



Renaissance City Plan III
Arts Development Plan

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Raw Canvas by Jane Lee, Singapore Biennale 2008 © National Arts Council



FOREWORD

Friends and visitors coming back to Singapore after a decade or so are often pleasantly surprised by the dramatic changes in our skyline and shoreline. When they venture into the heart of the city, they are even more amazed by the vast array of arts and entertainment activities before them. From what was perceived as a cultural desert, Singapore has now transformed itself into a culturally vibrant city. This did not happen by chance.

Eight years ago, the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts launched the Renaissance City Plan (RCP). The plan, which has since undergone two phases (RCP I from 2000–04 and RCP II from 2005–07), articulated the vision of Singapore as a global arts city. The National Arts Council (NAC), as the agency responsible for arts development in Singapore, was given the responsibility of making the vision a reality. Consequently, NAC intensified its efforts to nurture the arts and audiences and launched many new initiatives. As a result, the number of arts activities shot up dramatically; more flocked to arts events; and Singapore arts and artists began to attract international attention.

While there is cause for us to celebrate our achievements, we must set our sights farther afield at the same time. The journey is never-ending because there are always new fields to conquer as we cross a particular milestone. We have laid a good foundation in terms of physical infrastructure, financial assistance and capability development programmes. Opportunities for further advancement of the arts ecosystem abound. Singapore is maturing as a more confident and cosmopolitan global city, with a population that is acquiring a more discerning and sophisticated taste for the arts. Beyond Singapore, there is a resurgent wave of economic growth in Asia and global interest in Asian culture. The stage is set for us to take our thriving arts scene to a higher plane.

To sustain the momentum gathered, RCP III (2008–12) has just been launched. In tandem with this, NAC has developed the Arts Development Plan. The plan takes into account happenings in the international arts scene, as well as views from the local arts community, academia, private sector and government. (Annex 1)

This publication highlights the main thrusts and key initiatives in the Arts Development Plan. The plan aims to usher in the “golden” phase of the arts by harnessing our rich multi-ethnic arts and cultural heritage to produce distinctive works of art that capture the imagination of the arts world. Anchored by the belief that the arts should not be a luxury for an exclusive minority, the plan also seeks to make the arts an integral part of the lives of all Singaporeans.

An exciting future beckons us. Let us all join in to nurture and grow the arts, making Singapore a place we are proud to call home and one that continues to wow friends and visitors alike.



Edmund Cheng
Chairman
National Arts Council



Water Fools, Singapore Arts Festival 2008 © National Arts Council

ARTS DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

VISION	GOALS	STRATEGIES	SUB-STRATEGIES	KEY PROGRAMMES	
Singapore as a Distinctive, Global City for the Arts (Chapter 2)	Excellence	Driving Content Creation and Distribution (Chapter 3)	(A) Promote Excellence and Innovation in New Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants Arts Creation Fund 	
			(B) Strengthen and Leverage Cultural Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Arts Programme 	
			(C) Develop a Range of Players in the Arts Ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Grant Support for Intermediaries 	
			(D) Develop and Support Platforms to Showcase Quality Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Arts Platforms 	
		Facilitating Internationalisation and Enhancing Global Connectivity (Chapter 4)	(A) Promote International Showcases and Exchanges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Development Grants Singapore Showcases at Major International Arts Events Cultural Exports Programme 	
			(B) Reinforce Singapore's Image as an Arts Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singapore Season Staging of Key International Arts Events in Singapore 	
			(C) Forge Close Linkages Among Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Exchange Programmes and International Arts Organisations 	
		Ecosystem Support	Nurturing Talent, Developing Capabilities (Chapter 5)	(A) Discover Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Arts Competitions Young Talent Programmes
				(B) Groom Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Grants Scholarships & Bursaries Specialised Arts Training GREAT Initiative
	(C) Enhance Professional Competencies			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Grants Creative Industries Workforce Skills Qualifications Framework 	
	(D) Recognise Talent			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Awards 	
	Developing Arts and Information Resources (Chapter 6)		Arts Resources (A) Spark Artistic and Commercial Synergies (B) Enhance Property Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Housing Scheme 	
			Information Resources (A) Facilitate Access to Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological Platforms for Knowledge Management 	
	Engagement		Engaging Communities (Chapter 7)	(A) ArtReach Enhance Broad-based Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Arts Festivals Arts Everywhere Community Participation Grant
		(B) ArtLink Link Specific Population Segments to the Arts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver Arts Arts in Health Youth Engagement through Arts (YEA!) 	
		Enthusing Children, Empowering Youth (Chapter 8)	(A) Ensure Quality Programmes and Facilitate Customisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AEP+ 	
			(B) Extend Arts Education to Pre-Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing Up with the Arts 	
			(C) Strengthen Competencies of Artists and Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Opportunities 	
		Advocating the Arts (Chapter 9)	(A) Reinforce Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Research 	
			(B) Promote Arts-Friendly Policies and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Publicity Platforms 	
			(C) Cultivate Arts Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patron of the Arts Award 	

Ascension of Polkadots on the Trees by Yayoi Kusama, Singapore Biennale 2006 © National Arts Council



ARTS FOR THE STATE, STATE OF THE ARTS

“ The old model on which I worked was to create a First World City in a Third World region – clean, green, efficient... These virtues are no longer sufficient. Now we have to be an economically vibrant and exciting city to visit, with top class symphony orchestras, concerts, drama, plays, artists and singers and popular entertainment... We have to develop our high culture – symphony orchestra, ballet, the arts... We must also develop our popular culture – pop singers, TV dramas... This is today’s global village that we have to be a part of...Singapore has got to re-position itself in this world.”

*~ Minister Mentor
Lee Kuan Yew*

[Parliament Speech, 19 April 2005]

Singapore’s dramatic transformation from backwater to industrial economy in one short generation has left an indelible mark on the world’s mind. With the economy growing at a steady pace of 8% a year since Singapore’s independence in 1965, the national income per head has risen more than 40-fold. Little wonder then that Singapore’s economic achievements and agenda often overshadow its cultural aspects of development. And yet, the arts have always been an integral part of Singapore’s national development.

DEVELOPING THE HE-ART OF SINGAPORE

1960s–1980s: Growing Arts for the Community and a Better Quality of Life

In pre-independent Singapore, there was no concerted effort to integrate the multi-ethnic immigrant communities that made up its population. Inter-racial and religious tension culminated in riots in the 1960s. To check this unhealthy state, the government stepped up cultural programmes to strengthen inter-ethnic understanding and enhance nation-building in the early years following independence. Grassroots bodies

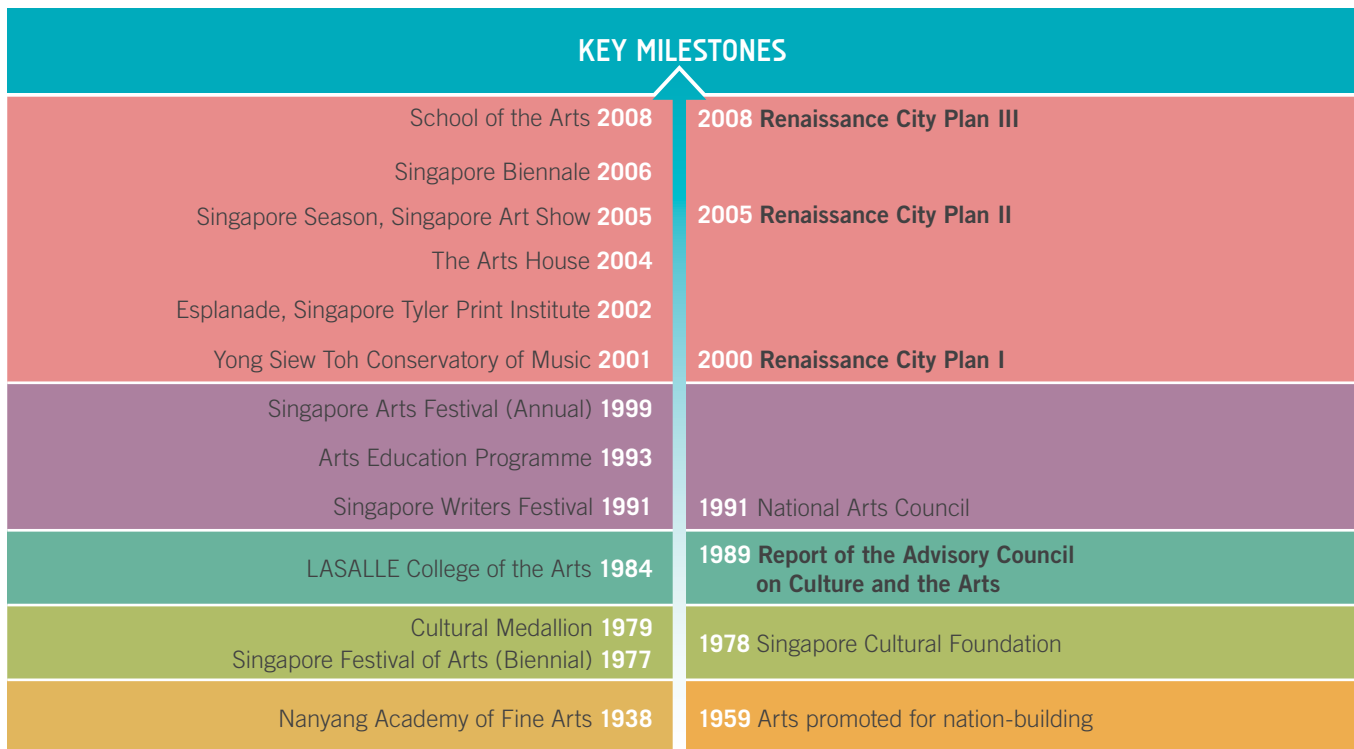
organised numerous activities to showcase the cultures of different ethnic groups. Songs by Singapore composers were promoted to help inculcate “Singaporean values” and develop a sense of national identity. A National Theatre Company comprising the Singapore National Orchestra, Chinese Orchestra, Choir and Dance Company was established.

As the nation climbed the economic development ladder in the 1970s and 1980s, attention turned to nurturing the fine arts and an arts community. The Singapore Festival of Arts was launched; the Singapore Symphony Orchestra was formed; and the Cultural Medallion was instituted to recognise artistic achievements.

1990s–2007: Investing in Cultural Infrastructure, Institutions and Industry

The economic recession in 1985-86 was a timely warning for Singapore to diversify its growth engines. The Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts (ACCA) was formed to study the role that the arts could play in a maturing nation. In 1989, the seminal *Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts* highlighted the indispensable contribution of the arts to the quality of life, a gracious society and economic development. The report recommended that greater investments be made in infrastructure such as arts centres and performing venues. It also called for a dedicated agency to be set up to promote the arts. In 1991, the National Arts Council (NAC) was formed. Key national festivals such as the Singapore Writers Festival and the Singapore Arts Festival were launched. An arts education programme was also initiated to cultivate an interest in the arts from young.

Figure 1-1: Key Milestones in Arts Development



At the turn of the 21st century, unprecedented advances in information and communication technologies and the rise of the economic giants of China and India starkly transformed the global landscape. Singapore reached a watershed — it needed to make the leap from an industrial to an innovation-driven economy, and to change its image from utilitarian workplace to a vibrant place for work-live-and-play. Arts — with their ability to enhance creativity and add buzz — received new attention for their economic role. A Renaissance City Plan (RCP) was thus conceptualised and publicised through the *Renaissance City Report* in 2000. The plan provided for increased investments in building arts and cultural capabilities. These were needed to transform Singapore into a global arts city with strong inter-cultural bonds and a distinct national identity. The plan also

strongly pushed for the nurturing of the creative industries to give Singapore a competitive edge in innovation.

Two phases of the RCP (i.e. RCP I from 2000–04 and RCP II from 2005–07) saw \$91.5 million invested in Singapore's arts and culture “software”.

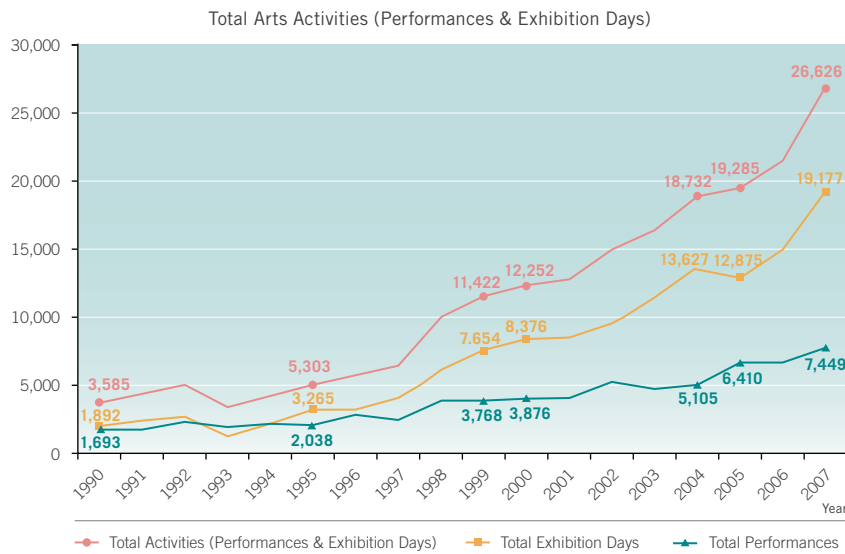
MEASURING THE (HE)ART-BEAT OF SINGAPORE

What is the state of the arts in Singapore today, after the first three decades of evolutionary growth and the subsequent two decades of substantial arts investments? Progress can be seen in four areas — vibrancy of the arts scene, level of excellence, breadth of audience development and national pride.

A Vibrant Arts Scene

In 1990, before the establishment of NAC, there was an average of 10 performances and visual arts exhibitions staged in Singapore daily. Since then, the number has grown by an average of 13% a year. Two distinct stages are evident. From 1990–97, steady increases in both the performing and visual arts sectors led to an overall 9% average annual growth. Subsequently, the pent-up demand after the 1997 financial crisis and the boost from RCP funding saw the arts activity growth rate jump to some 15% a year. Today, Singapore boasts a daily average of 70 performances and visual arts exhibitions that appeal to a diversity of preferences (Figure 1-2).

Figure 1-2: Dramatic Increase in Arts Activities



The growing appetite for the arts has given Singapore impresarios greater confidence in presenting performances and exhibitions by foreign artists and arts groups. This has further fuelled the sharp increase in the number of arts events in Singapore. There has been a five-fold jump in the number of foreign and joint (i.e. foreign and local collaborations) productions in the last 10 years, enhancing the rich flavour of the Singapore arts scene and making Singapore a truly vibrant and cosmopolitan city.

A DISH FOR EVERY PALATE

Singapore's arts scene has acquired a new flavour — diversity in breadth and richness in depth of choices. The number of performing arts productions and exhibitions has more than doubled in the last 10 years.

	1997	2007
Arts Activities	6,600	26,600
Performing Arts Productions	1,290	3,200
<i>Dance Productions</i>	150	450
<i>Music Productions</i>	790	1,860
<i>Theatre Productions</i>	340	620
<i>Others</i>	10	270
Visual Arts Exhibitions	350	800



Dim Sum Dollies in The History of Singapore © Dream Academy Productions, photo courtesy of The Esplanade Co. Ltd.



☒ CHEEK © Cake Theatrical Productions

☒ Tang Quartet © National Arts Council, photo by The Pond Photography

☒ Artwork by Iskandar Jalil © Lawrence Chong, photo courtesy of Art-2 Gallery

☒ The Architecture of Silence, Singapore Arts Festival 2008 © National Arts Council



© The Esplanade Co. Ltd.

Global Excellence in the Arts

A key characteristic of global arts cities is the presence of “world-class” arts venues and events. These help to carve a global artistic niche for the city, which then commands international attention, boosts cultural tourism and creates various economic spin-offs. RCP-initiated investments over the last decade in arts-related places, platforms and people are paying off. The cultural offerings have acquired a certain level of distinction and earned Singapore a growing reputation as an emerging arts city in the region.

Places: Key arts venues such as the Esplanade and Singapore Tyler Print Institute are considered equal in standard to the leading arts centres in other parts of the world. They have successfully attracted major international artists and arts groups to Singapore to perform, exhibit and create.

Platforms: Major events such as the Singapore Arts Festival, Singapore Biennale and the Mosaic Music Festival have been able to attract the participation of the world's best artists and arts groups. These platforms are also used to showcase Singapore's top artistic talent. More importantly, the festivals have built up a loyal domestic and regional following. It is estimated that around 10% of the audiences of these major arts events are visitors to Singapore¹.

People: A significant portion of RCP funds is allocated as direct grants to the arts community to support artistic and professional development. Such financial

assistance from NAC has helped to seed quality projects and developed a group of successful professional arts organisations that can advance artistic practices and engage audiences in Singapore and beyond.

