

# TOWARDS NAFA 100

YEAR IN REVIEW 2023/24



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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Having celebrated major milestones such as the academy's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary and being a founding member of the University of the Arts Singapore (UAS), Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) is now at a monumental juncture in its history to redefine the global arts and cultural landscape.

NAFA most recently developed the NAFA100 Strategic Vision Masterplan for 2025 to 2038, signalling our intent and commitment to spearhead the arts, forming strong connections across the world, empowering our students and alumni as empathetic changemakers to uplift those around us—NAFA will evolve as a centenarian worth emulating.

As Singapore's pioneer arts institution, we will continue to be custodians for Southeast Asian arts research and learning, elevate our distinctive cradle-to-grey educational pathways, enhance and deepen our programme offerings, nurture partnerships with eminent institutions around the globe; all with a bold spirit of innovation and enterprise.

With open minds and open hearts, and grounded by timeless values of passion, care, and achieving excellence, we will continue advocating for diverse artistic creations with meaningful social impact. Let us scale new heights together as we march on to our 100<sup>th</sup> year with a courage to create.

## **Ms Low Sin Leng**

Chairman and Director

Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Singapore





# LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

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				<b>Ms Hazel Chan Hui Shih</b> Director, Strategic Development Division/ Head, Planning & Projects Office	
				<b>Mr Wong Kron Joo</b> Director, Finance Office	
				<b>Ms Tay Chor Ngo</b> Registrar, Office of Student Affairs	
				<b>Mr Zulkifli Bin Osman</b> Head, Information Technology Office	
				<b>Mr Xavier Tan TingXuan</b> Head, Estate Management Office	

# NUMBER HIGHLIGHTS

## TERTIARY EDUCATION

3

faculties

9

schools

22

diploma and bachelor's degree programmes

3

master's degree programmes

1

NAFA Foundation Programme

More than

500

diploma and degree students travelled abroad for Overseas Immersion Programmes, Study Trips and International Placements

More than

25

Memoranda of Understanding signed with prominent educational institutions and organisations

Over

S\$1.2

million given out to

239

students in scholarships, merit awards and bursaries

2,510

attendees at NAFA Open House 2024

## LIFELONG EDUCATION

933

places taken up in Certificate Courses

1,201

places taken up in Short Courses

11

new Short Courses in craft, design, fine art and wellness

## CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT AND ARTS PRESCHOOL

5,024

young talents in art, dance, drama and music weekend classes

New preschool campus at

70

Bendeemer Road

## ALUMNI AND EMPLOYMENT

Over

19,000

full-time graduates to date

751

graduates from the Class of 2023

78%

overall employment rate for diploma and degree graduates

9 in 10

in employment secured jobs before graduation or within 3 months after graduation

1 in 2

interns were offered full-time employment after internship

## ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Ranked

#4

for the Education Sector and #63 among all employers in Singapore's Best Employers 2024

2

Tripartite Alliance Awards for Work-Life Excellence and Leadership in 2023

National Workplace Learning Organisation of Competence Gold Award 2023

Charity Transparency Award 2023



# A KALEIDOSCOPE OF TRIUMPHS AND COLLABORATIONS

As one of the leading arts institutions in the region, NAFA upholds the spirit of unbridled creativity and curiosity. By pushing the boundaries of learning and providing a platform for artists to collaborate and create, we continue to inspire generations to express themselves through bold and impactful works of art.

Over the past year, we have continued to cultivate a community that fosters discourse, drives learning and encourages co-creation. We also leveraged technology to find new ways of expression. As we celebrate the accomplishments of faculty, students, staff and artists across the region, our commitment remains steadfast: to empower artists with the courage to create.

## Research



Object theatre performing group Flying Balloons puppet performing Jala Lan Jana: The Everlasting Dance

### Southeast Asian Arts Forum 2023: Sustainability 2.0: Coding the World That Will Remake Itself

Continuing from the previous years' sustainability-centred theme, the 2023 Southeast Asian Arts Forum presented 'Sustainability 2.0: Coding the World That Will Remake Itself', a two-day hybrid event that highlighted creative practices working towards harmony between humans and nature.

