



# EUFF 2019 REPORT

EUROPEAN UNION FILM FESTIVAL  
29<sup>TH</sup> EUFF  
SINGAPORE

# EUROPEAN UNION FILM FESTIVAL

10 - 19 MAY 2019

NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

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## 1. EUFF

In its 29th edition, the European Union Film Festival (EUFF) continued to celebrate the multi-faceted nature and pluralism of Europe through the compelling narrative of cinema. European Union Member States and European partner countries provided an excellently curated selection of exciting contemporary films from their home countries. All in, 27 critically acclaimed films from 27 countries reflecting the diversity of perspectives, histories and cultures from across Europe were featured in EUFF 2019.

This year, Romania was the Featured Country. In a nod to EU's commitment to inclusivity, EUFF kicked off the opening night in the presence of film director Tedy Nacula. The director, who has cerebral palsy, flew in from Bucharest to introduce his compelling directorial debut *Beside Me*.

The festival, a keenly anticipated cultural highlight in Singapore's packed arts calendar, ran from May 10th-19th at the iconic National Gallery Singapore, where it has been located since the EUFF's re-programming and re-positioning three years ago. The stunning venue with its marked connection with the arts provided an important cultural context for EUFF. The setting reinforced also the excellent cultural collaboration and cooperation between Singapore and Europe.

Overall  
attendance:  
80%

Audience  
Numbers at  
National Gallery  
Singapore:  
5,000

## 2. EUFF Opening Night

Nearly 400 invited guests and European Ambassadors joined Tedy Necula, director of the Romanian film *Beside Me*; our guest-of-honour Dr Mohamed Maliki Osman, Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Defence & Foreign Affairs; and H.E. Barbara Plinkert, EU Ambassador to Singapore, for EUFF's opening night.

After a packed and lively reception, for the first time EUFF featured an insightful panel discussion as part of its opening night presentation.

Titled "Crossroads to Convergence: Art, Culture, Education and Education Perspectives from the European Union Film Festival", the panel featured director Necula; Mr Florin Marius Tacu, Romania's Ambassador to Singapore; Ms Eva Noordujin, Vice-Principal GESS; Ms

Suenne Megan Tan, Director Audience Development at National Gallery Singapore; Mr Craig McTurk from Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Mr Kenneth Tan, Chairman, Singapore Film Society. It was moderated by Deepika Shetty, Press Officer for the EU in Singapore.

Necula's film explores the idea of human connectivity in a cramped space. The story centres around several strangers stranded on the subway. Over time, these people with different pasts, issues and stories interact with one another to form unlikely relationships. *Beside Me* is a telling reminder that we are all strangers until something brings us together. The cast brings together some of the biggest names of Romanian cinema.





# Opening Night Snapshots





### 3. Title Sponsor

The German European School Singapore was once again the festival's title sponsor. This relationship between GESS and EUFF began three years ago and has deepened ever since with greater engagement of students taking on roles of event emcees, floor managers and ushers. Each year, over 20 students from the school are directly involved in the presentation of EUFF.



### 4. Partnership with Ngee Ann Polytechnic

In its 29th edition, EUFF continued its long standing tradition of collaborating with a Singaporean film school. Partnering for the fifth time with Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Film and Media Studies, the festival featured seven short films by students of the school, alongside the official film selection. The selection this year included documentaries and dramas that focused on various aspects of life in Singapore, enabling guests to visually experience sides of the island that they would otherwise be unfamiliar with.

Director Theophilus Sng's poetic rendition of everyday life through the evocative short *Life in the Void*, was screened on opening night. It offered the audience a glimpse into daily happenings at HDB (Singapore's public housing) void decks. These are empty spaces found in clusters - a place that many Singaporeans have fond memories of. By featuring these student and alumni films, EUFF not only acts as a window into the intriguing world of European cinema, but also offers a platform to showcase the works of young Singaporean film-makers.

## 5. New Programming Aspects

This year saw several new programming elements which made the EUFF experience much more interactive. A first: a panel discussion at the media conference held in April and on opening night.



Another first, a live music performance ahead of the screening of Irish film *Sing Street*. Over the course of the festival, there were more post-show dialogues; an increase in the number of pre-show receptions hosted by participating countries and dialogues with Romanian film director Nacula and Spanish director Paula Ortiz. Both were flown in by the Embassies of Romania and Spain respectively. Their presence and insights into the background, inspiration for their craft and the making up of their films added much to the EUFF 2019 programming.



## 6. New Visual Elements

A new addition to the film festival was the display of costumes from various European countries. These costume standees were introduced as a way to encourage engagement and interactions with European cultures. The feature, which showcased the richness and diversity of traditions and cultural heritage within the EU, was well-received by guests of all ages, particularly by children. It got excellent visibility on social media platforms.



## 7. Receptions

Several participating countries organized pre-screening receptions, which were greatly appreciated by guests who got to sample wines, cheeses and other delicacies such as Swedish hot-dogs, Portuguese egg tarts, Spanish tortillas. Guests also appreciated the opportunity to engage with Ambassadors from various countries.

## 8. Community Engagement

As the relationship between our title sponsor and the EU in Singapore is so collaborative in nature, students from GESS were involved in the EUFF from beginning to end. From taking on the role of MC at the media conference and opening night, to helping out as ticket ushers and floor managers, their help enabled the EUFF to run smoothly in terms of its operational capacity. The students were the fresh faces of the EUFF and by working with them, the EU was able to demonstrate its commitment to engaging with the next generation.



## 9. Sold Out Screenings

10 EUFF films sold out this year, compared to 8 last year.



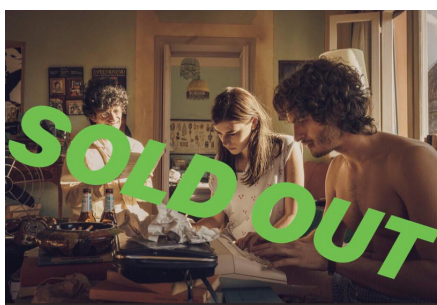
1. Remi, Nobody's Boy  
- France



2. Magical Mystery or: The Return of Karl  
Schmidt - Germany



3. Kazantzakis - Greece



4. Magical Nights - Italy



5. Sing Street - Ireland



6. Homo Novus - Latvia



7. The Wild City  
- The Netherlands



8. The Art of Loving: The  
Story of Michalina Wislocka  
- Poland



9. The Bride - Spain



10. Once Upon a Time in Anatolia - Turkey

Most other  
films had  
over 80%  
attendance!



## 10. Media Coverage

The media attention and word-of-mouth that the EUFF received this year has been exhaustive and extensive. Coverage included articles in various magazines and leading newspapers such as The Straits Times. There were interviews with EU Ambassador to Singapore Barbara Plinkert and several film directors. Additionally, the festival received widespread visibility on social media.



The Straits Times

### Exclusive Interview with Mark Verkerk, Director of the Wild City

<https://bit.ly/2J3yfEP>

### Time Out Singapore

<https://www.timeout.com/singapore/film/european-union-film-festival>

### Our Parenting World

<https://ourparentingworld.com/the-european-union-film-festival-2019-showcasing-the-best-of-contemporary-european-cinema/>

### Life Style Asia

<https://www.lifestyleasia.com/sg/culture/european-union-film-festival-2019/>

### In Cinemas

<https://incinemas.sg/article-details.aspx?id=3200>

### The World of Apu

<http://theworldofapu.com/interview-with-mark-verkerk/>

### Sinema

<http://www.sinema.sg/2019/04/04/news-showcasing-best-of-contemporary-european-cinema-29th-edition-of-european-union-film-festival/>

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