In the last 15 years, Singapore's base of arts companies and societies doubled from 350 to 800. Currently, these arts companies account for more than half of the ticketed performances in Singapore.

Like their economic counterparts, Singapore artists and arts groups do not confine their ambitions to the domestic market. Their high artistic standards

have opened international (stage) doors for them. In 2005, flagship companies like the Singapore Symphony Orchestra toured key venues in the United States, Europe and Asia; and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra performed a specially commissioned work by master composer Michael Nyman at the Barbican Hall as part of the Singapore Season in London. Singapore arts groups (e.g. the T'ang Quartet and Theatreworks) and artists (e.g. Tan Swie Hian and Min Lee) have received numerous invitations to exhibit or perform overseas or have been given prestigious international accolades.

A GLOBAL CITY OF FESTIVALS

In 2007, over 40 performing arts festivals were staged in Singapore. The five most popular performing arts festivals attracted over 1 million people.

Event	Attendance
Singapore Arts Festival	718,500
Huayi: Chinese Festival of Music	120,800
Mosaic Music Festival	94,200
Baybeats — local annual indie music festival	85,200
da:ns Festival	51,800



Beauty World © Wild Rice Ltd., photo courtesy of The Esplanade Co. Ltd.

¹ Estimated from audience surveys captured at various key arts events in 2004–2006.

Broadening Appreciation and Support

Another measure of an arts city is the level of enthusiasm with which the city's population embraces the arts. Over the last decade, factors such as rising affluence, changing social demographics and arts education initiatives have combined to increase demand for the arts. Besides support for the arts community, RCP funds have been deployed to cultivate greater appreciation of arts and culture. This is done by providing opportunities for all to experience and appreciate quality arts.

As a result, arts participation has trebled within a decade. Today, one in three Singaporeans attends at least one arts event in a year, compared to just one in 10 a decade ago. People are more willing to pay for the arts. The number of ticketed attendance for performances has doubled since the establishment of NAC in 1991 (Figure 1-3).

Interest in the arts has risen among the young. In 1999, one out of every four students had attended an arts event. This has increased to one in every two students² today. This bodes well for future arts development efforts.

Besides new audiences, there are more organisations from the private and people sectors, e.g. education institutions and foundations, playing a more visible and active role in promoting and supporting the arts. In particular, Community Development Councils (CDCs), the People's Association (PA) and schools have all incorporated a stronger arts component into their programmes and activities.

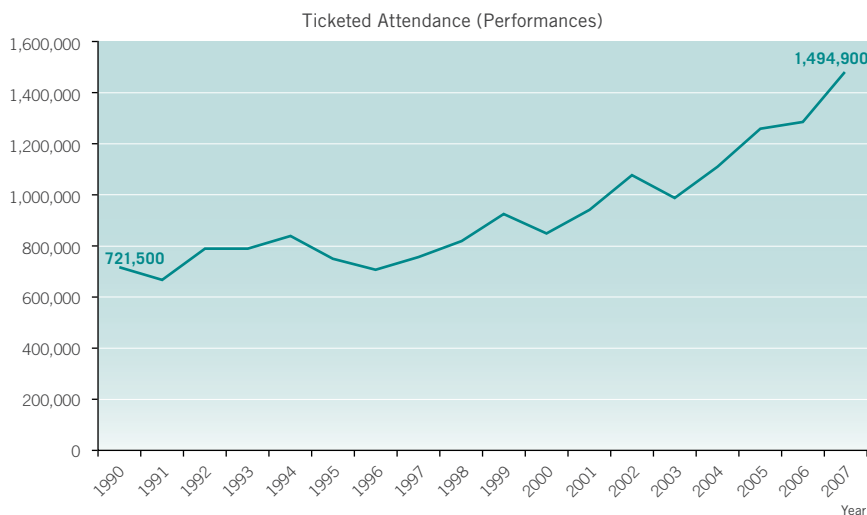
While private and corporate philanthropy has been maintained at a steady level of \$30–\$35 million per annum over the last five years, there is an encouraging trend of more sophisticated support mechanisms. These include co-branding partnerships

like the M1 Fringe Festival (collaboration between mobile telecommunications operator MobileOne (M1) Ltd and arts group The Necessary Stage) and capability development vehicles such as the HSBC Youth Excellence Programme and the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Inspire Programme.

Pride in Arts and Cultural Identity

The pride that Singaporeans take in the vibrancy and excellence of Singapore arts is increasingly evident. For instance, seven out of 10 people in Singapore said that they were proud that Singapore could stage the Singapore Biennale (SB) in 2006. There was also strong agreement that SB 2006 was a good way to enhance Singapore's reputation as an arts and cultural hub. These are important outcomes as studies have shown that collective pride can contribute to cultivating a sense of emotional affinity for and belonging to the nation.

Figure 1-3: Rising Ticketed Attendance



² Students who are 15 years and above.



A Stranger At Home by Drama Box, Singapore Arts Festival 2006 © National Arts Council



Lee Wen, The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

ARTS FOR THE FUTURE, A FUTURE FOR THE ARTS

“ ...to stand out as a truly distinctive global city, Singapore cannot be just an economic marketplace. We must also create a living environment that is the best in Asia – a city rich in culture, that exudes our own Singaporean brand of diversity and vibrancy. ”

*~ Prime Minister
Lee Hsien Loong*

*[Official Opening of the new
Peranakan Museum, 25 April 2008]*

NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Going into the second decade of the 21st century, Singapore will face new challenges. The global economic landscape is expected to be more volatile. Competition for talent, ideas and capital across borders will intensify. Domestically, national identity and “rootedness” have to be fostered in a world of fluid human capital. With their ability to facilitate personal, community and economic development, the arts have a key role to play.

Developing the arts is not without its own set of challenges. Singapore needs to match the significant investments of other countries jostling for cultural significance and cities vying to be the next “It” city. But there will be many more demands on the public purse.

At the same time, there are many opportunities. There is a resurgence of interest in all things Asian, fuelling an increase in intra-region travel. More specifically, in the arts, Singapore has started to make inroads into the international scene. Coming from more affluent family backgrounds and having enjoyed greater exposure, both locally and abroad, younger Singaporeans are more willing to participate and work in the arts.

In short, Singapore has reached an inflection point in its arts development. With the right strategies and programmes, Singapore can address the challenges and build on its strengths to seize the new opportunities presented. Recognising this, NAC embarked on the formulation of an Arts Development Plan. This plan supports the third phase of the RCP (i.e. RCP III from 2008–12) and has been allocated a total of \$16.09 million per year for the next five years.



Urban Dream Capsule, Singapore Arts Festival 2004 © National Arts Council

SINGAPORE'S ARTS VISION

The vision is to develop Singapore into a distinctive, global city for the arts. What does this mean?

DISTINCTIVE

With a rich multi-cultural heritage and the sensibility of a progressive and modern nation, Singapore is well-placed to evolve a unique cultural identity. Distinguishing factors that lend Singapore arts their differentiated and competitive edge include a critical mass of artistic assets rooted in Singapore's multi-ethnic traditions and enhanced by drawing from the diversity of the world, Asia or ASEAN³; a pool of leading arts talent, and a range of iconic arts infrastructure and events.

GLOBAL

As an economy, Singapore has always sought to be globally relevant. This can be achieved through a global arts presence as well as being a global arts destination. As envisioned by RCP III, "Made by Singapore" content will be regularly featured at international platforms, and Singapore will become the choice destination in Asia to create or incubate an original piece of work. Top global creative talent are drawn to Singapore because of its extensive international networks, strong pool of professionals and creative energy. Tourists will be drawn to Singapore to experience the arts.

CITY FOR THE ARTS

"Safe but boring" was once a favourite label for Singapore. A creative and vibrant milieu — created through exciting opportunities for all to experience, create and work in the arts — can enhance liveability and the quality of life. The arts can also provide effective means for Singaporeans to grow in their personal capacities, explore societal issues responsibly and contribute to community bonding. In addition, a city for the arts is one where Singaporeans recognise the multi-faceted value of the arts and take pride in giving to the arts.

Boosting Buzz, Creating Cool - The Ingredients for Global Arts Cities

What defines a global arts city? Simply put, "buzz". There is no fixed formula for creating the buzz. However, there appears to be several essential ingredients that can be distilled from world-renowned arts destinations that attract cultural tourists and arts aficionados from around the world all year round. These can be summarised as 4Ps — Product, Place, People and Patronage.

Product

New York, London and Paris are steeped in history and culture, and have accumulated a wealth of arts and cultural assets. These pull in the tourists. Even a decade ago, around 4.3 million people visiting New York State extended their trip because of the arts¹. Almost one-third of London's West End theatre audience is made up of overseas visitors².

Place

Significant cultural infrastructure is another visitor favourite — for both local and international tourists. Infrastructural investments have revitalised moribund cities and conferred a competitive edge on cities and nations (Guggenheim effect at Bilbao, Angel of the North in Newcastle). Similarly, Asia is wising up. With an estimated 1,000 new museums to be built in China over the next 10 years, China is all set to become the nation of museums.

People

Infrastructure would be largely meaningless without the presentation of artistic work. And there can be no artistic work without the artist. Talent often gravitate to cities with a range of different talent clusters, where there can be dynamic interaction and exchange of ideas and knowledge. In Silicon Valley, informal collaborations, information and ideas outside the workplace are just as important as the interactions that happen at work. Global arts cities often have a range of clusters located in different neighbourhoods, co-existing and feeding off each other creatively. For example, New York has its Greenwich Village, SoHo, TriBeCa and Broadway; and London has its Covent Garden and West End. In Singapore, creative enclaves such as The Old School at Mount Emily, Wessex Estate, Chip Bee Gardens and Little India have mushroomed recently.

Patronage

People in global arts cities embrace and passionately support the arts — as audience, buyer or patron. Patronage or private giving is the lifeblood of thriving arts cities like New York, London and Tokyo. Approximately 40% of the operating income of New York City's non-profit cultural organisations come from private sources³; while up to 70% of firms in Japan participate in some form of corporate patronage of the arts⁴.

¹ Alliance for the Arts (1997). *The Economic Impact of the Arts on New York City and New York State*, pp31

² <http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/performingarts.pdf>

³ Alliance for the Arts (2001). *Who Pays for the Arts? Income for the Nonprofit Cultural Industry in New York City*

⁴ <http://www.bunka.go.jp/english/>

³ Association of Southeast Asian Nations

FROM VISION TO OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

Realising Singapore’s vision requires NAC to translate the attributes of a global arts city into concrete goals and to adopt a holistic framework to guide the development of effective strategies and programmes.

The attributes of a global arts city translate into two key goals — Excellence and Engagement. In concrete terms, it means that:

- For Singapore arts to stand out among global arts capitals such as New York, London, Sydney, Melbourne and Barcelona, there must be a high level of **Excellence**, be it in cultural products, place or people.
- For Singapore to be a city for the arts, the arts must be an integral part of the lives of Singaporeans. There must be a deep level of **Engagement**, be it among producers, consumers or supporters.

Figure 2-1 shows how the vision and goals are further cascaded down to strategic outcomes.

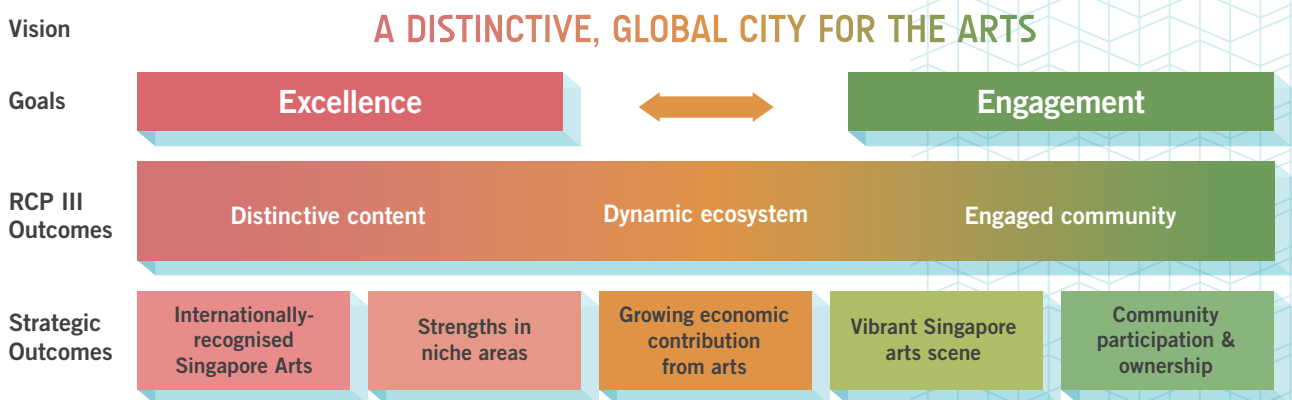
The next seven chapters elaborate how the Arts Development Plan aims to achieve these strategic outcomes through the following strategies:

- Driving Content Creation and Distribution
- Facilitating Internationalisation and Enhancing Global Connectivity
- Nurturing Talent, Developing Capabilities
- Developing Arts and Information Resources
- Engaging Communities
- Enthusing Children, Empowering Youth
- Advocating the Arts



Singapore Dance Theatre, Singapore Season 2007 © National Arts Council, photo by Melinda Ng

Figure 2-1: Strategic Framework for the Arts Development Plan





Geisha by TheatreWorks © National Arts Council

ART WORKS — DRIVING CONTENT CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION

“ We must draw on our diversity of arts talents to create new and inspiring works which will truly reflect our multi-cultural roots.”

~ Minister
Dr Lee Boon Yang

[Parliament Speech, 25 February 2008]

DRIVEN BY CONTENT

The Internet ushered in an era of affordable and easy access to information from any corner of the world. However, with vast oceans of information available, only relevant, updated and distinctive content is able to attract and retain the growing numbers of Internet users. “Content is King” has become a common and enduring mantra.

Content is what lies at the core of the creative industries. The convergence of arts, business and technology, which began in the 1990s, promises many new possibilities and opportunities. But these can only be realised if artists are able to transform their oceans of creative ideas and artistic inspiration into distinctive cultural content, products and services. Artistic and economic value is created only when inspiring works of art or compelling

stories are crafted and appeal to their intended audiences.

Content unique to a nation is integral to cultural identity. Works of art— sometimes described as culture expressed — can be used to transmit values from one generation to another and to tell a nation’s stories to the world.

Given the importance of content — whether as intellectual capital for the creative industries, competitive edge for a global arts city or repository of a nation’s stories and memories — there must be a systematic effort to drive its creation. Since the establishment of NAC, with funding for the first two phases of the RCP, there has been a surge in the number of performances staged and exhibitions held. The five-fold increase in arts activities in 10 years is indicative of the amount of domestic artistic content created. Research done by Frost and Sullivan (2008) found that, in 2007, content producers in the performing arts and visual arts industries generated some \$223 million in revenue.

In the next phase of arts development, the emphasis will move beyond mere creation of content to artistic excellence and innovation. The aim is to build up a strong body of creative innovations and knowledge embodied in artistic content creations such as scripts, music compositions, choreography and art works that are distinctive to Singapore.



Pots, Pipes and Other Pieces by artists at the Jalan Bahar Clay Studio, Singapore Art Show 2007 © National Arts Council

Like all other products and services, the full potential of arts creations can be unleashed only with the existence of appropriate and far-reaching distribution channels. A cluster approach is thus taken by NAC. It designs policies and programmes by considering the entire value chain of interdependent, complementary activities with the potential of generating synergies and new areas of growth. Besides just fostering the production of more content, NAC facilitates the aggregation and distribution of the content.