The forum saw 11 leading regional artists, designers, artisans and scholars from a variety of creative and academic disciplines, come together to examine the concept of sustainable consumption and production in their fields.

Particularly memorable was a specially commissioned performance by Yogyakarta-based object theatre performing group, Flying Balloons Puppet. By tracing the lineage of rivers and the communities in the vicinity, the group drew attention to the intricate, ever-evolving relationship between man and nature.

Additionally, in line with the Institute of Southeast Asian Arts (ISEAA)'s mission of championing practice-based and practice-led learning, the forum also hosted a zine-making workshop for NAFA students from the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Fine Art programme. The workshop, facilitated by the Hanoi-based Ba Bau Art Collective, centred around the theme of space-making. Students were given the opportunity to examine how responsibility and sustainability play a part in building communities of the future, and to put together their findings and responses in a mini-publication.

Finally, there was also a dialogue session, where artists explored the past and future of their practices, and shared innovative ways to create and push boundaries as a practitioner in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, the forum not only showcased the artists' determination to survive, but also their profound search for harmony between humans and our surrounding ecology.



Photo credit: Memphis West Pictures/Don Wong

### Arts & Design Practice Research Exchange *Attending Differently: Practising Research*

The inaugural Arts & Design Practice Research Exchange (ADPRex) is Southeast Asia's first annual conference dedicated to practice research. Held on 27 July 2023, it saw NAFA's faculty come together to exchange insights uncovered through various arts and design practices, and share their visions for the future.

Keynote speaker, Associate Professor (now Professor) Jesvin Yeo Puay Hwa from Nanyang Technological University, delivered a compelling presentation on 'Driving Meaningful Social Change Through Creative Research'. This highlighted the possibilities of combining creativity and research to address complex societal challenges, explore artistic making, inspire empathy and action, and challenge the status quo.

Another keynote speaker, Dr Diana Salazar from Royal College of Music (RCM), London offered an equally inspiring presentation on 'Towards a Practice Research Ecology: Radical Listening in the Conservatoire'. Dr Salazar showcased how RCM, rooted in late 19<sup>th</sup> century classical music, is evolving through new discourses, practices and technologies—illustrating how research, once historically overlooked, now forms a central part of RCM's identity.

This significant milestone positions NAFA as the leading centre of arts and design practice research in the region. It also underscores our commitment to shaping the future of arts and design practice research, and fostering a dynamic community of innovative thinkers and practitioners.





## Inaugural Digital Interdisciplinary Arts Salon

The Faculty of Interdisciplinary Practices was established in January 2023. On October 12 and 13, it celebrated the integration of art, technology and culture with its inaugural event, the Digital Interdisciplinary Arts Salon.

The NAFA Studio Theatre and Foyer was transformed into a creative space for arts practitioners and academics to gather, discuss, exchange ideas—and ultimately uncover how to push boundaries of what is possible in the digital age.

Prominent speakers such as Andreas Schlegel (LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore), Dayn Ng (NAFA), Fu Yongwei (NAFA), and Matthew Hawkins (Camberwell College of Arts, University of the Arts London) energised the event. Together, they led the audience in vibrant discussions delving into the exciting and evolving digital world of interdisciplinary arts and design.



## Living with the Rising Seas – Ideas Competition for Singapore's South-eastern Coastline

In 2023, Singapore's national water agency, PUB, launched the 'Living with the Rising Seas' Ideas Competition. They invited local tertiary students to propose innovative ideas that can protect the South-eastern coastline of Singapore from rising sea levels while still achieving liveability, flexibility and sustainability. NAFA's Year 3 3D Design students from Diploma in Design (Landscape and Architecture) rose to the challenge and worked on the brief as part of their Final Year Project.

The competition garnered 32 entries from eight tertiary institutions. Of the nine winning entries, four were from NAFA in the Urban Promenade, and Nature-centred Coastline typologies. The innovative ideas and concepts generated may potentially influence PUB's future measures for coastal protection, thereby leveraging the creativity of the younger generation in tackling real-world challenges.

