

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NHB'S PATRON OF HERITAGE AWARDS 2021 HONOURS  
SINGAPORE'S INSPIRING HERITAGE PHILANTHROPISTS**

**Singapore, 16 August 2022** – The late philanthropist **Agnes Tan** left a lasting legacy of deepening the appreciation of Peranakan culture in Singapore through her life-long contributions, which includes her last gift of Straits Chinese artefacts to the NUS Baba House last year. Software firm **Dassault Systèmes Singapore** boosted awareness of the nation's built heritage by contributing its digital expertise to execute a virtual reality experience of the Former Tanjong Pagar Railway Station which was the key highlight in an exhibition to celebrate 50 years of gazetting of National Monuments. Singaporean photographer **Russel Wong** donated 79 photographic prints from his 13-year-long documentation project to the Asian Civilisations Museum for a special exhibition in 2021, which helped shed light on Kyoto and the lesser-known traditions of the geisha community, and enabled Singaporeans to immerse themselves in a foreign Asian culture during a time when overseas travel was highly restricted.

2 These inspiring accounts of heritage philanthropy are just some of the many celebrated at this year's *Patron of Heritage Awards* which took place this evening at the historic Malay Heritage Centre. At the ceremony, the National Heritage Board (NHB) recognised 31 cultural champions – both organisations and individuals – for their generous gifts to various heritage causes in 2021, which totalled about S\$1.66 million in cash and artefact donations, as well as in-kind support. Their contributions were instrumental in helping to sustain efforts to safeguard Singapore's heritage and strengthen the capabilities of the heritage sector.

3 Guest-of-Honour Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, said: "We deeply appreciate the continued generosity of our patrons, whose support remains as crucial as ever. Their contributions have helped to galvanise spirits in a time when such inspiration was sorely needed. With preparation underway for *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0*, I look forward to embarking on the next phase of development for our heritage and museum sector with the support of Singaporeans, to forge a more confident and cohesive Singapore through our shared heritage."

## Building on the Past for Our Future

4 The heritage sector continued to provide Singaporeans with a variety of offerings and experiences to draw strength and inspiration from, even as the COVID-19 situation continued to evolve in 2021. These engaging exhibitions and novel programmes would not have been made possible without the strong support of the patrons.

5 **Dassault Systèmes Singapore** supported NHB's Preservation of Sites and Monuments (PSM) division in its *PSM50: Celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Singapore's Preservation Journey* special exhibition, by contributing its expertise in three-dimensional software. The Former Tanjong Pagar Railway Station was brought to life through virtual reality and allowed visitors to explore its interior to gain a better understanding of the monument's features and historic fabric without having to set foot inside the actual building. Such collaborations align with NHB's focus for the next phase of development of the heritage sector, as NHB continues to harness technology and innovation to enhance heritage experiences for Singaporeans.

6 With the support of the patrons, museums have also been able to make heritage offerings more accessible to people with diverse needs and backgrounds. For instance, one of the National Museum's past special exhibitions, *Home, Truly: Growing Up with Singapore, 1950s to the Present*, piloted an accessibility experience for visually impaired visitors through the Smart Cane initiative, supported by the **Temasek Foundation**. Such visitors could experience the exhibition more meaningfully by using a Smart Cane prototype with sensors which are paired to a web-based platform that provides a customised descriptive audio tour and instructions to help them navigate independently.

7 The patrons' contributions have also augmented the National Collection with objects that enable our museums to continue presenting exhibitions that excite and connect with both local and regional audiences. These include **Mr Russel Wong's** donation of 79 photographs presented in the Asian Civilisations Museum's *Life in Edo | Russel Wong in Kyoto* exhibition and the expanded *Russel Wong in Kyoto* showcase in 2021. The photographs documented Kyoto and the lesser-known customs and traditions of the famously private *Geisha* community, which helped further ACM's mission as a museum which spotlights narratives that expand perspectives of Asian cultures.