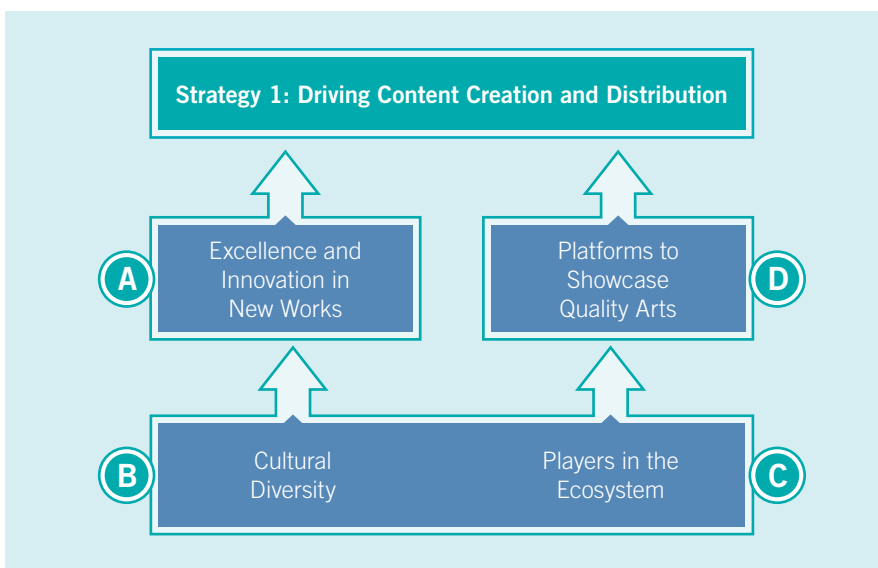
To achieve the overall aim of producing and distributing excellent and distinctive Singapore works, NAC will:

- (A) Promote excellence and innovation in new works
- (B) Strengthen and leverage cultural diversity
- (C) Develop a range of players in the arts ecosystem
- (D) Develop and support platforms to showcase quality arts

A: PROMOTE EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN NEW WORKS

In the past three years, NAC provided financial assistance of over \$12 million annually to artists, arts groups and arts businesses. Most of it was used to support the production and presentation of works of art. The new phase of RCP III funding will help to boost the amount of direct financial assistance available to the arts community. To encourage artists to continue pushing the artistic frontiers, NAC has revised its **grant framework** to provide for **greater emphasis on artistic merit and innovativeness**. New works that contribute significantly to the nation's canon of artistic content (e.g. intellectual property embedded in writings, scripts, compositions, choreography and art works) can expect a higher level of support.

Like scientific research and product development, incubating a new art work often requires huge investments of time, space, money and talent with no guarantee of returns. Under the pressure of time and limited financial resources, new works presented to audiences are often under-developed. In contrast, given adequate resources, distinctive and significant works can be created. For instance, *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress*, originally co-produced by the Esplanade and Singapore Repertory Theatre for the Esplanade's Opening Festival in October 2002, was such a success that it was brought back again in the following year. The third run, planned to coincide with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Annual Meetings in 2006, saw a revamp in the production to make it tighter and more exciting. Collectively, the three stagings of the musical attracted over 100,000 people.



Literary session, *The Straits Times* © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.



To build a regular pipeline of such high-quality and distinctive works, NAC will establish an **Arts Creation Fund**. The fund will help Singapore artists and arts groups create quality new works. It will provide financial support for incubation of the work and facilitate connections to test-beds and showcase platforms. The outcome of this initiative will be a rich legacy of works of arts that are distinctively Singapore or Asian, accessible to Singaporeans, and possess international appeal.



📖 *Rhinoceros*, Singapore Arts Festival 2008 © National Arts Council

📖 *Human Species* by Itchy Hand, Noise Singapore 2007 © National Arts Council

B: STRENGTHEN AND LEVERAGE CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The traditional arts of all nations are a rich resource which can be tapped to inspire the creation of new and distinctive works. For example, Australian art and design are easily recognisable through the incorporation of elements of aboriginal art. Similarly, the highly intricate Javanese batik designs have become well-ingrained in the Javanese cultural life. In this respect, Singapore has been blessed with a population that comprises three main ethnic groups, giving rise to a rich, multi-cultural heritage.

Developing or sustaining strengths in the traditional arts leads to a sense of confidence in Singapore's own cultural identity. It also facilitates the development

of cultural assets that are “uniquely Singapore”. Familiarity in and a facility for the traditional arts — much of which is shared with others in the region, e.g. China and Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia — also reinforce Singapore's credibility as a key contributor to New Asian artistic exchanges and collaborations.

However, the open and cosmopolitan nature of Singapore and its language and education policies have led to a younger generation of Singaporeans who are often more comfortable with English than their “mother tongue” or the vernacular dialects. Thus, practitioners of the traditional art forms worry about the potential threat of cultural discontinuity, citing the erosion of artistic expressions using the traditional arts or vernacular languages, dwindling audiences and lack of leadership succession in key cultural institutions.

Recognising the critical need to preserve and develop the traditional arts to provide the cultural ballast for developing works that are distinctively Singapore or Asian, NAC has established a **Traditional Arts Programme (TAP)**. The key thrust of this programme is to build the artistic foundation and upgrade the professional skills of traditional artists and arts groups to ensure sustainability of traditional arts in Singapore.

Talent development is a key component of TAP (further elaborated in Chapter 5). In addition, emphasis is given to traditional arts projects, especially those that contribute to cultural diversity and Singapore's cultural identity and those that inspire new content. In assessing applications for grants, NAC will give special consideration for the contributions of such projects.

The Importance of Intermediaries

Potential commercial exchanges of art works are not realised for several reasons. On the demand side, these include lack of consumer awareness and certainty in terms of the quality and availability of the art works. On the supply side, artists and arts organisations themselves are not equipped to take advantage of commercial opportunities. Intermediaries perform a critical brokerage function that encourages information flow, communicates the different parties' interest and capabilities more effectively, and leverages their reputation to assure quality. In doing so, they facilitate exchanges in the arts and allow better exploitation of commercial arts opportunities.

C: DEVELOP A RANGE OF PLAYERS IN THE ARTS ECOSYSTEM

A thriving arts ecosystem requires a diversity of dynamic arts players to create, produce and distribute the arts. Over the years, NAC has put in place various programmes and levels of support to meet the needs of different players at different stages of growth. As a result, in 2007, there were close to 800 (an increase of 92% in 10 years) core arts companies (for-profit and non-profit) and societies in Singapore undertaking a range of arts activities. These include staging arts performances, selling art works, providing private arts education and managing industry associations.

In any sector, the demand for government assistance inevitably outstrips the public funds available. The key challenge is therefore to help build capacities within the arts ecosystem that enable the arts industry to be viable and self-sustaining.



ClickArt 2003, photo by Chang Chia Ming

Growing Leaders

NAC launched the **Major Grant Scheme** in 2000 to nurture a pool of leading arts companies. Under the scheme, not-for-profit arts companies that exemplify artistic excellence and professionalism, and that have contributed to the development of the wider arts industry are given financial support on a one-year or two-year basis. In just six years, the scheme has been instrumental in supporting the advancement of arts players in key areas such as audience and organisation development. For example, performing arts companies supported under the scheme from 2000 to 2007 enjoyed a six-fold increase in average audiences reached.

Going forward, NAC will benchmark other countries or cities with best practices in the administration of funds for major arts groups. It will also work towards enhancing support — funding and other areas — to help build stable and thriving arts companies that create and distribute quality art works to audiences as well as generate jobs for the arts community.

Nurturing Intermediaries, Distributors and Supporting Industries

Compared to other leading arts cities, Singapore's arts ecosystem is relatively young. There is a critical need to **develop intermediaries** (e.g. arts managers, agents, producers and curators), arts distributors (e.g. impresarios) and the supporting industries (e.g. technical theatre, arts logistics, arts financing).

In the next phase of arts development, NAC will partner economic agencies, e.g. Economic Development Board (EDB) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB), to promote a favourable business and market environment, and facilitate enterprise development in these critical intermediary, distribution and supporting sectors. Initiatives include:

- Facilitating the expansion of scalable critical intermediaries, distributing and supporting activities through co-funding schemes.
- Helping the arts markets (e.g. visual arts fairs, performing arts markets) in Singapore to develop and establish a regional presence.
- Reviewing tax and regulatory policies that influence arts businesses and markets in Singapore.

D: DEVELOP AND SUPPORT PLATFORMS TO SHOWCASE QUALITY ARTS

New works need appropriate access to the right markets. Major arts platforms such as Singapore Biennale, Singapore Arts Festival, and Singapore Writers Festival which showcase new arts creations to audiences are excellent distribution vehicles. These platforms have acquired a certain level of prestige, and their endorsement of excellence provides the new creations with a higher profile both locally and internationally. They are also Singapore's main congregation points for international "buyers" such as festival directors, curators, museum directors and venue presenters. In the next phase of development, NAC will grow these **national arts platforms** to be leading distributors of arts, with specific expertise in showcasing New Asian arts.

A 50Fifty Chance to Grow

50Fifty is a co-publishing initiative that aims to grow the local publishing industry while supporting the development of quality local literary works. Under this initiative, NAC and selected publishers co-invest in the publication of new local works. In 2007, seven publications were selected to be published under this scheme. These works include *The Lies that Build A Marriage: Stories of the Unsung, Unsaid and Uncelebrated in Singapore* by Suchen Christine Lim; *One Earth* by Isa Kamari; *Dari Stesen ke Stesen* by Rohman Munasip; and *Dendam Berbalas* by Sarifah Yatiman.



ARTSingapore 2007, The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.



Sonic Dome: An Empire Of Thought by Zulkifl Mahmod, 52nd Venice Biennale © National Arts Council

ARTS UNLIMITED — FACILITATING INTERNATIONALISATION AND ENHANCING GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

4

“Rudyard Kipling famously said that ‘East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet’. That was in 1892. Today, we have met and interacted and our interdependence will only continue to grow.”

~ Senior Minister
Goh Chok Tong

[Second Asian Leadership Conference,
21 February 2008]

With a resident population size of only 3.6 million, Singapore has long realised the importance of plugging itself into the international landscape to overcome both resource and market constraints. Businesses in most industries and of all sizes have constantly been encouraged to seize international opportunities to grow and flourish.

Such a global orientation is particularly critical for Singapore’s arts industry, which is relatively young compared to

countries with a much longer history. Being connected to international markets not only enhances our artists’ audience reach, it also enables them to develop artistically and professionally through interaction with foreign arts practitioners and other cultures. An example is Heman Chong, Singapore’s representative at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003. After being profiled at Venice Biennale, he was subsequently invited to exhibit at other key international arts events and art spaces such as the 5th Busan Biennale, South Korea in 2004, and the Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou, China in 2007.

With growing numbers of our artists gaining critical acclaim abroad, world-class artistic talent will be drawn to Singapore to create and collaborate with local artists. This will further add to the vibrancy of the domestic scene and contribute to enlarging the pool of quality arts products to be internationalised. In this way, a virtuous circle of excellence and global recognition is created.



Heman Chong, *The Straits Times* © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

The recent surge of international interest in Asian arts and culture has opened up a window of opportunity for Singapore. Blessed with a natural geographical location between the East and the West, with a population fluent in English and at least one ethnic language, Singapore can position itself as the world's cultural gateway to Asian arts and culture. However, we will be able to seize international mindshare only if we successfully heighten the international visibility of our arts and the branding of our arts scene. To this end, NAC has identified three strategic areas of work:

- (A) Promote international showcases and exchanges
- (B) Reinforce Singapore's image as an arts destination
- (C) Forge close linkages among peers



Andy's Pranks and Swimming Lessons
by Vincent Leow, 2007, Stainless Steel

A: PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASES AND EXCHANGES

NAC facilitates internationalisation in a number of ways. Firstly, its **international development grants** enable artists and arts groups to take up more than 60 international engagements every year. These include international touring or presentations of art works at prestigious arts events or venues; and collaborations with foreign arts groups and artists. An example is Electrico, a local band which already has a strong, growing fan base in Singapore. To advance, Electrico has to tap global markets. With NAC's support, Electrico and The Great Spy Experiment (another upcoming band) participated in the South by Southwest Music Conference and Festival⁴ in Austin, Texas in 2007.

Secondly, **Singapore showcases** organised by NAC at major arts markets, e.g. Marché international de l'édition musicale (MIDEM) and Frankfurt Book Fair, help to bring Singapore's artistic talent, professionals and content to the notice of the world's leading commercial distributors. For instance, Billy Koh, music producer and founder of Ocean Butterflies International (Singapore) was part of the Singapore delegation to MIDEM in 2007. In 2008, he was invited to speak at MIDEMNET, the high-powered music forum. He spoke on the topic "Asian Lessons — Learning from Pan-Asian Live Models". In the same year, Ocean Butterflies International and Ricall, an online business-to-business music licensing service provider in the United Kingdom, formed a joint venture to extend an online music licensing service in Asia.

In the future, there will be a larger pool of quality talent and increasingly sophisticated arts creations available from Singapore. To ensure that practitioners of the various art forms enjoy extensive exposure, NAC will adopt a multi-tiered approach to international profiling. Promotion efforts will be customised for reaching out to:

- Established arts and cultural powerhouses, e.g. London, New York and Shanghai.
- Innovators at the forefront of new arts practices and developments, e.g. Beijing, Gwangju and Berlin.
- Emerging niche players in Southeast Asia, e.g. cities in Indonesia and Vietnam.

The key challenge is the intense competition in the international arts scene. Many countries invest significant amounts to profile their artists. To keep pace, Singapore must undertake promotional efforts and developmental programmes on an increasingly large and concerted scale. To this end, NAC has established a **Cultural Exports Programme** which is characterised by the following:

- Deliberate curation of a collection of Singapore works (e.g. Singapore Dance Collection and Singapore Chinese Writers Showcase).
- Careful selection of works of exceptional quality to tour major overseas arts destinations, venues and events.
- Collaboration with local and international presenters to deliver these quality arts presentations to the foreign audiences. Not only is this approach more cost-effective, it leverages the expertise of international partners in the areas critical to the success of these international showcases — audience preferences, marketing, local networks etc.

⁴ For 20 years, the South by Southwest Music Conference and Festival has been one of the most influential musical events in America – and throughout the world. The festival is the place where record scouts check out bands and make deals. Hence, the event provides a cost-effective way for musicians and bands to connect with press, radio and other music industry players to promote themselves.





Little Toys by Mark Chan and Musicians, Singapore Season 2007 © National Arts Council

Soo Bin's Portraits of Chinese Ink Masters, Singapore Season 2007 © National Arts Council



Mosaic Music Festival © The Esplanade Co. Ltd.

B: REINFORCE SINGAPORE'S IMAGE AS AN ARTS DESTINATION

Singapore is a city known more for efficiency and rapid economic development than creativity and rich culture. To retain home-grown talent and attract global talent, Singapore must now develop a vibrant work-live-play environment as well. Many other countries are also using culture to rebrand themselves. In fact, such rebranding may even be undertaken as a regional effort. For example, the European Union

launched its European Capital of Culture programme to enable designated European cities to showcase their cultural life and development and, in so doing, change their international image. A number of European cities have used this scheme successfully. Glasgow is widely considered to be the scheme's biggest success story. Its bold initiatives and exhilarating year-long programme of arts and culture, coupled with investments in infrastructure, make for an exciting makeover which brings in a huge influx of artists, creative industries and overseas tourists.

Culture Club

During the last decade, cities across the world have competed to attract all kinds of investment. To this end, many cities have placed culture at the heart of their agendas, giving it strategic importance.

- Barcelona's transformation over a number of years has been led by culture.
- The two main strands of Paris' cultural policy are to enhance the reputation of the city as a cultural capital with world-class facilities and to encourage participation in culture by Parisians.
- In Sydney, Cultural Strategic Partnerships have been developed with a number of cultural organisations that can assist the city to realise its "Living City" vision.

Source: International Intelligence on Culture (2001).

A Singaporean innovation is the **Singapore Season**, which is a concerted programming and marketing platform in key global cities. The programmes are carefully chosen to raise the awareness of Singapore as a creative city and to help advance Singapore's cultural, political and economic interests. What constitutes the Season's key achievement as well as its success factor is its effective engagement of the government, private and creative sectors. The daring decision to start with the top-tier cities — London in 2005, and Beijing and Shanghai in 2007 — paid off huge dividends for the artists. The next destination is New York.

As a global arts city, Singapore must be the destination where people come to immerse themselves in the arts, and the city of choice for networking and interaction with people in the arts community. It has gained itself a reputation for works and artistic dialogues that marry the best of both east and west, and which epitomise the New Asian. NAC will build on this foundation by continuing to attract **key international arts events, symposiums and conferences** for staging in Singapore.

C: FORGE CLOSE LINKAGES AMONG PEERS

To plug into the global network of cultural institutions, Singapore **participates actively in cultural exchange programmes and international arts organisations**. In fact, Singaporeans have been elected to the highest office in these bodies, e.g. International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) and Association of Asian Performing Arts Festivals (AAPAF). This is acknowledgement of the significant progress that Singapore has made in arts development. Going forward, these leadership positions will enable Singapore to extend its global influence on the international arts scene.

Some of Singapore's more established arts groups have successfully established connections with their overseas counterparts. However, there are smaller or younger organisations that lack the resources to invest in these connections. To help focus international attention on Singapore's arts, NAC produces publications with information on Singapore's artists and arts groups; and these are distributed at leading international events such as Australian Performing Arts Market, Canada's CINARS (International Exchange for the Performing Arts) and Frankfurt Book Fair.

Reason for the Season

The Singapore Season has two critical strategic roles:

(A) Facilitate Artistic Development through Collaborations

The Season offers a vehicle for co-presentations or co-commissions between Singapore's national events and the host cities' arts events and institutions.

- The 2007 Season in China catalysed a landmark collaboration between two prominent theatre companies — Singapore's Drama Box and the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center. *Drift*, an original Season commission, was produced and staged by creative talent drawn from both China and Singapore.