## Competitions



## Crowbar Awards 2023

NAFA's School of Design & Media students performed exceptionally well at the prestigious Crowbar Awards 2023, themed 'The Multiplier'. Of the 600 submissions, our talented students earned 10 Golds, 12 Silvers and seven Bronzes. 13 of our students were also named finalists.

In addition, our students were crowned the Crowbar Challenge Gold (winner). The adrenaline-pumping challenge, presented by foodpanda, pushed teams of two to five participants to their creative limits with a 48-hour deadline to solve a brief. Evaluated on design, feasibility, creativity, presentation skills and more, our students' remarkable achievement underscores the rigorous training embedded in NAFA's curriculum, which equips them with critical skills and the ability to excel under pressure.



## Spatial Design Awards (SPADE) 2023

The Interior Design Confederation Singapore's (IDCS) Design Excellence Awards (DEA) celebrates the achievements of both professionals and students in the interior design industry by recognising the best commercial, residential, and public design projects in Asia Pacific.

For its 10<sup>th</sup> edition, IDCS brought back 26 of its most popular award categories across two competition tracks: Interior Design Excellence Awards (I-DEA) for professional interior designers and firms, and Spatial Design Awards (SPADE) for design students.

The prestigious competition saw NAFA's Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Design Practice students secure the Bronze award for Best Exhibition Design, Best Public Design, and Best Sustainable Design. A student also received the Highly Commended prize in Best Exhibition Design. The winners were selected by an esteemed panel of highly regarded interior design professionals. The awards were announced at a ceremony held on 14 December 2023 at Shangri-La Singapore.

## Diploma in Theatre (Mandarin Drama) student crowned top at Script Reading Competition

We are proud that our Diploma in Theatre (Mandarin Drama) Year 2 student Luo Hanwen won first prize in the University Professional category, for the National Theatre of China's first Script Reading Competition. Additionally, NAFA received the esteemed Outstanding Organisation Award in recognition of our commitment to excellence in arts education and support for student endeavours. Senior Lecturer Zhao Na was also honoured with the Outstanding Advisor Award, underscoring her dedication and guidance to students in the Mandarin Drama programme. These accolades reflect NAFA's continuous efforts and dedication in nurturing talent and promoting excellence in the performing arts.



## International Arts Festival 2023

NAFA's Junior Dance students stole the spotlight at the International Arts Festival (IAF) organised by the Singapore Dance Alliance. They took to the stage with 13 solo performances in Ballet and Contemporary Dance, two duo performances in Ballet and Chinese Dance, as well as one trio, one ensemble, and seven group performances in Ballet and Chinese Dance.

Their impressive performances earned them six Gold Awards, five Silver Awards, nine Bronze Awards, eight Outstanding Teacher Awards, and four Potential Awards. Additionally, the Elite Chinese Dance Senior Level 3 group received the Grand Award in the Grand Ensemble/Group category and was invited to perform at IAF's Gala & Awards Presentation ceremony.



## NAFA School of Young Talents Christopher & Rosy Ho Music Competition 2023

77 students participated in the NAFA School of Young Talents Christopher & Rosy Ho Music Competition, held at the esteemed Lee Foundation Theatre and organised by the Junior Music department. The distinguished jury, which comprised three international and six local members, were blown away by the competitive showcase of talent across the four categories of Piano, Violin, Cello and Flute, and Chinese Instruments.

Ultimately, 12 contestants emerged victorious. The winners went on to showcase their musical prowess at the winners' concert and prize-giving ceremony on 4 June 2023. Besides recognition of their musical accomplishments, they also received certificates and prize money to support their tuition fees, marking a significant milestone in their artistic journey.