8 There were also donors who gifted objects to museums which helped enhance our understanding of Singapore's multifaceted culture. For instance, the late **Ms Agnes Tan's** donation

of Straits Chinese objects to the NUS Baba House in 2021, provided insights to the material history of the Peranakan Chinese community in the early 20th century. She was the founding donor of NUS Baba House, whose contributions over the past years included a notable cash donation of S\$4 million in 2005 that went towards the National University of Singapore's acquisition and restoration of a three-storey town house, built around 1895 at 157 Neil Road. The house, renamed as the NUS Baba House, has been open to the public since 2008, providing visitors with experiential learning into a Peranakan Chinese family home of the early 20th century.

9 Additionally, there were also patrons who supported the heritage sector in the form of professional expertise or in-kind giving. **Mr Danny Wijaya of EXD Lab** gave design consultancy and services for the revamp of the SGH Museum that marked the Singapore General Hospital's 200th year of contributing to national healthcare. **SBS Transit Limited** also generously contributed advertising space on its buses to promote the *Speak Good English Movement*, *Speak Mandarin Campaign*, and *Bulan Bahasa* (Malay Language Month).

10 Ms Yeoh Chee Yan, Chairman, NHB, said, "We express our heartfelt gratitude to our Patrons of Heritage. Their tremendous support energises us as we move towards the next exciting phase of development for the heritage and museum sector in Singapore, encapsulated in *Our SG Heritage Plan 2.0* which will be rolled out next year. We look forward to working even more closely with our many partners to make heritage more accessible, compelling and vibrant for Singaporeans."

11 For more information, please refer to:

- Annex A: Criteria of the *Patron of Heritage Awards*
- Annex B: Key statistics of the *Patron of Heritage Awards 2021*

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### **About the Patron of Heritage Awards**

Established in 2006, the *Patron of Heritage Awards* is an annual event that aims to boost heritage philanthropy in Singapore by honouring individuals and organisations who have made significant contributions towards enriching our national heritage.

### **About the National Heritage Board**

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993. As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit. NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the National Collection.

Through the National Collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit [www.nhb.gov.sg](http://www.nhb.gov.sg) for more information.

**Who is Eligible for the Patron of Heritage Awards**

To be eligible for the *Patron of Heritage Awards 2021*, organisations or individuals must have fulfilled any of the following during the qualifying period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021:

- Contributed artefacts, artworks or archival materials to the collection of any museum or heritage institution in Singapore
- Contributed to the building and development of museums and heritage institutions in Singapore
- Played a pivotal role in creating memorable heritage events for the community at large
- Contributed to publications and scholarships related to heritage

NHB also considered other types of contributions to heritage-related causes on a case-by-case basis.

**Awards Criteria**

Awards were given based on the following categories:

**Donations in cash, kind or material:**

- Distinguished Patron: S\$2 million and above
- Patron: From S\$1 million to S\$1,999,999
- Partner: From S\$150,000 to S\$999,999
- Friend: From S\$50,000 to S\$149,999
- Supporter: From S\$10,000 to S\$49,999

**Key Statistics for Patron of Heritage Awards 2021**

## (i) Value of contributions

The total value of contributions acknowledged by the *Patron of Heritage Awards 2021* is about S\$1.66 million. The breakdown of the contributions is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Contributions</b>	
Cash donations	S\$0.63 million
Artefact and in-kind donations	S\$1.03 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>S\$1.66 million</b>

 (ii) Number of awardees in each of the award categories in *Patron of Heritage Awards 2021*:

<b>Award categories</b>	<b>Number of awardees</b>
Distinguished Patron (S\$2 million and above)	0
Patron (From S\$1 million to S\$1,999,999)	0
Partner (From S\$150,000 to S\$999,999)	4
Friend (From S\$50,000 to S\$149,999)	5
Supporter (From \$10,000 to \$49,999)	22

*\*The above excludes patrons acknowledged under "Special Thanks".*

## (iii) Number and percentage of patrons in 2021 that are corporations and individuals:

	<b>Organisations/Foundations</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
Number	15	16
Percentage	48.4%	51.6%

## (iv) Value of contributions in 2020 and 2021

<b>Year</b>	<b>Value of Contribution</b>
2020	S\$3.24 million
2021	S\$1.66 million