(B) Profile Singapore's Creative Talent

The Season has been a springboard for arts practitioners to secure further international opportunities in the host countries.

- After their performance in London in 2005, the T'ang Quartet was invited to Ireland's leading music festival, the West Cork Chamber Music Festival; and to the Cheltenham Music Festival, one of the oldest music festivals in Britain and Europe's most prestigious classical musical festival. The group also enjoyed the honour of being broadcast over BBC.
- During the 2007 Singapore Season in China, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra toured Guangzhou, Zhongshan, Macau and Shenzhen; the Singapore Symphony Orchestra staged performances in Hangzhou, Taipei and Tai Chung; and the Singapore Dance Theatre travelled to Tianjin after their Shanghai performance.



The Lord of the Rings Symphony, Singapore Arts Festival 2008 © National Arts Council

NURTURING TALENT, DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES

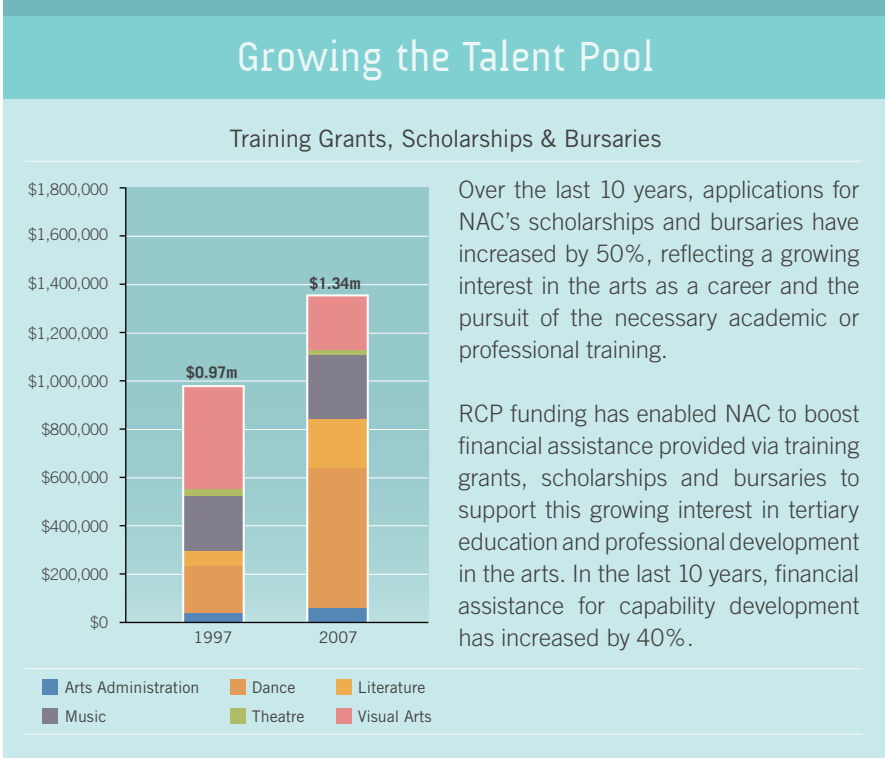
“How many outstanding musicians, artists, directors, dancers and actors can a three-million population produce? We are not like the Israelis, who are already naturally talented, and furthermore draw on a large pool of talented Jews from all over the world, to be artists, musicians and writers. After the Soviet Union collapsed, 600,000 Russian Jews emigrated to Israel. Every Russian immigrant coming off the plane in Tel Aviv carried some musical instrument – either a violin or cello, or perhaps a French horn. Occasionally you would see somebody carrying nothing. He was probably a pianist.”

*~ Then-Prime Minister
Goh Chok Tong
[National Day Rally Speech,
22 August 1999]*

Every thriving arts ecosystem must be supported by a deep and wide talent pool. A big challenge for any nation with a tiny population is to have sufficient talent. This problem is compounded when making a living from the arts is perceived to be less rewarding, and hence not preferred as full-time employment. If the arts sector is to grow — in terms of the heights of excellence that it can reach and its ability to generate revenue and jobs — the immediate challenge for Singapore is to ensure that there is sufficient high-quality talent.

The main mode of manpower development in the overall economy is employment-based training. Specifically, the Skills Development Fund administers incentives for employers to upgrade their workers. However, characteristics peculiar to the arts sector make it difficult to rely on employment-based training programmes to develop the talent base. Firstly, non-profit arts organisations often have limited funds. Frequently, paying for production costs gets first priority; capability development comes a distant second. Secondly, there is a higher than average proportion of freelancers in the arts sector. Such contractual⁵ basis for employment makes it difficult to implement employment-based capability development programmes.

Consequently, over the last 10 years, NAC has put in place generic training grant schemes to help artists develop professionally. However, with a pool of artists who have reached different stages of development and are practising a range of art forms, there must be a number of paradigm shifts in the approach to

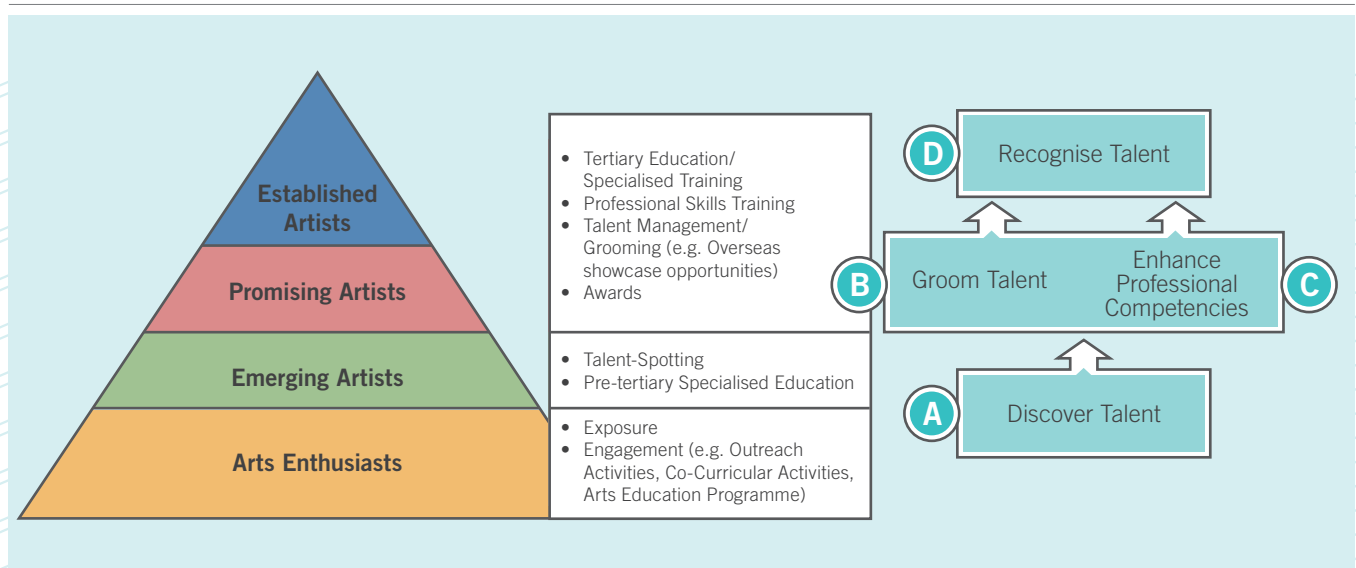


⁵ The rationale for employing freelancers differs within the creative industries. Reasons often cited include the large number of projects which full-timers cannot handle, insufficient projects to sustain full-time employees, and lower employment costs.

capability development:

- Previously, it was a one-size-fits-all approach to capability development, designed with the average artist in mind. Today, there is a need for a comprehensive arts capability development framework, with differentiated assistance to ensure that the full potential of artistic talent is realised and that they become active contributors to the arts community and beyond (See Figure 5-1).
 - Previously, artists applied for assistance for ad-hoc or one-off stints. Today, there needs to be dedicated and seamless capability development programmes to take artists from one phase of growth to the next.
 - Previously, areas of training were largely determined by the artists themselves. Today, there needs to be an additional emphasis on developing a core group of Singapore artists with strengths in niche areas identified under RCP III.
- NAC’s capability development framework focuses on four key areas:
- (A) Discover talent**
 - (B) Groom talent**
 - (C) Enhance professional competencies**
 - (D) Recognise talent**

Figure 5-1: Different Folks, Different Strokes – A Comprehensive Capability Development Framework



Writers, from left: Han Han, Isa Kamari, Dan Ying, Ying Pei An, Wong Yoon Wah, Edwin Thumboo, Wong Meng Voon, Chua Chee Lay, You Jin, Xi Ni Er, Lin Denan © National Arts Council, photo by Wee Khim

A: DISCOVER TALENT

Before artistic talent can be groomed, they must first be discovered. Moreover, discovery should not be left to chance — there should be a conscious effort to facilitate a “pipeline” of emerging talent. A key platform for this is the **national arts competitions**. NAC regularly holds national competitions, such as the National Chinese and Indian Music Competitions, the Golden Point Award, and National Art Exhibition, to spot talented young musicians, writers and artists. These competitions are also useful to these aspiring artists, as they raise their profiles, build their portfolios, and enhance their public performance skills.

Complementing the national competitions are the **young talent programmes** run by arts institutions. Examples are the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) School of Young Talents, Yong Siew Toh Young Artist Programme and the Arts and Music Elective Programmes in schools. These programmes are widely-accessible platforms to identify emerging new artists. In fact, Singapore’s first pre-tertiary arts school — School of the Arts (SOTA) — which started in 2008 is a dedicated pathway for young arts talent.

RCP III funding will allow NAC to enhance talent platforms and ensure that ample opportunities exist for emerging artistic talent in all art forms to showcase their talent and receive opportunities to be

further nurtured. NAC will also explore platforms such as international competitions and festivals which can establish Singapore as a key location for spotting international talent. These help to ensure that our talent are exposed to the best around the world and, in turn, they are noticed by the international community. An example is the Genée International Ballet Competition which is slated to be held in Singapore in 2009. Jointly organised by NAC and the United Kingdom’s Royal Academy of Dance, this competition will firmly turn the world’s spotlight onto Singapore and allow Singapore ballet talent to interact with the best in the international ballet community.



Patron of the Arts Award 2004 © National Arts Council

Ong Hai Rou, National Chinese Music Competition 2006 © National Arts Council

SO-Talented: Inculcating a Love and Nurturing a Flair for the Arts

Established in 2008, the School of the Arts (SOTA) is Singapore’s first national pre-tertiary specialised arts school offering a six-year unique integrated arts and academic curriculum for youth. SOTA offers a dedicated development path for those who have interest and show early talent in the arts, providing a learning environment where both artistic and academic potential can best be realised.

Students are talent-spotted and gain admission through SOTA’s Talent Academy under the Ministry of Education’s Direct School Admission – Secondary Exercise. The primary criterion for acceptance is artistic talent and potential demonstrated through live auditions, personal interviews, or portfolio reviews.

Upon gaining admission, students can look forward to a curriculum that builds meaningful connections between areas of knowledge. Through its integrated approach in the form of the International Baccalaureate programme, students are able to benefit from coaching and mentorship by local and overseas arts experts, as well as multiple exposure platforms through masterclasses, workshops, performances, exhibitions and internships with arts companies and creative businesses.

A school of the future, SOTA embraces a holistic educational philosophy that celebrates experimentation, expression, and discovery.

B: GROOM TALENT

Spotting potential new artistic talent is the first step; the next critical step is to ensure that these talent have every opportunity to develop and excel. Important channels of capability improvement include **training grants, scholarships and bursaries, and specialised arts training.**

Currently, NAC disburses more than \$1 million in training grants, scholarships and bursaries annually. NAC's scholarships and bursaries have produced a good base of arts practitioners. Scholarship recipient Cheah Mei Sing was an ex-dancer with the Singapore Dance Theatre and is now teaching at SOTA. Ricky Sim has set up his own dance studio which offers dance classes, while Chan Yoong Han is currently playing with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Equally, if not more, important is the fact that these practitioners contribute in mentoring, educating and developing others. Seven out of 10 recipients of music scholarships in the early 1990s have remained active contributors to the local arts scene. Many of them are arts educators in schools, helping to raise appreciation of music and groom the next generation of arts lovers and artists.

To groom talent in a concerted and more dedicated manner, NAC will launch the **GRowing Exceptional Arts Talent (GREAT) Initiative**. This initiative is a series of development programmes to groom promising arts talent to become Singapore's cultural leaders with a global influence. Arts professionals (e.g. writers, visual artists, choreographers and composers) who have demonstrated significant potential to create distinctive Singapore artistic intellectual property will be groomed and profiled at international

Mentor Access Programme: Learning from the Masters

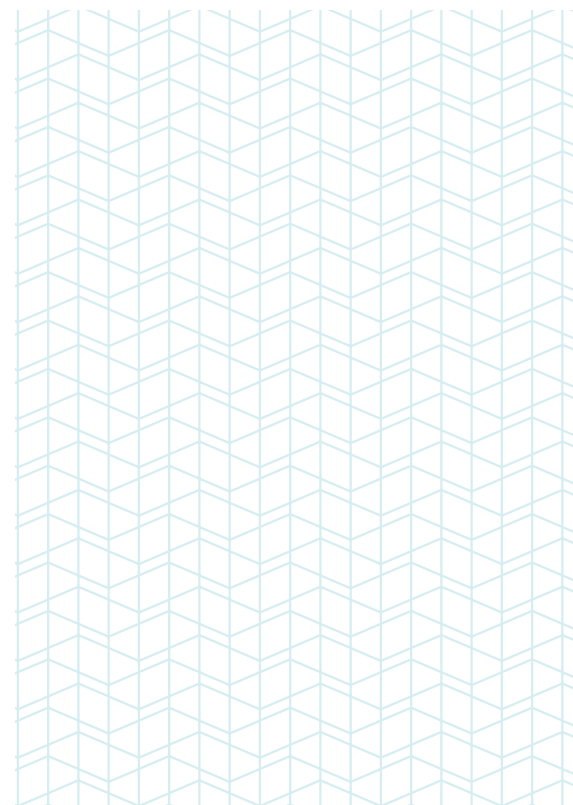
The Mentor Access Programme (MAP) was started in 2000 to groom the next generation of Singapore writers. Nurturing emerging writers and developing their writing skills, it has catalysed the creation of new works. To date, the programme has benefited more than 70 aspiring writers and opened doors for them to work closely with established writers and other industry players.

These mentees have gone on to win writing competitions and present exciting new theatrical productions. Recent achievements include:

- Jacke Chye (currently being mentored by Ovidia Yu) won Theatre Idols, a playwriting competition organised by Action Theatre, with his play, *Catching Adam Cheng*.
- Edgar Liao (currently being mentored by Robert Yeo) won first prize in TheatreWorks' 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2007 in the Open Category with his script, *A STATE of ConsterNATION*.
- Janet Liew (currently being mentored by Lee Tzu Pheng) won second prize for poetry at Golden Point Award 2007.
- Thiam Chin (currently being mentored by Colin Cheong) won second prize in the 2007 LifeStyle-Elephant and Coral Creative Writing Contest with his microfiction entry in response to the theme, "Animal Instinct". He won the third prize of the 2008 LifeStyle-Elephant and Coral Creative Writing Contest in the genre of microfiction based on the theme of "The Great Escape".

platforms. This initiative will be implemented using two approaches:

- Development of a series of Singapore-based residencies, masterclasses, training courses, mentorship programmes and fellowships for artists from around the world to congregate for knowledge exchange and professional arts capability development.
- Securing opportunities and providing support for the talent to participate in leading overseas residencies, fellowships and other dedicated capability development programmes.



International Artist Residency Programme: Scaling New Heights

NAC's International Artist Residency programme aims to position Singapore as a cultural centre and gateway for Asian arts development, bringing arts professionals from Singapore, Asia and beyond together to exchange insights and collaborate. The programme has two elements:

- **Outbound:** Residency providers act as sourcing agents to artists who wish to pursue residencies abroad such as in the United States, Germany and Japan.
- **Inbound:** Residency programmes in Singapore tap on unique local and regional offerings and platforms, to attract foreign artists to participate. Such programmes promote networking, learning and collaborations between Singapore artists and foreign artists.

International residencies have allowed Singapore visual artists, such as Ana Prvacki, to go from strength to strength in their careers. In April 2008, Ana's group show at The Artists Space in New York, was chosen as "Pick of the Week" in *Timeout New York* magazine. Ana also put up a five-day performance as part of The Money Fountain, which included a panel discussion with the public. About 500 visitors came, among whom were internationally-acclaimed artists and critics including artist/writer Coco Fusco, band members from Anthony and the Johnsons, Art Forum's Steven Madoff and musician Moby. Ana's series of exhibitions and events in New York was the culmination of a successful residency stint under the International Studio and Curatorial Programme (ISCP) – a top-tier residency programme in New York provided for artists and curators worldwide. Ana was the first Singapore artist to be invited to join ISCP, greatly boosting her international profile and artistic development.