## Collaborations & Showcases

### XEMX: 5 Friends 10 Years Art Infinite

XEM is a group of visual artists based in Saigon, founded by five Vietnamese multidisciplinary artists, Nguyễn Thanh Trúc, Quang Lâm, Phan Quang, Hoàng Dương Cầm and Ưu Đàm Trần Nguyễn. XEM's experimental practices have led to the creation of videos, photographs, digital games, and installations—all of which advocate for sustainability by remaining responsive and adaptable to evolving socio-economic and cultural contexts. United by shared ideologies, aesthetics and beliefs, the works of XEM symbolise how hopes and dreams can manifest in contemporary times and everyday life.

*XEMX: 5 Friends 10 Years Art Infinite* was held in commemoration of XEM's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. NAFA was proud to be part of this milestone celebration.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Institute of Southeast Asian Arts (ISEAA) collaborated with NAFA's academic schools to increase students' exposure to Southeast Asian art practices. For example, students participated in an Art Clinic and used the XEM exhibition as

research material. They were also encouraged to explore what 'collective' means in contemporary Southeast Asian Arts discourse, and question the relevance of community and globalisation in our fractured times. Following this, they presented their findings and responses before XEM and their peers at the galleries.

Additionally, over 200 Year 1 diploma students attended an exhibition tour where XEM shared their journey both as individual artists and as a collective. XEM also articulated their intentions and thoughts on diversity pertaining to Vietnamese culture. The students learnt about challenges faced by artists as they strive for social and creative growth, and had a chance to participate in an exchange with others who share similar interests and values with them.

*XEMX: 5 Friends 10 Years Art Infinite* promoted vitality and diversity in art practice, serving as a foundation for young, aspiring artists to boldly kickstart their experimental art journey.



Installation view of *XEMX: 5 Friends 10 Years Art Infinite* exhibition – from right, video of Phan Quang, to left, photographic installation of Nguyễn Thanh Trúc



XEM collective in dialogue with Year 1 diploma students at the General Studies module

### Stories of Care III

*Stories of Care III*, a collaboration between Year 2 Fine Art degree students from NAFA and personnel from the Assisi Hospice, was designed to facilitate deep cross-disciplinary exchanges between the healthcare and art education sectors.

The third edition of the project fostered appreciation for healthcare practices, and raised awareness of topics relating to vulnerable communities, palliative and broader notions of care. It also encouraged contemplation on what it means to have empathy and dignity in the face of end-of-life issues.

Assisi Hospice personnel shared moving stories about their personal and professional experiences, giving students a chance to dive deep into the contributions of medical social workers and pastoral carers. Together, they co-created a collection of artworks based on these stories. The work was displayed at the hospice as well as a public exhibition—advocating for art's place in non-art settings and the value of peer-sharing.



*Saudade, 2023*, by Amirah Zahirah Binte Abu Bakar, Erin Nashira Binte Rudy Hesty, Heng Ying Xuan, Shana Selvan, Vinod Arnav, Callista (Assisi Hospice)



Photo credit: Jean-Christophe Olry

### Lao Fashion Week 2023

Testament to the exceptional talent and creativity of of NAFA's students, the School of Fashion Studies was invited to participate in Lao Fashion Week 2023, the most prestigious international fashion gathering in Laos which sees participation from designers all around Southeast Asia. Three standout outfits from the graduation collections of 2023 Diploma in Fashion Design graduates, Chua Jia Ling and Quek Yu Tong, were presented at the event.

Chua's *Anatomy* collection, inspired by the intricacies of the human anatomy, was tailored for the Spring/Summer 2024 season. The collection featured precise, well-fitted silhouettes that reflect the structural integrity of the body, alongside flowy pieces that capture the fluidity and natural motion of the human body.

Quek's *Saccharine Rush* collection, designed for Spring/Summer 2024, drew inspiration from the adrenaline rush. It captured the sweetness, sentimentality and nostalgia that one might experience during moments of excitement, fun, receiving undying love, or even having a good dream.



Photo credit: Lim Shao Yong

### NAFA 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Concert

The NAFA School of Music (SOM) put on a memorising display of musical excellence at the NAFA 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Concert. The concert was held on 8 April 2023 at the Victoria Concert Hall, and supported by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

SOM opened the event with the world premiere of a specially-commissioned work by Head of Composition at SOM, Dr Zechariah Goh, recipient of the 2014 NAFA Distinguished Alumni Medal and 2003 National Arts Council's Young Artist Award.

