

Community Brief

An occasional bulletin of projects, events and engagements that underscore ITI's commitment to and involvement with the wider community in and outside Singapore

June 2011

Short Programmes.....



UB Arts Management Summer School 2011

21 - 29 May 2011

The UB Arts Management Summer School 2011 of the Arts Management Programme of University at Buffalo (UB), State University of New York, was a collaboration between UB and ITI. It was the first UB Arts Management Summer School to be held outside Europe, the previous ones having taken place at the Venice Biennale (2009), Finland and Sweden (2008), and France (2007). Participating in the programme co-developed by ITI were postgraduate students from the USA, as well as from Germany and Tajikistan. On ITI's initiative, two places were also offered to Singaporeans, through Six Degrees (a community of people and organisations from the arts, design and media).

Students considered and discussed arts management and cultural policy in Singapore and the region, centred on the theme: "The Arts and Cultural Identity in a Borderless World". Speakers and instructors included:

- Benson Puah, CEO, National Arts Council and The Esplanade Co Ltd
- Tisa Ho, Executive Director, Hong Kong Arts Festival
- Tan Boon Hui, Director, Singapore Art Museum
- Dr Ruth Bereson, Director, Arts Management Programme, UB
- Alvin Tan, Artistic Director, The Necessary Stage
- Alex Au, web commentator, yawningbread.wordpress.com
- Laurence Leong, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore
- Lysa Hong, Historian, former Senior Visiting Fellow at the National University of Singapore History Department
- Gene Sha Rudyn, Founder, Keelat Theatre Ensemble, actor and director
- Dr Kwok Kian Woon, Head, Division of Sociology, Vice-Dean (Academic) at Nanyang Technological University, and Board Member, ITI
- T. Sasitharan, Director, ITI

Events & Speaking Engagements.....



Harvard Singapore Foundation – Tote Board Lecture Series

8 June & 19 April 2011

This series of lectures on social capital included one by Paul Brest, President and Director, Philanthropy Programme, Hewlett Foundation, who spoke on “Strategic Philanthropy in an Interconnected World: The Hewlett Foundation's Approach”. It was followed by “New Social Capital: What Non-profits Can Learn from the Business World” by Dr Kjell A. Nordström, Associate Professor at Stockholm School of Economics. ITI Director of Development, Josephine Tan, who was invited to attend the talks, notes that the future ultra-modern company, as depicted by Dr Nordström, is not unlike a non-profit organisation like ITI – smaller in headcount but not necessarily in its impact. Such a company is about originality, and is always creating and innovating.



Free Speech in a Borderless World: A Public Forum

28 May 2011

This forum was jointly presented by ITI and the Arts Management Programme of the University at Buffalo (UB), State University of New York. The public event was an extension of the UB Arts Management Summer School 2011, which had the theme, “The Arts and Cultural Identity in a Borderless World”. The forum addressed one key concern, which was the idea of free speech in a borderless world. Recent events worldwide demonstrate that today, communication is instantaneous and borderless, and has an impact on everyone’s lives. In this context, the question of free speech is more urgent and challenging than ever before.

The panellists at the forum were Alex Au of blogsite YawningBread, Alvin Tan, Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage and Vijay Chandran, Chair of the Films Consultative Panel, Media Development Agency. The discussion that saw a diverse audience of some 50 people was moderated by poet, writer and playwright Alfian Sa’at.



2011 Arts Awards

Sasi was appointed to the assessment panel for the Cultural Medallion in theatre, where he will serve as Chairperson. The Arts Awards are presented by the National Arts Council every year to recognise artistic excellence in the arts.

Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) – Arts and Culture Strategic Review

The Arts and Culture Strategic Review was initiated in 2010 by MICA to chart Singapore’s next phase of cultural development. ITI General Manager, Goh Su Lin, was invited to be in a focus group to discuss the preliminary recommendations of the review. This is part of MICA’s aim to obtain feedback from key stakeholders to refine the recommendations before they are finalised.

National Arts Council (NAC)

ITI’s Board Chairman, Philip Jeyaretnam, co-moderated with Kok Heng Leun of Drama Box a dialogue session on NAC’s grants framework on 6 June 2011. This session was one of a series of dialogues to seek feedback from the arts community in the council’s review of its current grants schemes.

For the ongoing NAC Scholarship and Bursary Schemes, Su Lin was appointed to the panel to interview this year’s Arts Management applicants.

Workforce Development Agency (WDA)

Since 2008, ITI General Manager Goh Su Lin has been consulted by WDA in the development of competency standards in the arts and culture sector. This is part of WDA’s Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system, a “national credentialing system” applied to competency-based training of the workforce. In 2008, Su Lin was appointed a member of the Arts & Culture Manpower Skills & Training Council to validate competency standards for arts and culture. Her appointment was renewed for another two years.

Artworks radio programme: “Singapore Arts Festival”

12 Jun 2011

Artworks, a weekly arts and culture programme broadcast by ABC National Radio in Australia, covered the Singapore Arts Festival 2011. Reporter Debra McCoy also investigated arts and cultural development in Singapore, which gave a background to the coverage of the festival. Among the people she interviewed was ITI Director, T. Sasitharan, who was asked about the development of theatre in Singapore. He talked about the prospect for theatre, which he said “has widened considerably”, as well as theatre criticism and theatre’s place in Singapore society.

Sasi said: “Theatre has a very unique place in Singapore’s culture.” He elaborated that many issues “which were dealt with by academia or by the media or by special interest groups in Western societies, were dealt with by theatre [in Singapore]. And that was one of the main reasons why people began going to the theatre. It wasn’t just simply about entertainment.” On theatre criticism, Sasi noted that while in the past “the lack of criticism in the arts is a reflection of a wider and more general lack of criticism in society”, the environment has changed. He observed that “sensibilities of critique have become more acceptable” and “there is now slowly developing an alternative critical scene on the internet”, with a wide range of blogs and reviews on theatre, dance and literature.

To listen to the full programme, go to <http://www.abc.net.au/m/artworks/stories/2011/3239885.htm>