In the area of traditional arts, NAC has identified specific gaps in leadership succession and upgrading of skills of the practitioners. To address these gaps, NAC has begun to develop customised capability development initiatives for the traditional arts. The initiatives will target these areas:

- **Upgrading Skills and Increasing Professionalism**
NAC will launch a programme to raise the professionalism of traditional arts groups. The programme will comprise customised workshops that cover topics such as marketing, publicity and sponsorship.
- **Overseas Residencies and Training Initiatives**
Overseas residencies and training initiatives will be implemented to widen development opportunities for traditional arts practitioners' skills. While links with major Malaysian and Indonesian arts institutions already exist, NAC will explore more specialised overseas residencies which focus on exclusive art forms such as the Zapin dance.



Maha Mela - Dharma Margam by Bhaskar's Arts Academy, The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

C: ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

The successful creation and distribution of Asian content locally and internationally hinges on a strong arts ecosystem in Singapore – be it in terms of the existence of players or linkages throughout the value chain. To this end, NAC will provide training grants for the critical supporting professions (e.g. curators and technical personnel) as well as the upgrading of professional skills (e.g. marketing and business administration).

One of the barriers to greater participation and investment in training is the lack of certifiable standards for occupational skills. In response, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) developed the Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) system. Organisations across the economic and social sectors have benefited from this national continuing education and training system. NAC, together with the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, will step up its partnership with WDA to develop a **Creative Industries WSQ framework**, covering the development of skills standards, assessment strategies and training curriculum for the creative sector. Such a framework will enhance the employment prospects

for creative workers, and also raise the level of professionalism in the arts industry, particularly in the areas of arts education, technical skills and business competencies. Freelancers will also benefit from this WSQ framework. Overall, it is envisioned that the WSQ framework will facilitate delivery of innovative and cutting-edge products to global markets by top creative companies.

In Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, peak bodies or industry associations, established originally to undertake advocacy for their member organisations, have become intimately involved in the processes of policy-making and programme delivery (e.g. Australia's National Association for the Visual Arts). In Singapore, industry associations can be useful partners to facilitate the development of professional industry standards such as ethics and benefits for the artists, particularly for the freelancers. NAC will thus work towards strengthening arts industry associations, e.g. Singapore Drama Educators Association (SDEA), Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS), and Singapore Music Teachers' Association (SMTA). Subsequently, NAC can partner them to deliver programmes for capability development.

D: RECOGNISE TALENT

Recognising the achievements of Singapore's artistic talent is important. Not only are their contributions to the cultural development of Singapore critical, these recipients epitomise the cultural aspirations of a nation and are a source of national pride. In Singapore, artistic talent has received recognition through **Singapore's national awards and overseas arts awards**. To date, 93 artists have been conferred the prestigious Cultural Medallion, while 96 young talent have received the Young Artist Award.

Moving forward, NAC hopes to leverage more platforms to sustain awareness for these cultural heroes as their achievements can inspire both the next generation of artistic talent and the wider public. One such platform is the collaboration between NAC and the National Library Board (NLB) to develop the National Online Repository of the Arts (NORA). This project documents the development of the Singapore arts scene through the creation of digitised contents related to the lives and works of our Cultural Medallion recipients. When completed, the documents will be accessible to the public, thereby serving to create more awareness of the continued achievements and progress of artistic talent.

In the next phase of development, NAC plans to increase the visibility of the award recipients and their works through targeted local showcases such as the Singapore Arts Festival and the Singapore Biennale, as well as through prestigious overseas awards such as Japan's Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize.

How Skilled is "Skilled"?

The Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) System was launched in October 2005. It links competency standards and generic employability skills with job-relevant training for occupations and industries, and gives recognition to this training as a set of continuing education and training occupationally-linked qualifications. As a national credentialing system, it facilitates the training, development, assessment and recognition of workers for competencies which they need to stay employable. Based on standards developed, WSQ ensures that workers acquire workplace skills needed by employers.



📄 The Arts Awards Ceremony 2007 © National Arts Council
📄 Sarkasi Said, Streets © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.



The Arts House, The Business Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

DEVELOPING ARTS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

“I am told that between the genome of the human being and the genome of the chimpanzee, the difference is very slight, maybe 2 or 3%. In that 2 or 3% is the coding for the arts. The arts set us apart as a species and it should not be surprising that the greater the intellectual achievement of a society is, the greater too is its artistic accomplishment... The completion of the Esplanade will therefore be an important milestone in our development as a global city.”

*~ Minister
George Yeo*

*[Esplanade Topping-Out Ceremony,
26 February 2001]*

ARTS RESOURCES

With a land area of just under 700 square kilometres, Singapore has limited space with competing needs. It is therefore a constant challenge for artists and arts groups to secure affordable spaces. However, this challenge is not unique to Singapore. All around the world, affordable and appropriate artistic space is difficult to come by, especially in major arts cities. In New York, skyrocketing prices for gentrified “neighbourhoods of choice such as Chelsea, TriBeCa and SoHo” (which were once artist enclaves) have made it impossible for many artists to remain. These artists have had to venture into cheaper neighbourhoods such as Harlem, Long Island City and outer Brooklyn. In the early 1990s, Cologne was the undisputed German contemporary arts market and market hub. Subsequently, it lost ground to Berlin which had been able

to attract over 6,000 artists from around the world with low studio rents and a thriving creative scene. The “Cologne Kick” is now the “Berlin Buzz”.

While the “migration” of artists and arts groups in search of affordable and appropriate spaces is possible in other cities, it is limited in Singapore by the inherent smallness of this city-nation. Therefore, in all of Singapore’s arts development plans, addressing space needs is a critical strategy.

A strong foundation has been laid with the building of the Esplanade, together with smaller performance spaces such as the Drama Centre. However, there are still gaps. The most critical gaps in creative space provision for the arts community are:

- Limited space for the various stages of the art creation process, beginning from conceptualisation (e.g. short-term facilities for artist residencies) to incubation and test-bedding (e.g. artist and recording studios, rehearsal facilities).
- Limited professional presentation venues which are mid-sized, given that many new works will not yet attract a huge audience base.
- Limited facilities for supporting activities, e.g. special customised storage spaces for art storage and logistics companies, office lofts, etc.



Victoria Theatre © National Arts Council

Esplanade – Everyman’s Arts Centre

It takes a concerted effort by the various players in the arts scene to maintain the forward momentum in the growth of the arts. Major arts venues play critical roles in developing audiences and artists.

Since the Esplanade opened its doors in 2002, it has established itself as a major arts venue. Annually, more than a quarter of all arts performances in Singapore are held at Esplanade, accounting for over a third of total ticketed performing arts attendances. Besides dramatically enhancing the Singapore skyline, the Esplanade has enabled the presentation of world-class shows, drawn in new audiences and introduced new programming to develop the palate of existing audiences. It has also helped the arts community to realise its vision and artistic potential by providing opportunities for Singapore productions to play at a world-class venue.

FOCUS IN PHASE 1

- Boosting vibrancy in Singapore’s arts calendar
 - Staging a **comprehensive range of programmes**, spanning classical to popular and encompassing different arts genres.
 - Presenting **leading international companies** to audiences in Singapore and helping to boost Singapore’s profile as global arts city.
- Growing audiences
 - Cultivating young audiences through a range of **educational programmes**.
- Investing in the development of Singapore’s arts community
 - **Engaging Singapore artists** to perform and collaborate in productions at the Esplanade.

ENHANCED FOCUS IN PHASE 2

- Growing audiences through greater variety and sophistication in Singapore’s arts calendar
 - Presenting a **wider range** of programmes.
 - **Maturing festivals** will take on a more sophisticated character.
- Challenging Singapore’s artists
 - Working with Singapore and international artists to **create innovative new works**.
- Strengthening Singapore’s appeal in the international arena
 - Enhancing the **variety of cultural offerings in the Marina Bay area and Civic District**.
 - Boosting our **attractiveness as a place to live, work and play**.

The Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) is currently spearheading the development of a comprehensive RCP III Cultural Infrastructure Masterplan which covers both the arts and cultural infrastructure — e.g. the National Art Gallery, and the upgrading of Victoria Concert Hall and Victoria Theatre.

A: SPARK ARTISTIC AND COMMERCIAL SYNERGIES

NAC’s **Arts Housing Scheme** (AHS) was launched in 1985 to provide professional artists and arts groups with work space for use as office studios, and administrative, rehearsal and performance space. These spaces were deliberately clustered in heritage-rich areas such as Waterloo Street, Little India and Chinatown. The intent was to have a belt of arts groups adding vibrancy and colour to these areas by engaging in their arts creation activities. In 2007, AHS housed over 90 arts groups and artists in 42 properties.

72-13: Creative Crucible

72-13 is the latest Arts Housing Project to be completed with the aid of a \$2.8 million developmental grant under AHS. Retrofitted with modern and versatile arts facilities within, 72-13's space is flexible enough to be a gallery, cinema or theatre. At the same time, the space serves as an incubator and platform for the creativity and trans-disciplinary processes of young and emerging artists. Artists from around the world, through residencies and collaborations at 72-13, also serve as role models to inspire these young and emerging Singapore artists to develop hybrid creative expressions.

Art-to-Art

In the next few years, AHS will be refocused to spark creative synergies among its tenants. It is envisioned that the revamped AHS will create arts enclaves with a creative, vibrant environment that facilitates dynamic interactions and exchanges of ideas and knowledge, while supporting the arts community's various activities across the value chain. An example of the type of creative spaces envisioned for the revamped AHS is London's Acme Studios which provides affordable work/live residencies, runs residency programmes and manages international residency programmes for six cultural agencies from Australia, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. The spaces provided by Acme Studios

include 374 studios, eight units of living accommodation and space for two important publicly-funded galleries in London — Matt's Gallery and The Showroom. Acme Studios has played a key role in establishing and supporting over 5,000 artists in East London, seven of whom have gone on to win the Tate Gallery's prestigious Turner Prize.

NAC will explore the introduction of new elements such as studios and rehearsal spaces which support the hot-housing of new creations. When these spaces succeed as dynamic crucibles for Singapore's artists, they will attract leading foreign artists here to conceptualise, collaborate with Singapore artists and produce new works.

Art-to-Business

AHS will also be extended to other players in the arts ecosystem such as private intermediaries (e.g. arts consultants, commercial galleries and artist management companies) and supporting industries (e.g. arts storage and logistics agencies). By introducing mixed-use spaces and co-locating various players of the creative value chain, NAC will address the space demands of the entire chain much more effectively.

More important are the potential synergies that can be generated through cross-fertilisation of ideas between artists and other creative talent, as well as collaboration among different players in the value chain. With such co-location, artists developing their works and seeking to bring their works to the market will have readily available networking platforms.



 Sculpture Square, *The Straits Times* © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

 Victoria Theatre © National Arts Council



Goh Beng Kwan at Telok Kurau Studios, *The Straits Times* © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

B: ENHANCE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Going forward, a more sophisticated management programme will be put in place to manage AHS properties and core arts housing tenants. For example, differentiated assessment criteria for different space use and different art forms may be introduced to ensure that government-subsidised spaces go to priority activities and players.

NAC will also explore new operating models such as collaboration with or out-sourcing to private entities. The objective is to ensure that these new integrated spaces are self-sustaining, so that enhancement or expansion of these spaces need not be over-dependent on the availability of public resources.

Emerging Enclaves

The burgeoning demand for arts housing has led many artists and arts groups to turn to private spaces.

(1) **Wessex Estate** is a cluster of 214 black-and-white colonial walk-up apartments and semi-detached houses. Some 40% of its tenants are in creative fields, including Cultural Medallion winners Han Sai Por, a sculptor, and Tan Choh Tee, a painter. Recognising the success of Wessex's experience in innovative arts housing, landlord JTC Corporation has envisioned Wessex Estate to be a creative hub where creative minds gather.

(2) **Old School @ Mount Sophia** is a secondary school building transformed into an enclave for artists. Tenants include arts and design companies such as Song Wykidd and Osage Singapore. The tenants are attracted by its mixed-use facilities which include a ground-floor art gallery space, creative studios and an art film theatre. The Old School management regularly organises contemporary guerrilla arts and popular culture events.



Teh Tarik (Courting After School 1950s Style)
by Cheo Chai Hiang, Singapore Biennale 2008 ©
National Arts Council

Action Theatre © National Arts Council



 Loke Wan Tho Gallery © National Arts Council

 Drama Centre © National Arts Council

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Easy access to comprehensive knowledge and information resources is critical for arts development. New knowledge can spark new creations; and the best practices can promote efficiency in delivering arts activities and generate greater awareness of the arts.

A: FACILITATE ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

Over the years, NAC has been actively promoting the use of **technological platforms for knowledge management** for the arts community and the public. Examples are:

- Knowledge acquisition
NAC collaborates with National Library Board (NLB) on National Online Repository of the Arts (NORA)

to document the development of Singapore's arts scene through the creation of digitised contents related to the lives and works of Singapore's Cultural Medallion recipients.

- Knowledge sharing and access
A dance knowledge portal for Singapore was launched in 2007 by I Dance Central, a non-profit organisation, with the support of NAC. DanSing (www.DanSing.org.sg) provides a wide range of information on the different genres of dance and a comprehensive directory; and allows viewpoints to be expressed and queries answered by experts.

Going forward, NAC will continue to work with relevant organisations to build up more comprehensive digitised information resources on the arts. NAC will also provide incentives to more arts community peak organisations to drive the development of such resources.

Finding Your DanSing Partner

The Singapore dance portal www.DanSing.org.sg was launched in 2007 by I Dance Central, a non-profit dance advocacy group, in partnership with the NAC. www.DanSing.org.sg is a comprehensive one-stop guide to Singapore's dance scene; it hosts a dance directory for all genres of dance, a calendar of events, resource articles and an expert panel to answer queries specific to dance.

The portal serves the dance community and the general public by providing practical information and dance-related resources that will help to develop professional practice, deepen interest, and raise awareness and the level of appreciation in dance. It aims to create and support a larger base of interested and well-connected dancers and dance-related personnel. The portal opens up networking opportunities by offering additional advertising and marketing space for arts organisations and suppliers.

Aside from advancing Singapore's dance scene, the portal serves as a gateway to the global community, reflecting the vibrancy of our dance scene to international readers.

With contributions from practitioners, dance lecturers, instructors, students, dance photographers and dance lovers, www.DanSing.org.sg brings together the efforts of the entire dance community of Singapore.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

7 CHALLENGES TO ARTS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Results from the Singapore 2005 Population Survey on the Arts provide indications of the challenges in promoting arts attendance:

- **Relevance:** The main reasons given for not attending any arts event were lack of interest (53% of respondents) and lack of time (50%). The two reasons could be related — when people do not find the events offered interesting, they do not make time for them. Such a finding is in line with studies done in the United Kingdom which show that a factor hindering people's engagement in cultural activity is that they feel that what is available does not relate to them⁶.
- **Spending habits:** Older people may have different priorities for their discretionary spending and time. They may also have more specific ideas on what type of arts they like compared to the more adventurous young. Indeed, from the Population Survey, four out of every 10 people below the age of 35 had attended an arts event in the past year. In contrast, only two out of every 10 people above the age of 50 had done so. Generally, Singaporeans tend to be wary about spending on things as "intangible" as arts and culture, preferring leisure pursuits such as shopping (87%) and eating (68%).

“It is a fact that not everyone of us is sensitive by nature to art. Many of us have to be introduced to poetry, drama, music and visual arts by gradual stages. ... Adults who have not had such opportunities during their early years should also be given every facility to appreciate and participate in cultural pursuits.”

*~ (Then) Acting Minister for Culture
Ong Teng Cheong
[Launch of the Singapore Festival of Arts,
9 June 1978]*

VALUE OF THE ARTS

The arts enrich the lives of Singaporeans, contributing to Singapore's efforts to make the city a desirable place to work, live and play. The arts can broaden horizons and transform mindsets, making it a critical element in Singapore's bid to become an idea-and-innovation-fuelled economy. The arts reflect and celebrate Singapore stories, fostering community bonds and interactions among the people. The arts can provide a spectrum of possibilities for Singaporeans to realise their aspirations, increasing confidence and self-esteem.