Led by Artistic Director, Maestro Lim Yau and in partnership with The Philharmonic Orchestra Singapore, the NAFA Orchestra then presented Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 5*, a piece described by esteemed conductor Serge Koussevitzky in the November 1945 *Time* magazine as "the greatest musical event in many, many years". Zhu Zunzun, Grand Prize Winner of the NAFA Concerto Competition 2022/2023, played the soloist in Prokofiev's lyrical and virtuosic *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63*.

This concert highlighted the artistic sensitivities and technical competencies of NAFA's students, faculty members and alumni, marking a significant milestone in NAFA's illustrious history.





## Crossings

Crossings is an annual celebration of Singapore's emerging dance talents. The 2023 edition, held on 12 and 13 May, offered a diverse showcase of dance works featuring distinguished local and international guest choreographers.

Jacky Yu from Hong Kong mesmerised the audience with his high level of individualism and fluidity of contemporary movement language in *Lights Up 15*, while Gillian Tan from Singapore expertly put together music, dance and fashion for a stunning display of *In Transition*. Shahrin Johry from Singapore restaged *Belladonna NightShade*, a contemporary piece with roots in Bharathanatyam and street; and Jeffrey Tan, also from Singapore, revisited the excerpt *Amalgamation*—a piece that managed to challenge the dancers' movement vocabulary while retaining the strength and beauty of classical ballet.

The repertoire of performances underscored the edge and versatility of NAFA's dancers, cementing our status in Southeast Asia as a leader in conservatory-styled programmes with a contemporary outlook.



## Walk With Me

*Walk With Me* was an immersive installation that encouraged visitors to take a break from the hustle of daily life and embrace the present moment. Held in conjunction with Singapore Night Festival 2023, the installation leveraged visual, sound and motion detection technology to trigger vibrant colours and audio effects as visitors passed. The unexpected twist captured their attention, prompting them to take a breather and rediscover a sense of childlike wonder.

The installation design was developed by Dayn Ng, sound artist and NAFA alumnus, and Iskander Abori, Programme Leader (Projects & Outreach), Faculty of Interdisciplinary Practices. Graphic design was by Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Design Practice student, Oh Jun Wei.



## My Art, Our Voices

NAFA's Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Performance Making Year 1 students and Interdisciplinary Project diploma students presented *My Art, Our Voices* as a performative response to the large-scale exhibition *Tropical: Stories from Southeast Asia and Latin America* at National Gallery Singapore. Inspired by the exhibition's themes such as 'The Myth of the Lazy Native', 'This Earth of Mankind', and 'The Subversive', the compelling performance opened with the manifesto "My Art, 'Art of Liberation'" by Semsar Siahaan (Jakarta, 1988). It continued with a non-linear journey through traditional and contemporary realms, showcasing beautiful, confident, post-colonial reclaimed identities through movement, dance, text, moving images and sound.



## Memories of Jogja: A showcase of NAFA's first Overseas Immersion Programme in Arts Management

*Memories of Jogja* showcased works from the first successful Overseas Immersion Programme (OIP) for Arts Management students at Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta (ISI Yogyakarta). Open to all visitors during the NAFA Open House 2024, the exhibition displayed diverse works done by the Year 3 students during and after the OIP, including photographs, videos, batik pieces and postcards. Visitors were also treated to Indonesian snacks 'Tastes of Jogja' and participated in a gamelan interactive activity 'Sounds of Jogja'.

The 2023 OIP is significant as it marked the first partnership between ISI Yogyakarta's Arts Management programme (Tata Kelola Seni) and the NAFA School of Arts Management. ISI Yogyakarta's programme is part of their Faculty of Visual Arts and boasts academic staff with strong expertise in visual arts management, archive curation, and traditional arts and artifact management.

