excellent Service Award for their outstanding service. NAC also presented 15 other deserving staff with NAC Long Service Awards.

Staff work best in a congenial work environment. To help staff balance work and family demands, a telecommuting scheme was launched. We also organised a Family Day for our staff and their families to come together for fun and games at the Drama Centre.

A new platform for staff engagement called Smile@NAC (Sharing Moments In A Learning Environment at NAC) was piloted. This one-hour programme focused on the creation of interest groups, sharing activities and educational visits.

NAC promoted numerous workplace health programmes to ensure the physical wellness of employees. These included free health screenings and fitness assessments, stress management and ergonomics workshops, pilates and body combat exercises, an inline skating clinic, and a friendly bowling competition.

TECHNOLOGY SMART

In achieving organisation excellence, NAC has also leveraged on technology. In December 2007, NAC launched the Incentive Management System which streamlines and integrates the processes of all grant applications and administration. Information is maintained in a consolidated database for grant administrators to research and analyse. The system makes grant applications much more convenient as applicants can now submit online.

NAC also uses technology to help our staff do their work more efficiently. All staff are equipped with laptops. In addition, senior management has been given mobile email. This allows our staff to stay connected to the office or work from any location.

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

NAC recognises the media as an important partner to help publicise its work and raise the profile of the arts. To establish a strong relationship with the media, regular press briefings, luncheons and networking sessions were held by the Corporate Communications Department to update media on its development strategies and initiatives for the arts sector.

In FY 2007, NAC received substantial media coverage for its major programmes such as the Singapore Arts Festival, Singapore Art Show and Singapore Writers Festival, generating buzz and public awareness of these events. Initiatives to develop and promote arts education and outreach, international relations, arts sponsorship, training and capabilities building, and arts awards also gained considerable media visibility throughout the year.

During the Singapore Arts Festival 2007, NAC hosted a journalist visit programme for 23 overseas print and broadcast journalists from eight countries and regions. They provided positive reports on the Festival and Singapore's vibrant arts scene.

In order to invigorate corporate branding, NAC updated its corporate identity manual to reflect a refreshed and progressive organisation. NAC also played host to visiting delegations from overseas cultural institutions who are keen on exchanging knowledge and learning more about arts development in Singapore.



From top: Sharing ideas at a strategic planning exercise; Visit by Memphis delegation

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Transforming Singapore is a long-term project that requires strategic planning, in-depth research and the formulation of appropriate policies. In FY 2007, the Planning and Research Department worked with MICA to develop plans for the third phase of the Renaissance City Plan to transform Singapore into a global arts city. Going forward, there will be new programmes to develop distinctive arts content, nurture critical arts intermediaries and seed community engagement in the arts. NAC will receive \$80 million in funding over the next five years, or \$16 million per year, to support both existing and new initiatives.

To facilitate strategy and programme development, NAC conducts surveys. NAC provided data on the vibrancy of the arts scene and the size of arts audiences for the Singapore Yearbook of Statistics. We also produced statistical analyses on trends in the arts sector and a statistical pamphlet listing key arts indicators.

In addition, an audience survey was conducted for the Singapore Writers Festival 2007 to collect important insights into our audience and their response to the Festival. The information will help us to improve the Festival and other large-scale arts events.

A grant review exercise was undertaken to identify gaps in the provision of financial assistance to the arts community, as well as ways to improve the grant application process. As a result of the review, NAC put in place clear and transparent assessment criteria, added a new online application system and planned to launch a new Community Participation Grant in April 2008.



Photo Credit: Malay Heritage Centre

Clockwise from left: Singapore Arts Festival Opening at the Padang; Viewing artworks at the Singapore Art Show; Sri Warisan Som Said Performing Arts performers; Singapore Dance Theatre, Singapore Season

HIGHLIGHTS OF FY 2007/08

APRIL 2007

- Singapore artists Vivienne Koh and Nicholas Li participated in the ASEAN Design and Technical Theater Workshop, 8 to 22 April, in Manila, The Philippines.
- NAC represented Singapore in the Next Generation Leader's Program for Southeast Asia Region from 24 April to 1 May in the Republic of Korea.

MAY 2007

- The 30th anniversary of the Singapore Arts Festival opened with an outdoor aerial performance at The Padang. Held from 25 May to 24 June, the Festival attracted over 700,000 people.

JUNE 2007

- A Memorandum of Understanding was renewed with the Scottish Arts Council and a strategic alliance was inked between the Singapore Arts Festival and the Edinburgh International Festival on 4 June.

- On 7 June, NAC announced the appointment of Fumio Nanjo as the Artistic Director of Singapore Biennale 2008 and the curators, Matthew Ngui and Joselina Cruz.
- Four Singapore artists participated in the 52nd Venice Biennale from 10 June to 21 November.
- North East District Arts Festival, under the NAC-PA MOU, presented a showcase of dance groups and a dance competition from 15 to 17 June.
- South West District Arts Festival, under the NAC-PA MOU, was held from 23 June to 21 July. Highlights included a dance competition, launch of a South West Fun Dance, and lunchtime concerts.
- NAC entered a new three-year agreement with Mexico's National Council for Culture and Arts on 29 June, to further promote artistic exchanges and closer cultural relations between the two countries.