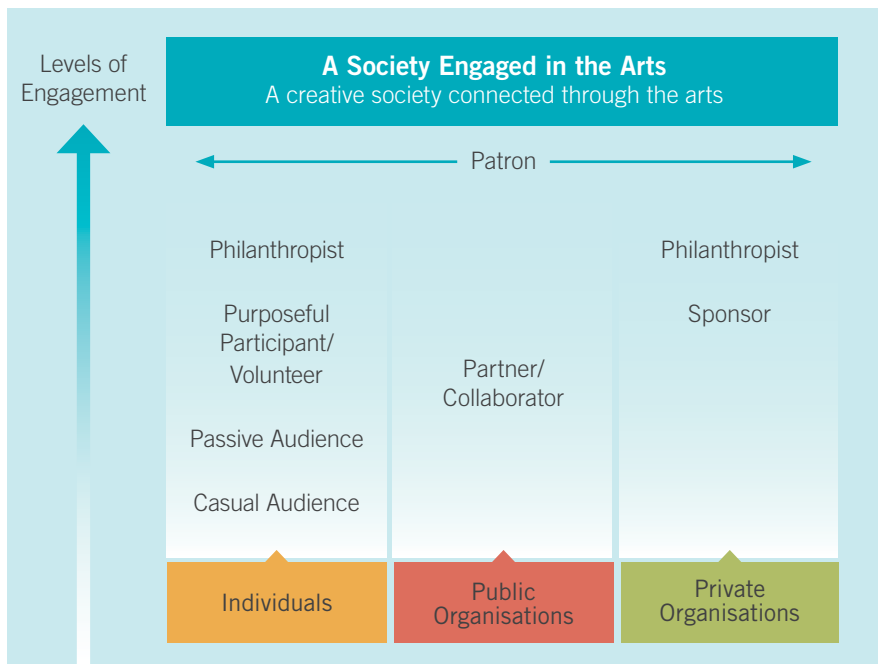
Today, one in three Singaporeans attends at least one arts event a year. This is a dramatic progress from the one in 10 recorded a decade ago. Given the myriad benefits of the arts to the individual, economy and nation, NAC will sustain its efforts to enhance the community's access to the arts. In addition, it will champion active lifelong and deepening engagement in the arts (see Figure 7-1).



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⁶ Greater London Authority (2004). *London Cultural Capital: Realising the Potential of a World Class City*, pp99

Figure 7-1: Levels of Engagement in the Arts



ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY – ARTS FOR ALL

These findings point to a critical need for a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan developed to achieve inclusiveness in two aspects:

- **Offerings** — A rich diversity of arts activities should be offered to suit different interests, lifestyles and cultures; giving Singaporeans of all age groups and walks of life more leisure choices, thus enhancing their quality of life.
- **Ownership** — Programmes should be developed in partnership with agencies with a stake in engaging the community, e.g. Community Development Councils (CDCs), corporations and hospitals.

To realise this, NAC will launch a new **Arts for All** Community Engagement Plan. The plan comprises two key components:

- (A) **ArtReach** — Enhance broad-based access to the arts
- (B) **ArtLink** — Link specific population segments to the arts

A: ARTREACH — ENHANCE BROAD-BASED ACCESS TO THE ARTS

ArtReach is an umbrella initiative that aims to increase access to quality arts experiences for the community at large. In particular, it will develop a sustained, year-long programme of quality arts activities in the heartlands. By taking arts to the people, it will debunk mistaken perceptions that the arts embrace only a narrow selection of “fine arts” activities (e.g. classical music and ballet) performed in major venues. This initiative also aims to deepen arts experiences by offering interactive programmes, encouraging the public to be participative co-creators. Key programmes which have been lined up include district arts festivals, community tours for the arts and a community participation grant.



© National Arts Council

- **Income:** While a relatively small proportion (13%) felt that cost was hindering them from participating in the arts, the data shows that arts attendees generally hail from higher-income households and from the “Professional, Managerial, Executive and Technical” (PMET) occupational groups. Moreover, while cost for one person may be affordable, it may be prohibitive for those with families.
- **Comfort:** There continues to be segments of the population who perceive that art events are meant for the elite. More than 20% said that arts events were meant for people from the “middle to the upper classes” only. And 25% said that they felt out of place at an art gallery, museum or exhibition. They tended to be those from lower-income households and living in one to three-room HDB flats.

District Arts Festivals

Currently, many of Singapore's key arts events take place in the heart of the city. However, there are a number of smaller "cultural pockets" emerging around Singapore which have the potential to grow into cultural quarters. We can take a leaf out of the book of the dining and entertainment scene where the buzz of Dempsey, Holland Village and Changi areas complement the swinging vibrancy of Marina Bay and Clarke Quay. Spreading cultural activities more evenly across the districts will catalyse the development of these cultural quarters and help to give each district a distinctive buzz.

In 2006, distinctive **District Arts Festivals** (DAFs) were jointly developed by the People's Association, CDCs and NAC. These aimed to develop a deeper appreciation of the arts within the heartlands, provide valuable platforms for showcasing community artistic talent and create opportunities for bonding and interaction among residents. Close to 140,000 residents enjoyed DAFs in 2007, which featured a wide range of traditional and contemporary arts programmes. For instance, there were traditional operas, hip hop dance performances and fringe activities by schools, community groups, as well as professional artists and arts groups.

The three partners intend to build on these early successes and develop DAFs into highly anticipated events which facilitate interaction and community bonding. From the arts perspective, DAFs are excellent platforms that complement the national arts platforms in a number of ways as DAFs:

- Focus on activities of mass and community appeal
- Develop mid-tier community talent
- Showcase the rich diversity of local culture

Making A Difference

All DAFs are characterised by key features that distinguish them from other arts festivals:

- Inclusiveness** – To promote greater collaboration with the community, DAFs involve grassroots and school-based arts groups, along with professional artists and arts groups.
- Distinctiveness** – To attract participants from all parts of Singapore, each DAF has a strong personality and brand.

District Arts Festival	Personality	Description
North East District Arts Festival	Dance Hub	The festival aims to leverage its signature dance competition Dance Xplosion to be the Hub for Dance Excellence .
South West District Arts Festival	Interactive Hub	The festival emphasises heartlands-based interactive programmes such as ethnic fun dance and pottery-making. Two events to be developed into regular features are Saturday! @ Series and Pay Arts Forward @ South West .
South East District Arts Festival	Diversity of Arts Expressions	The festival provides the community with opportunities to engage in different modes of arts expressions ranging from traditional art forms to photography and playwriting.
North West District Arts Festival	Multi-Cultural	The festival aims to promote inter-ethnic understanding through multi-cultural arts performances and festival-themed events like Hari Raya celebrations and Vasantha Oli. It also provides a platform for the community and local arts groups to showcase their talent.
Central Singapore District Arts Festival	Life of the Party	The festival features different series of arts events that aim to reach out to and engage residents of different age groups, races, and social status. Its signature platforms are the weekly Community Life Arts Programme (CLAP!) and the Central Singapore DAF programme Arty Party . There are also fringe activities with schools, grassroots youth committees and hospitals.

Arts Everywhere

The most common reason that motivates Singaporeans to attend an arts event is “accompanying a friend, relative or colleague” (37% of the population cited this). Over the years, NAC has thus developed events in locations which attract families and have high human traffic. For example, NAC partners ExxonMobil and the National Parks Board to organise the Concert-in-the-Park series. Held at various parks in Singapore, this is one of the longest-running and most successful outdoor arts programmes; in total, these concerts typically attract crowds of 10,000 every year.



National platforms such as the Singapore Arts Festival and Singapore Biennale also have free outreach components for arts novices, both in the city centre and the heartlands. Each year, these events reach some 500,000 people. Going one step further to deepen engagement with the arts, the Biennale has worked with the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC), to develop a volunteer programme to groom arts volunteers.



1 Beautiful Sunday: Mother's Day Special © The Esplanade Co. Ltd.

2 Singapore Biennale 2006 © National Arts Council

3 The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

4 Singapore Arts Festival 2007 © National Arts Council



NAC will be launching a new touring programme — **Arts Community Tours** — to bring more arts performances and exhibitions to various constituencies. Together with the performances and exhibitions, there will be interactive fringe programmes called **Arts 101** comprising talks, demonstrations, and workshops by professional artists, including Cultural Medallion and Young Artist Award recipients. Such an educational component will enable the general public to better appreciate the arts through greater interaction and hands-on encounters with the arts.

Community Participation Grant

To encourage community groups to initiate their own arts activities, NAC has launched a new **Community Participation Grant**. This grant enables artists and the community to co-create distinctive projects that reflect the community's heartbeat. By allowing members of the community to be more involved in the creative process of the arts projects and work alongside professional artists, the grant helps to deepen engagement in the arts.

B: ARTLINK — LINK SPECIFIC POPULATION SEGMENTS TO THE ARTS

The population is not homogeneous. Each population segment has different perceptions, interests, priorities and social conditions. Under **ArtLink**, the other component of the Arts for All initiative, NAC will partner social organisations such as centres for seniors, hospitals and prisons to bring the arts to specific population segments which have been constrained by age, physical disability, income or other circumstances. ArtLink programmes are tailored to cater to the particular interests or needs of these different population segments. Key programmes that have been lined up include arts programmes for senior citizens and youths.

Silver Arts

Engaging in the arts holds particular benefits for senior citizens. By participating in meaningful creative activities, senior citizens keep themselves mentally and physically active, thus enhancing their health and general well-being. These arts activities can also provide opportunities for social interaction and inter-generation rapport. Some of these senior citizens may have creative potential which were not realised when they were younger. NAC will be working with relevant partners to develop the **Silver Arts** programme.

The primary aim is to allow senior citizens who have missed the opportunity or discontinued their artistic pursuits to re-engage in the arts. The programme will include a comprehensive range of activities — formation of arts interest groups, workshops and training programmes to enhance skills and knowledge, excursions to arts venues, arts volunteering and talent showcases for the senior citizens. NAC will be exploring with other organisations such as Council of Third Age on how the arts can help achieve a better quality of life among their constituents.

Arts in Health

The positive outcomes⁷ that the arts bring are seen in patients, staff and patient-staff relationships in hospitals and mental health services and in the health of the general population. In fact, there are also a number of healing approaches that use the creative arts, e.g. arts therapy, music therapy and dance/movement therapy.

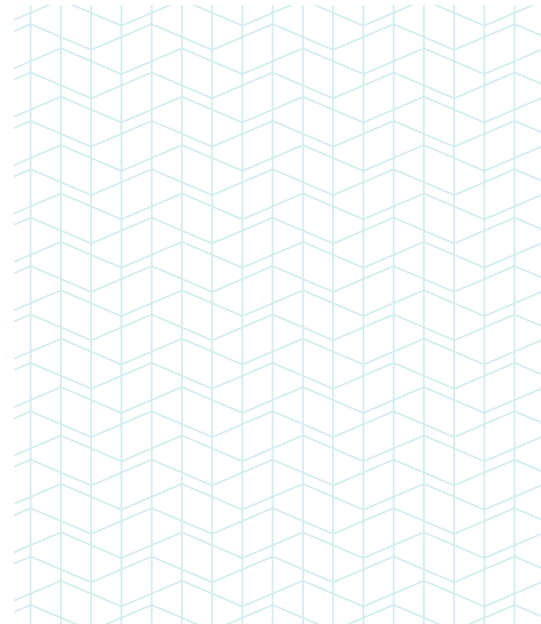
The use of the creative arts for healing is still at a nascent stage in Singapore. For a start, NAC will partner the Singapore General Hospital and Tan Tock Seng Hospital to organise a series of **Arts in Health** activities; the aim is to enliven the hospital environment to benefit patients, healthcare workers and visitors. In subsequent stages, a comprehensive framework can be developed to integrate the arts into healthcare settings and fund activities related to the arts for health.

⁷ Research done by Arts Council England shows that "there is now a considerable and growing evidence base of the effectiveness of arts interventions in healthcare and in promoting well-being."

Youth Engagement through Arts

— YEA!

During their schooling years, youth enjoy many opportunities to engage in the arts (refer to Chapter 8) — be it through arts elective subjects, co-curricular activities or NAC's Arts Education Programme. Some of them even display significant talent at this stage. To sustain their interest and engagement in the arts, there is a need to provide compelling platforms for young people to enjoy and participate in the arts outside of school and after leaving school. NAC will introduce a **Youth Engagement through Arts (YEA!)** programme, working with youth-centric organisations to develop a range of dedicated arts programmes for these young creative talent.



The Young at Art

Singapore youth are getting more "arty". In 2005, 50% of youth between the ages of 15 to 19 years attended at least one arts event, twice the percentage in 1999.

Year	Percentage
1999	24
2002	49
2005	50

Music is a favourite among the youth. Some one quarter of the youth have attended music performances, in the past years.

Type of arts performance attended		Most interested in	
Music	26%	Live popular music concerts	44%
Theatre	15%	Book fairs	31%
Dance	10%	Musical plays	29%
Visual arts	10%	Classical music events	20%

Top three reasons for attending		Top two reasons for not attending	
Like going to type of event	33%	Not interested in arts and cultural events and activities	46%
Accompany friend or family member	27%	Too busy or no time	45%
For relaxation	23%		

Source: National Arts Council (2006). 2005 Population Survey on the Arts.



ENTHUSING CHILDREN, EMPOWERING YOUTH

“We have difficulty recalling the Periodic Table or the Laws of Thermodynamics but we recollect with ease the Shakespeare and the Wordsworth.”

~ Senior Minister of State
(RADM (NS)) Lui Tuck Yew
[Ministry of Education Literature
Symposium, 21 July 2006]

CHILD'S PLAY

Children and youth matter to the arts because they are the artists and audiences of tomorrow. This truism has been the basis of much arts outreach work in Singapore, and continues to be relevant for the future. However, just as critically, the arts matter to children and youth, especially if Singapore is to make the transition from an industrial to a creative economy; and from a place to live to a liveable home. The reason is that “involvement in the arts and creative opportunities can transform the way children and young people explore the world around them, changing the way they see themselves and what they aspire to in the future”⁸.

Studies in the United States and United Kingdom reveal wide-ranging benefits that engagement in the arts brings to children and young people. Firstly, the arts can facilitate Academic learning by making lessons fun and memorable; and training pupils to think in different ways, use different forms of intelligence and “consider complex issues, thoughts, feeling and actions”⁹. Secondly, the arts

enable the development of Basic life skills such as envisioning, communication, problem solving, innovation and teamwork. Thirdly, the arts contribute to the Comprehensive development of the young by building self-esteem and confidence and the motivation to learn, especially for those from less-privileged or at-risk backgrounds. For instance, in the United Kingdom, artists and arts organisations have successfully re-engaged young people back into education and training, thus helping to enhance their future employability. The arts also allow children, especially those growing up in a culture and country different from that of their forebears, to examine issues of self, relationships and identity.

In Singapore, a number of agencies have been committed to tapping the synergy between education and the arts. To this end, a key focus for the Ministry of Education (MOE) is to realise the aspirations of students and to develop the young through the arts. To achieve this, it has put in place a number of policies and programmes. At the schools level, the general student population benefits from arts education; co-curricular activities related to the arts (e.g. choir, band, literary, drama and debating societies); compulsory learning of a music instrument for every child in primary school; and an annual arts-centric Singapore Youth Festival. Students who are particularly inclined towards the arts have the option of taking up arts electives at pre-tertiary and tertiary levels. In addition, there are mentoring programmes such as the Creative Arts Programme which match students with latent creative talent with local writers who act as their mentors.

⁸ Arts Council England (2006), *Arts Matters*.

⁹ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. *Arts alive!* website (<http://www.qac.org.uk/artsalive/>).



¹ Noise Singapore 2007 © National Arts Council

² Berita Harian © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

³ Singapore Art Show 2007 © National Arts Council

⁴ The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

The Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts (MICA), as well as NAC, focuses on inculcating a love for the arts in the young, thus nurturing future artists, arts-related professionals and audiences. With support from the Tote Board, NAC's Arts Education Programme (NAC-AEP) was launched in 1993 to develop initiatives that advocate the value and importance of arts education and appreciation among the young in schools. In 2008, Singapore saw the birth of its first independent pre-tertiary arts school. The School of the Arts, which takes in students aged 13 to 18, offers an academic and arts curriculum in a unique, cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary environment. The main aim is to provide an "opportunity to nurture those who are talented and passionate about the arts to be the next generation of creative individuals" and to cultivate the whole person, training future Singaporeans "to take risks, make meaning of disconnected patterns and draw strength to live life"¹⁰.

Past efforts in seeding a love for the arts in the young have paid off. In the 2005 Population Survey on the Arts, almost one fifth of all arts attendees in Singapore were students. This group was also significantly over-represented among those who expressed interest in attending the arts in the near future. One out of every four students attended one or two arts events in the past year; and one out of every five students attended three or more events. The emergence of such a significant group of arts audience comprising students and young Singaporeans augurs well for Singapore's arts development.