Our Arts Management students benefited from insightful lectures and workshops. The lecture, 'Volunteerism and the Jogja Biennale', which detailed the development of volunteer programmes was noteworthy as it aligned with NAFA's efforts to encourage volunteerism among students. All in all, the enriching experience underscored the significance of international collaboration in broadening our students' educational and cultural horizons.



## New Advanced Certificate programmes in arts management and design literacy for marketing

On 19 May 2023, the NAFA Centre for Lifelong Education (CLE) and SMU Academy signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop and offer the SMU-NAFA Advanced Certificate in Arts Management for Arts Professionals, and the SMU-NAFA Advanced Certificate in Mastering Design Literacy for Marketing programmes. This collaboration is significant as it marks NAFA CLE's entry into the corporate training market. It also reaffirms our position in the Continuing Education and Training (CET) sector. By leveraging the expertise of NAFA and SMU, these programmes will empower learners with unique perspectives needed to enhance their professional practice in marketing and arts management. We are confident this partnership will bring together the arts and business, to enrich both lives and communities through education and practice.



## JA Art Carnival 2023

From 6 to 8 October 2023, NAFA's campus grounds were transformed into a vibrant platform of creativity for Junior Art's biennial Art Carnival. Excitement filled the carnival as students and the public alike tried their hands at a myriad of art and craft activities, all designed to elicit one's imagination and spark joy. Highlights of the event included interactive stations for participants to unleash their inner artist, and free popcorn to celebrate Children's Day 2023. The carnival was a joyous celebration of artistic expression and community spirit, making it an unforgettable event for everyone involved.



## Junior Drama student's work shines on Spotify, radio and film

At just 11 years old, Junior Drama Performance Ensemble student Aurvi Jain launched her first podcast. Her work was inspired by the Communication Skills class she took in 2023, where she achieved a high Distinction in her Trinity Grade 5 Communication Skills examinations.

During her time in class, Jain researched on environmental and animal protection. She also dived deep into the impact our behaviour has on the earth. Motivated to do more for our environment, she developed a podcast to share her views.

Jain's podcast episode aired on Spotify and was featured on Money FM 89.3 on 1 March 2024. She also completed a film project with Damon Gameau, an Australian actor, director and producer known for the documentaries *That Sugar Film* and *2040*. Their collaboration, set to be released later in 2024, signifies Jain's commitment to making a positive difference through her creative endeavours.



## Mother Tongue Languages Symposium 2023

The annual Mother Tongue Languages Symposium (MTLS) aims to promote Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) by sharing best practices for teaching and learning. Organised by the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning (CPCLL), the Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee (MLLPC) and the Tamil Language Learning and Promotion Committee (TLLPC), the symposium is targetted at educators at preschool and lower primary levels, as well as parents with young children.

In 2023, the NAFA Arts Preschool (APS) was invited by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) to participate and showcase our Chinese curriculum. We presented our innovative teaching approach, including the Project Approach for Chinese language, and shared a range of reading materials and resources designed to enrich language learning. Encouraged by the reception to our *Mulan*-inspired performance in 2022, we also explained how we integrated traditional folktales into various art forms to enhance learning experiences. To further engage our audience, we planned interactive Mandarin games, to create an immersive and educational experience for all.

Response was overwhelmingly positive. Supportive APS parents visited our booth at the Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre. Numerous parents also expressed interest in our distinctive curriculum and approach. We are honoured to have this invaluable opportunity to foster a love for the Chinese language and culture.



## Academy Highlights & Initiatives

### NAFA 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fundraising Gala

As a grand finale for our year-long 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, we held the NAFA 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fundraising Gala dinner on 2 September 2023 at Capella Singapore. Themed 'Bold & Gold', the commemorative event was graced by then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong (now Prime Minister and Minister for Finance).

The evening featured a multi-sensory experience that showcased NAFA's community of outstanding talents. Magnificent works of alumni and Faculty of Art & Design students were on display. Lecturers, students and alumni from the School of Dance and School of Music put on mesmerising performances. There was also a live auction featuring iconic works by distinguished artists such as Cultural Medallion recipient Han Sai Por, Tay Bak Chiang, Boo Sze Yang and more.

