



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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NTU Singapore and the European Union launch SEA AiR, a new studio residential programme in the EU for Southeast Asian artists

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) and the European Union Delegation to Singapore today launched the **Studio Residencies in the EU for Southeast Asian Artists (SEA AiR)**, a new programme that aims to create a peer-to-peer cultural and artistic exchange between Southeast Asia and Europe, with Singapore as its hub.

This public diplomacy project is funded by EU's Foreign Policy Instruments.

SEA AiR will offer selected artists from Southeast Asia an engaging immersion in the European art scene that allows a deeper understanding of the various cultural strands and values shaping the continent. Through this experience, participating artists can create links with other art projects in Singapore, their home countries and the wider region. At the end of the residency, the artists will have an exhibition in Singapore which will enable them to present and showcase their artwork to a wider audience.

As a new residency programme, SEA AiR will promote a creative exchange enhancing the EU-Singapore-ASEAN dialogue through contemporary art and provide a meaningful opportunity for artists who have previously not lived or studied in the EU. Likewise, host institutions will benefit from expanding their networks in Southeast Asia, a region that has been historically under-represented in most artist-in-residence programmes in Europe.

Leading NTU's efforts in this partnership with the European Union is the **NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (NTU CCA Singapore)**.

The first host institution will be the **WIELS Contemporary Art Centre** in Brussels, Belgium. As a space dedicated to the exhibition and support of emerging artists since 2007, WIELS occupies a central stage in the art scene. A highly renowned institution dedicated to contemporary art, its residency is supporting emerging artists towards professional practices, presenting original artistic visions and facilitating critical exchange, and establishing connections between local and international artists and curators.

Barbara Plinkert, European Union Ambassador to Singapore said: “We have in the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore an excellent partner to present this project that will foster rich artistic exchanges inspired by travel and cultural exposure to Europe. SEA AiR offers a deeper, more extensive engagement and immersion in the vibrant European cultural landscape and arts scene to experience first-hand the various cultural strands and values shaping our world today.”

This initiative involves emerging artists in Singapore and Southeast Asia to further develop their practice, careers, networks and exposure where opportunities may not likely have existed. It also offers a means for European cultural institutions and communities to establish international cooperation and exchange with Singapore and the diverse Southeast Asian region.

Professor Joseph Liow, Dean of College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University said: “NTU, through the Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore is proud to be partnering with the EU Delegation in Singapore on this initiative that will be of great impact to the development of contemporary art and artists in Singapore and Southeast Asia. This partnership is a demonstration of the recognition of the Centre’s track record and further strengthens ties between the university and the EU. The SEA AiR programme is a significant opportunity for emerging Singaporean and ASEAN artists and we are pleased to support them in this way.”

How SEA AiR works

Residency candidates will be nominated by a pool of curators and arts professionals in Singapore and the region. These artists will subsequently submit a proposal for review to the Selection Committee, consisting of a panel of experts including the EU Delegation.

Selected artists will be offered a residency at selected European host institutions for up to three months, which will include studio access, accommodation and regional research trip opportunities. The artists are expected to present a new work from their residency upon their return reflecting on their experience in the residency, cultural exchange, creative dialogues, community and professional connections and more.

NTU CCA Singapore will serve as a connector and positive catalyst between all stakeholders and will provide mentorship and guidance to the selected artists in developing and realising their work and projects.

At the end of their residency, NTU CCA Singapore and the EU host institution will continue to provide the artists with feedback and support. NTU CCA Singapore’s curatorial team will also work closely with them on an exhibition or presentation in Singapore to showcase the body of work pursued whilst in Europe. Furthermore, they

will share their process of artistic enquiry with the public via a range of public programmes.

See **Annex A** for more information about SEA AiR—Studio Residencies for Southeast Asian Artists in the EU.

Since its inception in October 2013, NTU CCA Singapore has successfully conceptualised and administered an extensive residencies programme, supporting artists, curators, and scholars alike by offering them time and space to pursue their research without the pressure of deadlines and production commitments.

The Centre’s residencies programme is dedicated to working with established and emerging artists and is recognised as a platform for critical exchange in Southeast Asia. Its studio-based programme values the open-ended nature of artistic research and embraces multiform expressions of creative enquiry. This approach is of particular importance, allowing for free expression and giving artists latitude to question society in its plurality.

NTU CCA Singapore’s expertise in the selection of artists, its network of international host organisations, and experience in the administering of artists’ residencies makes it the ideal organising institution to launch SEA AiR.

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ANNEX A – SEA AiR Fact Sheet

SEA AiR aims to bring six emerging Singaporean or Southeast Asian artists over three years from 2021-2023 to Europe.

In the first year, candidates put forward by nominators selected by NTU CCA Singapore from arts, educational, and cultural institutions throughout Southeast Asia would provide a research proposal as an application for a three-month residency in the European Union.

The host institutions in Europe will provide access to a furnished studio, accommodation, per diems, regional research field trip and logistical and day-to-day assistance in a community of creative practitioners.

The artists will have ample opportunities for building networks as well as personal and professional development. Formal convenings of artists-in-residence with their peers drawn from a local or international cohort can take the form of sharing sessions, studio critique sessions, and organised study trips.

Curatorial and artistic mentorship would take the form of regular studio visits or other sessions with assigned mentors and less formal studio visits with visiting curators and artists. These sessions will centre around discussions on their research and studio projects as well as their practice as a whole.

During their time in the EU, artists will attend public programmes, exhibitions, and other events at the host institution. They will also have the opportunity to present their work publicly, in the form of a lecture, performance, screening, installation, or open studio event. Artists-in-Residence will also participate in group excursions and sessions alongside other residency artists.

About Nanyang Technological University

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. It also has a medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, set up jointly with Imperial College London.

NTU is also home to world-class autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Ranked amongst the world's top universities by QS, NTU has also been named the world's top young university for the past seven years. The University's main campus is frequently listed among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) buildings, of which 95% are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a campus in Novena, Singapore's healthcare district.

Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg

About NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore

A leading international art institution, NTU CCA Singapore is a platform, host, and partner creating and driven by dynamic thinking in its three-fold constellation: Exhibitions, Residencies Programme, Research and Academic Education. A national research centre for contemporary art of Nanyang Technological University, the Centre focuses on Spaces of the Curatorial. It brings forth innovative and experimental forms of emergent artistic and curatorial practices that intersect the present and histories of contemporary art embedded in social-political spheres with other fields of knowledge. For more information, visit <http://ntu.ccasingapore.org/>

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About the European Union

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union of 27 Member States. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. The EU is the largest trade block in the world, as well as the world's main source and the top global destination of foreign direct investment.

The 27 EU Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

About the European Union Delegation to Singapore

Set up in December 2002, the EU Delegation to Singapore formally opened on June 30, 2004. Since then, the EU's diplomatic representation has worked to promote closer ties between the EU and Singapore. The wide-ranging relationship has strengthened over the years. In close coordination with the diplomatic missions of the EU Member States, the Delegation ensures consistency and effectiveness of the EU's external action in Singapore.

With 27 countries, more than 450 million people and the largest GDP in the world, the EU is of increasing importance to Singapore, especially since the entry into force of the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA) on 21st November 2019, as well as ASEAN.

The Delegation covers a range of issues such as trade, foreign policy, climate change, environment, transport, industrial policy, research, science, technology as well as education activities such as the Study In Europe fair and on the cultural front presents the annual European Film Festival (EUFF), which takes place this year from May 6th-23rd at The Projector.

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