¹⁰ Rebecca Chew, Principal, School of the Arts, Singapore

Students from Singapore have been achieving top honours in international events such as the Royal Commonwealth Essay Competition, Foyle Young Poets of the Year, World Choir Games, World Music Contest, and International High School Calligraphy Exhibition. Parents are also more supportive of their children pursuing a formal education in the arts, with young talent such as Min Lee, Abigail Sin and Loh Jun Hong being groomed by top musicians in local and overseas institutions at a young age. More school leaders now recognise the benefits of leveraging the arts to enhance students' experiential learning, build their self-esteem and confidence and help them realise their full potential.

Sustaining children and young people's interest and engagement in the arts requires long-term efforts and partnerships. To build on the sterling achievements from its NAC–AEP, NAC will focus on three strategies:

- (A) Content — Ensure quality programmes and facilitate customisation**
- (B) Coverage — Extend arts education to pre-schools**
- (C) Capabilities — Strengthen competencies of artists and schools**

A: CONTENT — ENSURE QUALITY PROGRAMMES AND FACILITATE CUSTOMISATION

First impressions can make a lot of difference. NAC strongly believes that exposure to quality arts programmes from young not only aids in a child's development, it also helps to inculcate a life-long engagement in the arts. Hence, it is pertinent to ensure that arts programmes in schools are interesting and relevant to the young, and to make their first encounters with the arts exciting and memorable.

Arts Council England defines two aspects of “quality”. Firstly, the work produced by the artists, the materials they use and the artistic processes they adopt are critical. When children and young people have good role models for “professional” standards of production and presentation, they are inspired to aspire to excellence. Secondly, the artistic experience must be “fit for purpose”. Arts Council England emphasises that arts education needs to be “about the children first and foremost, not a platform for the artist or an opportunity to promote a particular art form. Hence, the artists need to be skilled in facilitating high-quality arts programmes with, for and by children and young people. Careful selection of artists, shared objectives and expectations from the outset, and joint development of tailored programmes and activities are all crucial to effective child-centred learning through the arts.”¹¹

Under the current system, a panel of arts and education experts, principals and officials from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and NAC assesses and endorses arts education programmes offered by Singapore arts groups and arts education providers. Endorsed programmes are

then offered to the schools. To date, some 99% of Singapore schools and 60% of all students have benefited from these programmes (67% and 39% respectively in 1997).

With the emergence of more providers offering an increasing range of programmes, NAC will enhance its evaluation framework to ensure that effective and high-quality programmes are developed for schools. It will also facilitate the provision of customised programmes. Under its **AEP+**, artists will work directly with schools to formulate unique arts programmes. For example, in 2005, Ang Mo Kio Secondary School embarked on a three-year curriculum programme called the Integrated Arts Programme funded under this scheme. Drama educator and actress Noorlinah Mohamed conducted drama training for some 700 students. She also worked with the school to create a drama syllabus for Secondary One to Three. The eventual plan is for school teachers to be equipped to teach the in-curriculum drama programme. Under the **Arts Excursion Partnership**, NAC, venue owners and arts groups will develop programmes to be hosted at purpose-built venues, specifically tailored to be age-appropriate and highly interactive in order to deepen students' arts appreciation and engagement.

Major events celebrating the different art forms, e.g. Singapore Arts Festival for the performing arts and Singapore Biennale and Singapore Art Show for the visual arts, provide a good opportunity to reach out to the young. Hence, NAC will ensure that there is a strong arts education and outreach component in the programming of these events. Special talks and student-friendly activities on the content of the events will be included to reach out to youth.

¹¹ Arts Council England (2006). Arts Matters.

B: COVERAGE — EXTEND ARTS EDUCATION TO PRE-SCHOOLS

Children take naturally to art. Singing, dancing, drawing, and role-playing — spontaneous creative play — come naturally to them. Early arts experiences, according to studies done in the United States, will have an impact on all aspects of a child's learning and development. "Arts engage all the senses and involve a variety of modalities including the kinesthetic, auditory, and visual. When caregivers engage and encourage children in arts activities on a regular basis from early in life, they are laying the foundation for — and even helping wire children's brains for — successful learning."¹²

In Singapore, there is growing recognition, especially among younger and more

affluent parents of the importance of such early arts exposure. There is a growing number of private sector providers of enrichment classes for toddlers that incorporate the arts, e.g. drama, pottery, art and music. The Singapore Symphony Orchestra's "Babies Proms", which aims to introduce classical music to children aged six and under, has been running for six years and enjoys a warm reception (averaging 70% house) from audiences. Arts festivals for children such as "Prudential Children First!" are also very popular.

To build on these achievements and ensure that even more children in Singapore have access to the benefits of early arts experiences, a **Growing Up with the Arts** programme can be developed. This initiative can provide assistance for pre-school agencies to customise quality arts programmes for pre-schoolers.



It's Not Just Play!

Arts activities benefit children in many ways:

- *Dance* helps build motor control, body relationships, and a sense of direction.
- *Drawing, sculpting, and other visual arts* develop spatial acuity.
- Group activities, such as *learning dance steps or singing songs*, build social skills.
- As children describe people and things in their world using *pictures, body movements, and mime*, they enhance their descriptive, nonverbal, cognitive capabilities.
- *Repeating stories, poems, and songs* strengthens memory.

Source: Arts Education Partnership (1998). *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections*, pp. 11–12



📍 Singapore Biennale 2006 © National Arts Council

📍 ClickArt 2003, photo by Bob Lee Keng Siang

¹² Arts Education Partnership (1998). *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections*.



C: CAPABILITIES — STRENGTHEN COMPETENCIES OF ARTISTS AND SCHOOLS

Continuous training and professional development build the expertise of artists working in education. Some examples in the United Kingdom are practitioner training, induction, shadowing and mentoring. Artists can work alongside teachers to gain insights into working with students; as well as with other professionals to hone capabilities such as project management or specialist knowledge such as helping children with multiple needs.

It is also important to provide **a range of training opportunities for those wishing to work with artists, such as teachers, youth and community workers.** Study trips to jurisdictions that

have successfully leveraged concepts such as “learning through the arts” will provide teachers with new insights into how the arts and creativity can enhance learning without compromising delivery of the national curriculum. Special pre-event talks and interaction with artists may also help teachers enhance their students’ experience of that particular event. An example of this is NAC’s own *Encounters* series of talks to help teachers better understand the work and artistic processes of artists exhibiting at the inaugural Singapore Biennale 2006.

Going forward, as part of its AEP+, NAC will foster sustainable partnerships between schools and artists and arts groups as well as raise art form and industry knowledge among the schools. Specifically, there will be training workshops and seminars to help schools acquire knowledge in traditional and contemporary arts and upgrade the pedagogical skills of artists.

It’s Not Just for the Present

A new national poll in the United States shows that the majority of voters surveyed understand the importance of subjects like art and music in developing the imagination — which they believe is critical for children to acquire skills necessary to prosper in the future.

According to *The Imagine Nation*, a random phone survey of 1,000 likely registered voters revealed that 80% believe the arts develop the imagination and the critical, intellectual and personal skills that students need to be successful in a global economy.

The survey, conducted in December 2007, also shows that:

- **85% agree** that the basics alone are not enough for a 21st century workforce without the skills and ability to be imaginative, creative and innovative.
- **87% believe** that science, engineering, technology and maths — when integrated with the arts — provide students with a set of skills and values necessary to promote innovation.
- **88% agree** that an education in and through the arts is essential to cultivating the imagination.
- **91% strongly believe** that an education in and through the arts helps to substantiate imaginative learning and should be considered a part of the basics.
- While almost two-thirds of voters think that it is extremely or very important to have imagination and creative skills taught in school, most do not think that these skills are being taught very well.

Source: The Imagine Nation (<http://www.theimagination.net/>)



Flower Tree at VivoCity © National Arts Council

ADVOCATING THE ARTS

“ In the history of the arts, patronage has played a most vital role. While it may sound romantic for artists to starve and work in their garrets, the output of such artists without patronage must be abysmally low. A Michaelangelo could not have given of his best without the beneficence of a Pope Sixtus with a Sistine Chapel to be decorated.”

*~ Then-Minister for Finance
Hon Sui Sen,
[Opening of the Third Singapore Festival
of Arts, 10 December 1980]*

RISING RECOGNITION

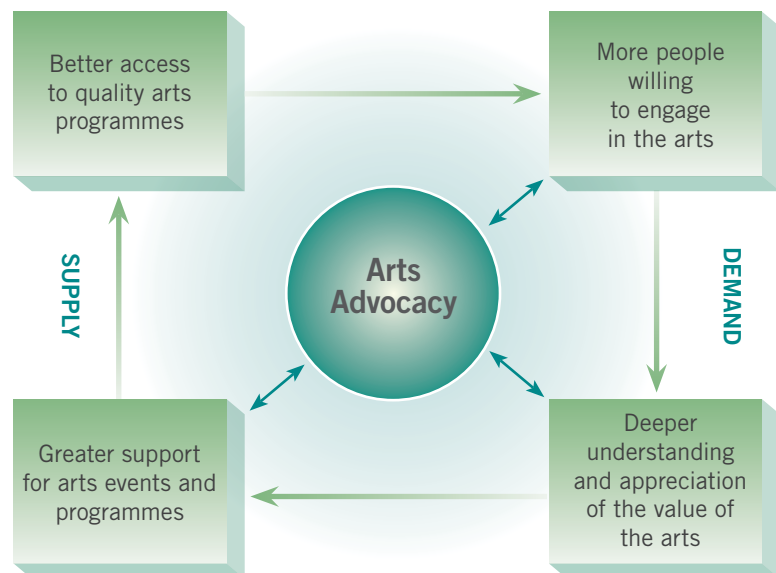
The value of the arts and their unique, instrumental role in contributing to broader personal (or organisational), social and economic development, is increasingly being understood and acknowledged. In the 2005 Population Survey on the Arts, 60% of Singaporeans agreed that arts and cultural activities enriched the quality of their lives, broadened their minds and encouraged creativity. A public value inquiry done in the United Kingdom yielded even more detailed findings.

The majority of respondents agreed that:

- The arts helped build capacity for understanding and navigating the world — they enabled them to interpret, adapt to and understand the world; and express themselves, communicate with others and broaden their collective horizons.
- The arts enriched their experience of life — they brought colour, passion, beauty and intensity to life; and they were a source of pleasure, entertainment and relaxation.
- The arts contributed to health and well-being, education and learning, and a sense of belonging and community, thereby leading to social cohesion and a healthy economy.

Continuing to provide access to quality arts is therefore crucial. But with the many demands on the public purse, investment in the arts cannot be the sole responsibility of the government. It hinges critically on the collaboration and support of individuals, and private and public organisations. To garner more support and cultivate more stakeholders to bring the arts to all Singaporeans, continuous efforts to promote and profile the arts are very important. Figure 9-1 shows how effective arts advocacy lies at the heart of the virtuous circle of quality arts supply and demand.

Figure 9-1 – Virtuous Circle of Arts Supply and Engagement

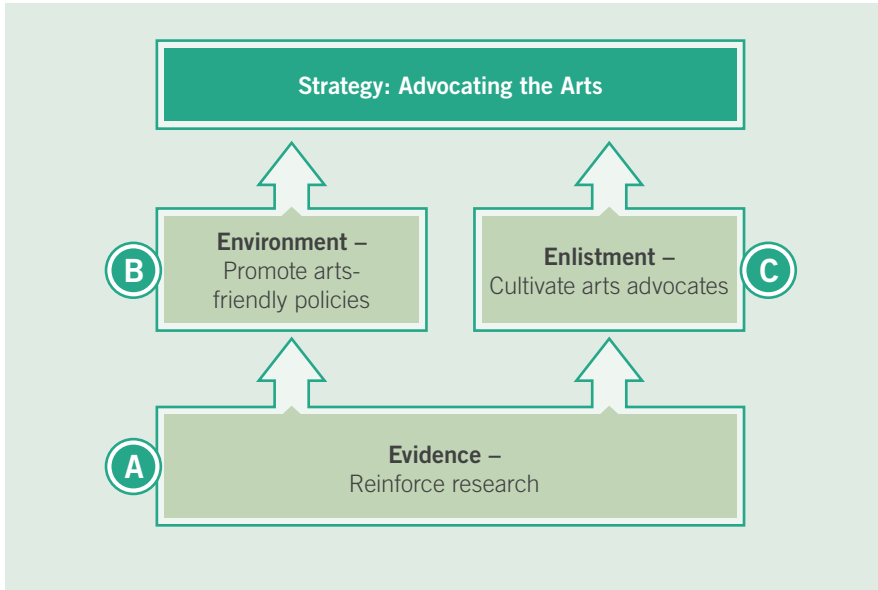


To continue capturing the benefits of this virtuous circle, NAC has developed a three-pronged arts advocacy strategy. This comprises:

(A) Evidence — Reinforce research

(B) Environment — Promote arts-friendly policies and practices

(C) Enlistment — Cultivate art advocates



Chilli Series by Kumari Nahappan © National Arts Council



A: EVIDENCE — REINFORCE RESEARCH

Effective advocacy for the arts to key decision-makers in both the public and private sectors and members of the public requires well-reasoned analyses backed by robust evidence. Under the first two phases of RCP, a Research and Development Grant was established to encourage greater interest in studying arts-related issues. To complement this, NAC will step up **Arts Research** and issue regular releases on cultural statistics. It will conduct targeted research on the impact of arts education and the arts in general.

At the national level, NAC will work with other agencies such as non-governmental think tanks, academic institutions and statistical organisations to encourage greater research focus on the arts and culture. Such knowledge resources can then be shared to build a foundation of common knowledge and language for arts advocacy.

B: ENVIRONMENT — PROMOTE ARTS-FRIENDLY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A key aspect of promoting the arts is keeping the arts in the public eye. This is a challenge, given the many sales, sports, entertainment and other events that are packed into the city's social events calendar. To help arts distributors promote art events to the public, there are the **National Publicity Platforms**. This national publicity and branding effort aims to provide a range of free permanent publicity and promotion platforms for Singapore arts groups and institutions to market their events, thereby increasing their reach to audiences. Under this initiative, there are currently two publicity channels – outdoor banners and print (Arts Beat). NAC will continue to enhance these channels and explore new technology-based means – e.g. dedicated arts events portals – to reach out to the public.

NAC's efforts to improve regulatory policies and practices have been greatly facilitated by two factors. The first is Singapore's whole-of-government approach to policy development; and the second is the public service's continual push for smart regulation and removal of red tape to improve processes. In the last few years, NAC and the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) have been involved in consultations on key issues such as the development of new academic programmes in arts institutions, fiscal policies and tax policies impinging on the arts industry. Moving forward, NAC will actively scrutinise arts-related policies and legislation in other countries and analyse whether these are relevant for the local arts scene. It will also leverage studies and recommendations made by leading overseas agencies and think tanks involved in advocating the arts, e.g. Rand Corporation, Americans for the Arts and National Arts Councils, to see how it can develop new initiatives and solutions for the priority areas under RCP III.

Arts Champions

Besides highlighting the importance of the arts through public profiling, arts advocacy is also about encouraging industry changes that will catalyse further development of the arts. For instance, Australia's National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) published *The Code of the Australian Visual Arts and Craft Sector* which is the national best practice standard for the sector. It provides a set of practical and ethical guidelines for the conduct of business between visual artists and their galleries, agents, retailers, buyers, etc. In the United States, Americans for the Arts conducts extensive action-oriented research on various aspects of the arts sector.

C: ENLISTMENT — CULTIVATE ARTS ADVOCATES

Apart from providing evidence and enhancing the environment, it is important to grow champions who proactively take a stake in developing of the arts, by contributing time, effort or finance. These champions can be either individuals or organisations.

Organisations that support the arts contribute in at least two ways: firstly, developing the artists and art forms; and secondly, bonding the community through the arts. In turn, their association with the arts can help to build their own brand value. For instance, Louis Vuitton's decision to invite acclaimed artists, such as Takashi Murakami and Richard Prince, to lend their artistry to its classic handbag selection has not only contributed to phenomenal sales, it has also elevated the status of the handbag to the must-have item for the new season¹³.

In Singapore, more public and private organisations have incorporated arts in their activities or provided sponsorship to arts events. NAC supports these organisations by helping them to implement their arts development schemes. Examples are Keppel Corporation's Keppel Nights — providing ticket subsidies to make ticket prices affordable — and Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation's Arts Inspire Programme. Developers of commercial buildings have also realised the power of the visual arts in branding their buildings and setting them apart from others, and, in so doing, attract more traffic. For example, in conjunction with Singapore Biennale 2006, Mapletree commissioned 13 permanent public art pieces to complement the iconic flow of VivoCity's architecture. NAC will be working with the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) on new initiatives to boost cultural philanthropy in Singapore. These include refining existing recognition initiatives, e.g. **Patron of the Arts Award**, development of sponsorship intermediaries and organisation of seminars to boost arts marketing capabilities.