With the generous support of our patrons and donors, we raised more than S\$1.2 million for the NAFA Development Fund, which will further the academy's mission of inspiring learning and growth through the arts.







### 85 Years in 85 Minutes Concert

In commemoration of NAFA's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the NAFA Music Alumni Chapter and Alumni Relations Office, came together with Voices of Singapore to present an energetic and dynamic concert showcasing the academy's musical talents spanning from the 1980s to 2023.

Past music alumni scholars were invited to contribute, and together with the generous support of the NAFA Collaborative Lab Grant, the unique event successfully intertwined live performances with nostalgic campus stories. This allowed the NAFA community to reminisce about their post-graduation journeys and celebrate the profound impact alumni have had both on campus, and in the wider community.



The 85-minute concert, the first of its kind since the NAFA School of Music (SOM) was established in 1984, was held at the prestigious CHIJMES Hall on 6 September 2023. Nearly 200 SOM faculty, alumni and students attended. 176 tickets were sold, surpassing the initial plan of 150 seats. The proceeds of S\$6,400, raised from ticket sales, donations and ad purchases, were donated to the NAFA Education Fund. The event was a heartfelt celebration of musical excellence and camaraderie, highlighting the enduring legacy and the vibrant future of NAFA's musical community.

### NAFA Convocation 2023

On 28 and 29 September, we celebrated the achievements of 751 graduates from the Class of 2023. Held at the Lee Foundation Theatre, the convocation was graced by Guest of Honour Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman, Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Education and Foreign Affairs. It was attended by over 1,100 family and friends of graduates.

Within the graduates were the pioneering cohorts from our programmes with both the University of the Arts London and the Royal College of Music's Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Instrumental & Vocal Teaching. Additionally, the first batch of students from our NAFA Foundation Programme graduated from the diploma programmes.

At the convocation, NAFA presented the Distinguished Alumni Medal to Isyana Sarasvati, one of Indonesia's most influential female musicians and a NAFA alumna who completed her Diploma in Music in 2013 and Bachelor of Music (Honours) in 2015. Various accolades were also presented to outstanding graduates who exemplify NAFA's core values of creativity, exploration and resilience. These included the Embassy of Peru Award, The Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal, NAFA Chairman Award, NAFA President Award, and the Wu Tsung Kan Book Prize.

To date, over 19,000 artists and creatives have graduated from NAFA and gone on to contribute significantly to the arts landscape both in Singapore and beyond.



### A warm welcome to the AY2023/2024 intake

Orientation for the AY2023/2024 diploma students was held between 31 July and 4 August 2023. During this time, students attended online briefings on student support services held by the Offices of Student Affairs, Student Care, Information Technology, and EdTech.

In addition, students were invited on campus for a welcome address by NAFA President, Mrs Tan-Soh Wai Lan, to meet the faculty, and to participate in activities organised by each school. Student Leaders also led campus tours for new students to familiarise themselves with the campus facilities. The orientation effectively combined information, inspiration and interaction, ensuring a successful onboarding experience for the students at NAFA.





# LEAPING FORWARD TOWARDS NAFA100

The last decade has seen NAFA ride the waves of change and emerge triumphant. We have integrated new technological approaches into our pedagogy and overcome the challenges thrust our way by COVID-19. As we reflect on the lessons learnt and celebrate our accomplishments, we are also looking to the future, seeking new and innovative ways to transform arts education, empower budding artists, and offer platforms for co-creation—ultimately, continuing our legacy as a leading arts institution in Southeast Asia.



Board of Directors Retreat



Management Retreat



Staff Dialogue Session



Industry Engagement



Nearing the end of our previous 10-Year Strategic Plan, NAFA took into account the considerable internal and external developments and began working on our strategy for the next era in **'NAFA100 Strategic Vision Masterplan'**, a strategic masterplan anchored in our vision, mission and core values. It outlines four strategic priorities: Academic Alchemy, Courage to Create, Empathy, and the SEA Arts Dimension for the academy to stride towards its centennial anniversary in 2038.