Clockwise from left: Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award recipients; Singapore Season in China; Gail Simone (holding book) at the Singapore Writers Festival; NAC-ExxonMobil Concert-in-the-Park; A young winner performing at the National Piano & Violin Competition; Family Funfest at HDB Hub, Singapore Arts Festival

JULY 2007

- NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park – *the Garden Party*, in conjunction with National Day Celebrations on 29 July.

AUGUST 2007

- Singapore Art Show 2007 attracted 616,500 visitors to its events from 2 August to 8 October. Launch of the inaugural International Artist Residency Prize which provides a grant of up to \$50,000.
- Eight primary schools received the 2007 National Arts Education Awards on 14 August. Haig Girls' became the first primary school to win a gold award.
- South East District Arts Festival, under the NAC-PA MOU, presented "Eastern Charm", a showcase of artistic talents of various genres from 17 August to 2 September.
- NAC awarded a total of 85 scholarships and bursaries worth \$1.2 million at the Creative Industries Scholarships Ceremony on 28 August.

SEPTEMBER 2007

- NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park – *the Kids Party* on 2 September.

OCTOBER 2007

- The Patron of the Arts Award was given to 265 individual and corporate sponsors on 2 October for contributing a total of \$33.5 million to the arts.
- NAC participated for the first time in the Frankfurt Book Fair from 10 to 14 October.
- The Singapore Season in China, held from 12 October to 10 November, presented an arts showcase comprising 20 performances by 10 arts companies, five literary arts events, three visual arts exhibitions as well as two talks.
- At the 2007 Arts Awards Ceremony on 19 October, Isa Kamari (Literature) and Eric Khoo (Film) were conferred the Cultural Medallion by President S R Nathan. Five promising artists received the Young Artist Award.



Photo Credit: Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation

Clockwise from left: Launch of Noise Singapore; Shuqun Primary School, a participating school in the Arts Education Programme; Apsaras Arts, adopted under the APB Foundation Inspire Programme; Takashimaya-NAC Scholarship recipient, Yap Kun Rong; Launch of the Singapore Arts Festival 30th anniversary publication

- North West District Arts Festival, under the NAC-PA MOU, was held from 28 October to 31 December. Highlights included the opening at Lebaran@Utara to celebrate Hari Raya, Vasantha Oli Deepavali Celebrations, and North West Countdown 2008 fireworks.

NOVEMBER 2007

- Central Singapore District Arts Festival, themed *It's All About You!* was held from 2 to 30 November, under the NAC-PA MOU.
- NAC renewed its MOU with Australia's Arts Victoria on 23 November, marking the 10th anniversary of cultural ties between Singapore and Australia.
- Launch of Singapore Arts Festival 30th anniversary commemorative publication *Making Visible the Invisible: Three Decades of the Singapore Arts Festival* on 27 November.

DECEMBER 2007

- Held from 1 to 9 December, the Singapore Writers Festival showcased more than 100 Singapore and overseas writers, and attracted over 20,000 attendees.
- The Golden Point Award was presented to 24 writers on 5 December for their winning short story and poetry entries in English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil.
- The 10th anniversary edition of the National Piano & Violin Competition was held from 5 to 15 December. The top violinist prize went to Cao Qi while the top pianist was Wang Haijie.
- NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park – *the Power Party* on 8 December.
- Noise Singapore 2007 Festival Showcase, held from 8 to 31 December, showcased some 1,500 music, photography and art and design works that had been short-listed from over 6,000 submissions by youths.



Clockwise from left: Haig Girls' School, National Arts Education Award (Gold) recipient; South East District Arts Festival; Sonic Dome by Zulkifle Mahmud, Venice Biennale; NAC Arts Professional Scholarship recipients; Central Singapore District Arts Festival; NAC at the Frankfurt Book Fair

JANUARY 2008

- NAC and COMPASS with support from IE Singapore jointly organised the Singapore Pavilion in MIDEM, the world's largest music trade fair in Cannes, France. Eleven music companies were showcased from 27 to 31 January.

FEBRUARY 2008

- NAC CEO Lee Suan Hiang was appointed as Interim President of LASALLE College of the Arts on 4 February.
- Digital artist Yap Kun Rong received the 2007 Takashimaya-NAC Scholarship on 21 February.
- NAC received a cheque of \$450,000 from Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation at the launch ceremony of the APB Foundation Inspire Programme on 20 February. The Programme provides funding to five adopted arts groups for three years.

- NAC participated in the Adelaide Performing Arts Market from 25 to 29 February to promote Singapore arts companies and artists.

MARCH 2008

- On 26 March, NAC announced the participating artists, programmes and exhibition sites for the Singapore Biennale 2008.
- NAC-ExxonMobil Concert in the Park – *World Drums & Percussions* on 30 March.