Taking Talent to the Top - HSBC Youth Excellence Initiative

Singapore's success and prospects for future growth are inextricably linked to the quality of its people and talents. Indeed, over the years, creating opportunities and providing support to help nurture Singapore's young talent has proven critical in Singapore's development. It was with this philosophy in mind that HSBC launched the **Youth Excellence Initiative**.

The HSBC Youth Excellence Initiative was launched in October 2000 in partnership with NAC. Funding from the Youth Excellence Initiative has enabled young Singapore arts talent, such as Min Lee, Abigail Sin and Clare Yeo, to be nurtured at leading institutions around the world. At the same time, they have been able to undertake milestone developmental initiatives such as international recitals, master classes and international competitions, which further help them hone their technical and performing skills. HSBC hopes that over time, their achievements will serve as a catalyst to promote the pursuit of excellence among young Singaporeans.

Besides providing such support and opportunities for young talent to realise and develop their full potential, HSBC endeavours to empower them to deliver tangible benefits to the community at large. The Youth Excellence Initiative recipients contribute back to society through their involvement in community outreach programmes. For instance, HSBC organises an annual concert at the Esplanade for recipients. Proceeds from these concerts are donated to charitable causes to benefit the larger community. In April 2008, Janell Yeo@Esplanade — the debut concert for the violinist, a HSBC Youth Excellence Award recipient in 2007 — raised over \$150,000. HSBC donated this sum to The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund and The Business Times Budding Artists Fund to help needy students with their educational needs. To date, the HSBC Youth Excellence Award recipients have collectively raised more than \$1 million for charity.

HSBC is confident that in time, the achievements of our young talent will inspire others to scale new heights both in the arts and beyond.

*It's not just about
handouts every year,*

but about partnership and sharing dreams.

Asian is the new Modern, they say –

So Singapore's the perfect place to be.

What kind of future world might we create?

There's lots more work before that day arrives:

You represent a nation's wealth and will.

We artists cultivate its spirit and soul.

Together we can make the future real:

a place and culture truly called our own!

– FROM "PATRONS" BY ALVIN PANG, YOUNG ARTIST AWARD RECIPIENT (2005)

¹³ Arts & Business UK (2008). *Benefiting Your Business and Brand Through Arts & Culture*.

NAC-EXXONMOBIL
concert in the Park



sun
18 May 08
4 - 6.30pm

concert starts at 5pm
main stage
bishan park II

FREE
ADMISSION

worldofkids
music+drama+dance

NAC-EXXONMOBIL
concert in the Park



sun
30 Mar 08
4 - 6.30pm

concert starts at 5pm
main stage
west coast park
(carpark 3, behind McDonald's)

FREE
ADMISSION

world**drums.**
+percussions



10 RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

“...it would be a serious mistake to believe that we have already “arrived” or indeed, ever can, “arrive”. This is a journey with no end; a constant process of adaptation and striving for new capabilities to deal with new challenges.”

*~ President
S R Nathan,*

*[Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic
Academy's Inaugural S Rajaratnam
Lecture, 10 March 2008]*

RCP III has painted the vision of Singapore as a distinctive, global city for the arts, underlying the government's unwavering commitment to the development of the arts. In support of this, the Arts Development Plan sets out the strategies to achieve excellence and engagement in the arts. The funding from RCP III to execute the strategies is expected to help Singapore achieve various outcomes in arts excellence and engagement, as articulated in Chapter Two.

Successful realisation of the vision and outcomes of RCP III hinges on several critical success factors – Speed, Scope and Synergy.

SPEED: TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION

In the new economy, the astounding ease at which voluminous amounts of knowledge flow often means that pathbeaters are distinguished by the speed with which they execute ideas as much as the originality of their ideas. In business, entrepreneurs and corporations race to find the next “killer” application. In science and sports, accolades and economic rewards accrue to the one who breathes the discovery or finishing tape first. Similarly, for the arts, if Singapore is to stand out as a cultural oasis, new arts and cultural initiatives must be executed well and in a timely manner.

Another aspect of speed concerns flexibility. We live in a time of rapid and discontinuous change. Goalposts shift and the rules of the game can change any time. Successful events and programmes can be rendered obsolete overnight. It is thus important for NAC to be plugged into the international arts scene so as to deliver relevant programmes; and to be able to adapt its current palette of programmes to meet the needs and demands of its stakeholders.



The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd.

SCOPE: HOLISTIC APPROACH

Effective development of the arts sector requires the adoption of a total approach. Firstly, one must address the entire value chain rather than just individual industries or firms. In the arts, the traditional model was to provide assistance to artists. However, it was soon realised that without an adequate pool of supporting players, such as impresarios, curators and agents, new arts creations would not reach audiences. Thus, looking across creators, coordinators and distributors allows NAC to identify core competencies which can be leveraged and gaps that need to be bridged. In addition, by ensuring value-chain integration, NAC ensures that the linkages between different activities are

strengthened and synergies enjoyed. To this end, NAC assists each of the five art forms (music, dance, theatre, visual arts and literary arts) through a cluster development strategy. Annex 2 highlights the key initiatives specific to each cluster.

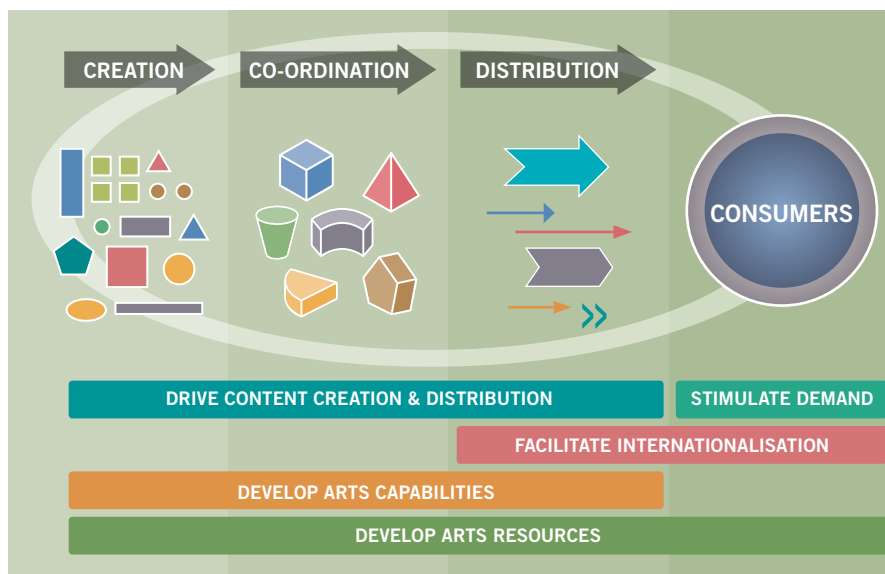
Secondly, it is also important to ensure a balanced emphasis. As in all other public initiatives, the demand for assistance far outstrips the financial or manpower resources available. A fine balance thus needs to be struck in trying to meet the various development needs of a diversity of players (from emerging to established), and encouraging different art forms (performing, visual, literary) and genres (contemporary, traditional).

SYNERGY: LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

Besides NAC, there are many stakeholders who can play a significant role in promoting and developing the arts. For example, all schools have some form of arts programmes — both as part of their curriculum and as a co-curricular activity. Youth organisations and community bodies find the popular arts a useful vehicle to reach out to and bond their constituents. In the private sector, some corporations find brand value in associating themselves with the arts or contribute to the arts as part of their corporate social responsibility. In the arts community itself, artist associations or informal enclaves can also initiate their own developmental programmes. By identifying and establishing good partnerships with these various bodies, there is significant opportunity to multiply the amount of resources that can be used to develop the arts.

THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION

The development of the arts in Singapore is an on-going journey, requiring stamina and support from the public, private and people sectors. It is an important journey, for a country without its arts and culture has neither identity nor soul. NAC looks forward to more stakeholders joining it on this journey to make Singapore a vibrant, global city with the arts at its heart and soul.





Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress © The Singapore Repertory Theatre

Opening Party at the Padang, Singapore Biennale 2006 © National Arts Council

Pesta Raya Puteri Gunung Ledang the Musical © The Esplanade Co. Ltd.



Fog Sculpture #48687 "Noontide" by Fujiko Nakaya, Singapore Biennale 2008 © National Arts Council

ANNEX 1

CONSULTATION ON ARTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In developing the Arts Development Plan, NAC held consultation sessions with key stakeholders to seek their insights, concerns and recommendations on arts development. These included representatives from the various sectors of the arts community (e.g. practitioners, educators, presenters), government agencies (e.g. Ministry of Education, Singapore Tourism Board), and NAC Council Members. Highlights of the feedback obtained are as follows:

1. Drive Arts Content Creation and Distribution

The quality of arts in Singapore needs to be improved. For Singapore to be an arts destination known for excellence in the arts, artists and arts groups have to acquire greater confidence in presenting new works, especially those that are representative of Singapore's culture and identity. This is exacerbated by the lack of understanding and pride in quality works created in Singapore. Recommendations on providing greater support for new works include:

- Provide greater government investment/support to help reduce the risk of undertaking new works. Government involvement would add clout to artists vying for international attention.
- Provide more platforms for promoting and producing new works.
- Facilitate sharing of best practices and success stories in developing significant new works.

With respect to arts distribution, the main gap is the lack of influential arts agents, affiliates and managers in Singapore. These intermediaries are critical in promoting the distribution of new works within Singapore and the global arts market.

2. Facilitate Internationalisation and Enhance Global Connectivity

Singapore's artists and works are not visible in the global arts scene. One reason could be the lack of a comprehensive and sustained effort to support internationalisation of arts. The lack of funds meant that international development efforts were generally one-off promotional events. Singapore is also generally associated with efficiency rather than a vibrant cultural scene. Recommendations to generate more visibility

for Singapore's arts include:

- Develop programmes to systematically attract international "influencers", e.g. critics, buyers and curators, to Singapore.
- Establish arts centres in key overseas cities to provide "presence".

3. Nurture Talent, Develop Capabilities

Capability development is the foundation for strong growth in the arts. However, there are key gaps such as the lack of a consistent and targeted approach for developing "bright stars", lack of qualified arts educators and lack of quality tertiary arts training institutions in Singapore. Recommendations to enhance capability development programmes in Singapore include:

- Attract talent scouts to Singapore to aid in talent-spotting.
- Provide "artist-out-of-residence" programmes to expose artists to other cultures and dimensions of human experiences.
- Develop an accreditation scheme for arts educators.

4. Develop Arts Resources

Initiatives required to support arts development include:

- Develop schemes to encourage buildings to create arts spaces.
- Provide integrated creative spaces to house artists, agents, publishers and marketers.
- Allow regional arts centres to use existing spaces e.g. office buildings and schools.
- Transform public space to open arts space, as having art galleries is equivalent to advertising space for the arts.
- Provide central arts storage facilities for bulky items like costumes and props.

5. Stimulate Broader and More Sophisticated Demand

In Singapore, the general appreciation of aesthetics is low and there appears to be a dichotomy between the arts and normal life for most Singaporeans. Arts education is thus fundamental for developing arts audiences. However, in Singapore, the focus of current arts education is narrow and largely western arts-centric. The delivery of arts education is also more focused on the product rather than the creative process. Hence, students do not benefit as much from arts education as they should. Recommendations to help nurture arts audiences include:

- Leverage mainstream media platforms (e.g. popular TV programmes, websites) to reach out more extensively to the general population.
- Work with Ministry of Education to establish quality arts programmes in schools.
- Develop arts education programmes for adults.

6. Advocate the Importance of the Arts

There is a lack of publicity and general awareness of the arts in Singapore. Support from the media could be improved. There is also limited understanding of intellectual property rights and professional pay agreements. Recommendations to step up arts advocacy include:

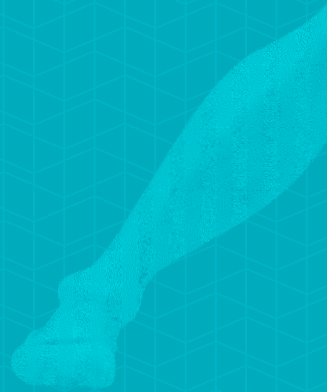
- Establish standard industry practices.
- Create an award for arts criticism.

ANNEX 2

ART FORM-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

ART FORM	KEY INITIATIVES
<p>Music</p> <p>The music scene today is characterised by the continued emergence of new music groups as well as an increasing rate of participation and interest in contemporary popular genres. The growing number of music events and platforms in Singapore is one source of the vibrancy of the local music scene. The Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra are well-established as the nation's flagship arts companies. Formal music education opportunities in Singapore have been enhanced with the establishment of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music and School of the Arts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation and development of new works through the Arts Creation Fund and other grant schemes. • Promote the internationalisation of Singapore musicians via supporting musicians at global music festivals and markets such as MIDEM and South By Southwest. • Support the development of distribution channels for greater profiling of Singapore music, e.g. music portal. • Provide more capability development and training opportunities for musicians via international residencies and Arts Professional Development Grant. • Provide comprehensive support to nurture young performing talent. This includes major talent spotting platforms such as national and regional competitions, assistance programmes (scholarships, bursaries and other grants) for skill development as well as facilitation for these talent to have access to corporate sponsorship (e.g. HSBC Youth Excellence Award) for further artistic development.
<p>Dance</p> <p>A small and dedicated pool of dance practitioners has made significant contributions to the development of dance in Singapore. The Singapore Dance Theatre continues to dominate the ballet scene. In the contemporary dance scene, steady growth is seen. Some exciting new entrants to have emerged in recent years include T.H.E Dance Company, Albert Tiong and Joavien Ng.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation and development of new works through the Arts Creation Fund and other grant schemes. • Promote the internationalisation of Singapore dancers and dance companies at global performing arts festivals and markets such as APAM and CINARS. • Provide more training and capability development opportunities for dance practitioners via international residencies and Arts Professional Development Grant. • Provide comprehensive support to nurture young performing talent. This includes assistance programme (scholarships, bursaries and other grants) for skill development as well as facilitation for these talent to have access to corporate sponsorship (e.g. HSBC Youth Excellence Award) for further artistic development. • Attract key international dance events to Singapore to spur greater interest in dance and to help reinforce the reputation of Singapore as a key destination for the arts, e.g. Genée Ballet Competition in 2009
<p>Theatre</p> <p>The theatre scene is very active in Singapore. Ticketed theatre performances account for 45% of total ticketed performances in Singapore. The local theatre scene is driven by a pool of dedicated and trained practitioners comprising actors, directors and technical theatre professionals. A good variety of infrastructure is also available for the artists and presenters to stage their performances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation and development of new works through the Arts Creation Fund and other grant schemes. • Promote the internationalisation of Singapore theatre practitioners at global performing arts festivals and markets. • Provide more training and capability development opportunities for theatre practitioners and supporting professionals via international residencies and Arts Professional Development Grant.

ART FORM	HIGHLIGHTS
<p>Visual Arts</p> <p>The increased vibrancy and continuing growth of the visual arts sector and scene are due primarily to growth in quality and quantity of visual artists, intermediaries and flourishing arts businesses. New art spaces continue to emerge and provide exhibition and networking opportunities for artists, curators and impresarios. The Black Earth Art Museum, Post Museum, Muse House, Osage Singapore and Valentine Willie Fine Arts Singapore are some recent additions to the Singapore art landscape. More artists are undergoing professional skills development overseas in the form of masterclasses and residencies, often resulting in invitations to present their works at international platforms and offers of international gallery representation. Singapore and Singapore-based art galleries are also making their presence felt in the international art fair circuit through participation in key regional fairs such as ARTSingapore and ShContemporary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support artists and curators in the development of new works and exhibitions through development grants. • Promote fine art photography practice, events and appreciation. • Establish Singapore as a key art business destination with international art fairs and auction houses. • Support international participation of Singapore and Singapore-based art galleries at major art fairs. • Encourage capability development and international exposure of artists through international residencies, exchanges and exhibition platforms. • Encourage local arts groups to host/conduct residency programmes for local and foreign artists. • Forge partnerships with international top-tier residencies. • Address shortage of incubation spaces for developing artists, curators and critics. • Encourage more platforms for art discourse and criticism. • Encourage private corporations to commission public art installations.
<p>Literary Arts</p> <p>The high literacy rate in Singapore provides a good foundation for grooming writers and readers. The bilingual and multi-lingual writers in Singapore make it well-placed to position itself as the hub for Southeast Asian Literary Arts. Key challenges to be addressed include the lack of resources and incubators for new or long prose writing and lack of literary agents and trained literary critics. A renewed push for greater appreciation of Literature is also critical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sustained development grants to established writers to develop new works. • Provide incentives for publishers to invest in commercially viable local writers, poets, etc. • Identify and grow a pool of literary agents. • Support the professional development of critics, arts journalists, etc. • Engage the private sector to boost marketing of locally-authored books. • Encourage and incentivise the appreciation of literary works in other languages, i.e. Chinese, Malay and Tamil.



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
SINGAPORE