**Academic Alchemy** will see NAFA provide a transformative, creative education focused on mastery of practice and lifelong learning. Our students are already globally sought-after for their creative talents, resilience and leadership. In the future, we will continue developing partnerships as part of an International Engagement Strategy, so we may elevate international collaborations and allow for further research and knowledge exchange.

**Courage to Create** entails nurturing a culture of innovation and enterprise. Besides encouraging our community to lead in arts, education and workplace practices, we will also highlight the importance of respecting heritage while championing innovation.

**Empathy** focuses on programmes and partnerships to effect positive social impact. The quality of empathy in a hyper-connected world empowers artists and creatives to make a positive impact through the intrinsic value of arts and design.

Finally, the **SEA Arts Dimension** establishes NAFA as a beacon and gateway for Southeast Asian (SEA) Arts. Through our Institute of Southeast Asian Arts and other resources such as the Living Archive of Contemporary Asian Art, we will expand our sphere of influence in the region, and attain a global reputation as a thought leader in SEA arts.

These strategic priorities span academic, cultural and social dimensions, and underscore NAFA's dedication to employing a holistic education approach. With them in place, we aim to deliver transformative educational experiences, cultivate an innovative culture, foster empathy and social impact—ultimately solidifying our position as a leader in the Southeast Asian arts landscape.



# GIVING BACK

Each dollar you donate to NAFA goes beyond simply supporting our scholarly initiatives and building the academy's capabilities. It also sends a powerful message of encouragement to students, faculty and staff—affirming them that their work is important and that you believe in their artistic pursuits. For every one in four students who is in need of financial support, your contribution can be pivotal to unlocking their passions and making their dreams come true. Step up to be the difference, and empower our community with the courage to create.



## Arts in Motion – NAFA Virtual Challenge

In 2023, NAFA kicked off its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations with the Arts in Motion – NAFA Virtual Challenge. Participants engaged in a healthy activity in support of a worthy cause, igniting both community engagement and a celebration of creativity. The inaugural challenge garnered overwhelming response, raising a combined total of S\$122,352 with the generous support of the Tote Board's dollar-for-dollar matching. The money will be directed towards the NAFA Development Fund to enhance campus facilities and resources for students.



## Five-year strategic partnership with UOB

NAFA is proud to partner UOB in championing Southeast Asian arts. This five-year partnership will see UOB support three key initiatives at NAFA: artist residencies in Singapore and Paris, the prestigious Southeast Asian Arts Forum, and a new module introducing students to the rich tapestry of Southeast Asian arts.

This collaboration underscores our shared commitment to nurturing artistic talent and appreciation of the arts within the region. We believe UOB's generous support will empower our students, faculty and the wider arts community. In addition, the initiative will solidify NAFA's position as a leading beacon for Southeast Asian arts and foster a vibrant artistic landscape across the region.





**BertChoong Bursary Fund**

The BertChoong Bursary Fund was established in February 2024. This is a S\$500,000 initiative to support students in need who are pursuing art and design programmes. Funded by Mr Bert Choong, Presidential Advisor to the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC), the bursary will aid 220 local and international students over the next decade, starting from the 2024 academic year.



**Courage to Shine Art Camp**

On 31 May 2023, NAFA’s CSR committee hosted a heartwarming ‘Courage to Shine’ Art Camp for children from Morning Star Community Services, Lakeside Student Care, and Care Community Services Society Singapore. 50 children from underprivileged families attended and spent a joyful day exploring their artistic talents through clay modelling and painting with DIY pigments.

Thanks to the generous support of the NAFA community and 50 dedicated staff and students who volunteered their time, the camp raised S\$3,850 and gave the children an experience to remember!



**BENEFITS OF GIVING**



Tax Benefits



Opportunities for Naming Rights



Acknowledgement and Recognition on NAFA’s Communication Platforms



Eligible for Cultural Matching Fund

**NAFA GIVING PROGRAMMES**



Scholarships and Financial Awards



Student Relief Fund



Special Projects Award



Overseas Travel Grant



Research



