

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

**CELEBRATE DIVERSE CONTRIBUTIONS, DEDICATION AND CONTINUITY AT PATRON
OF HERITAGE AWARDS 2023**

Singapore, 24 September 2024 – The National Heritage Board (NHB) today honoured 89 valued patrons for their contributions to the heritage landscape in 2023, the highest number recognised at the annual *Patron of Heritage Awards* (POHA) in five years. From 1 January to 31 December 2023, these patrons have contributed a total of S\$11.67 million in cash and artefact donations, as well as in-kind support to heritage causes. The awards ceremony was officiated by Guest-of-Honour Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Second Minister for Law at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), where a diverse group of patrons was celebrated; a testament to the vibrancy of the heritage ecosystem and the many different ways in which Singaporeans can make a difference to heritage.

Recognising a wider pool of contributors

2 From individuals who donated valuable artefacts, to community stakeholders who initiated projects to promote different aspects of heritage and industry partners who contributed resources and professional expertise, POHA 2023 saw a 40 per cent increase in the number of heritage benefactors over the previous year. The climate of heritage philanthropy was also fuelled by ACM's 25th anniversary gala in 2023, where both longstanding and new donors came together to support the museum's mission.

Enriching the Singapore story and museum collections with cherished objects

3 Gifts from the collections of individuals and families have continued to enrich the collections of museums and heritage institutions. For instance, the **family of Mr Tan Koon Yong and Mdm Ong Kue Neo** gifted ACM a treasured collection of over 450 batik-related objects that serves as a reminder of Singapore's contribution to the production and circulation of batik cloth within and beyond the region. The collection consists of batik stamps, fabrics, and garments from I. B. Batek Industrial Company, a family business founded by Mr Tan in 1974 which grew to become one of the largest batik-making enterprises in Singapore. The

stamps represent the early beginnings of I.B. Batek in making textiles and garments from the stamping process, and also highlight the intricate work of the artisans who crafted the stamps.

4 **Professor Lim Tow Keang**, a trailblazer in respiratory medicine in Singapore, generously donated an extensive collection of textiles comprising shoulder wraps, shawls, sarongs, horse saddle cloths, and ceremonial textiles to the NUS Museum. Originating from Indonesia and Borneo, the collection exemplifies the region's diverse tapestry of cultures and craftsmanship.

Celebrating the spirit of community giving

5 A key focus of NHB's work is the participation of the community in heritage, and POHA 2023 recognised members of the community who took ownership of various aspects of heritage by driving their own passion projects. These projects have contributed to heritage engagement and enriched their communities. **Mr Anil Chandru Thadani**, a heritage business owner in the Kampong Gelam precinct, commissioned a large-scale mural by renowned muralist Yip Yew Chong that showcases and celebrates the area's longstanding role as a hub for multicultural community ties, heritage, and enterprise over the past two centuries.

6 Further exemplifying the active role that community stakeholders play, Singaporean designer **Ms Kavita Thulasidas** from heritage brand Stylemart was recognised for her in-kind contribution of 20 original contemporary Kerala *kasavu sarees* designed for the *Ente Veedu, My Home: Malayalees in Singapore* special exhibition at the Indian Heritage Centre. The collection helped shine the spotlight on the traditional textile of the Malayalee community as a part of their intangible cultural heritage, and reimaged for the future.

Promoting inclusivity for all to enjoy heritage

7 Various partners have been recognised for promoting inclusivity in the heritage sector. **RSP Architects Planners & Engineers** is one such example, as the architectural consultant and designer behind the National Museum of Singapore's *Reunion Social Space and Café*, the first purpose-built space for seniors within a local museum.

8 The generosity of **Dalio Philanthropies** contributed to programme and exhibition accessibility at the Children's Museum Singapore (CMSG) for children with special needs. The

foundation's gift to the Peranakan Museum also supported the museum's intangible cultural heritage documentation project.

9 In addition, CMSG also benefited from **Apollo Management Singapore Pte Ltd's** support through both financial contributions and corporate volunteerism, which helped create meaningful experiences for children from Club Rainbow through CMSG's accessibility programme.

Cultivating a vibrant and sustainable heritage ecosystem

10 To help make heritage come alive for Singaporeans, partners also contributed their expertise and resources. POHA 2023 recognised donors from various industries including the media, MICE, real estate and investment, and transport which contributed in their own ways.

11 **Samsung Electronics Singapore** helped enliven the Bras Basah Bugis precinct as the presenting sponsor of NHB's signature *Singapore Night Festival* (SNF). At the heart of its collaboration with NHB was a special light projection on the façade of the National Museum tracing 700 years of Singapore history. SNF was further enhanced by **The Oval Partnership Consultants'** immersive exhibition on the culture and history of *kampongs*, which transported visitors back in time to 14th century Southeast Asia to discover the stories behind ancient societies and bustling marketplaces. Another patron that added colour and richness to the festival experience was repeat awardee **CapitaLand Investment Limited**, which worked with NHB to jointly curate three captivating and interactive art installations.

12 **Suntec Singapore** and **Jewel Changi Airport** were recognised for their generous provision of exhibition space and media support for The Intan to showcase its collection of Peranakan art, artefacts, and wares, which allowed local and international visitors to encounter the rich diversity of the culture. Other supporters such as **Singapore EXPO**, **Target Media Culcreative**, **Kingsmen OOH-Media Pte Ltd** and **Lagardère Travel Retail** also worked with The Intan to promote Peranakan culture through their resources and networks.

13 Longstanding and repeat contributors also played a vital role in supporting Singapore's heritage initiatives, which enhanced our reach and impact. **SBS Transit Ltd**, a key vehicle for the promotion of Singapore's language campaigns, continued to contribute advertising space on its buses to the *Speak Good English Movement*, *Speak Mandarin Campaign*, and *Bulan*

Bahasa (Malay Language Month). Also among the ranks of long-time donors is **Yuvabharathi International School**, a strong supporter of the *Tamil Language Festival* over the years, which extended its support to IHC's *Ente Veedu, My Home: Malayalees in Singapore* special exhibition in 2023. Another dedicated donor **Stellar Ace** continued to provide in-kind support to the *Singapore HeritageFest*. In collaboration with NHB, it transformed SMRT stations into exhibition spaces, inviting commuters to engage with and discover lesser-known facets of Singapore's history and heritage.

14 Ms Yeoh Chee Yan, Chairman, NHB, said: "I would like to express my deepest appreciation to our valued patrons, whose contributions show their commitment to and belief in NHB's mission of safeguarding and promoting our heritage. The increased number of heritage benefactors in 2023, the highest in five years, as well as the greater diversity of contributors, is sure sign of a heritage ecosystem that is in robust health. Every contribution helps build on this, and a strong and sustainable heritage and cultural landscape for Singapore is a legacy that will inspire generations to come."

15 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 2023*
- [Annex C](#): Quotes from awardees of the *Patron of Heritage Awards 2023*

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Say Hua Lee
Tate Anzur
9668 4605
sayhua.lee@tateanzur.com

Jia Xuan Seah
Tate Anzur
9617 4343
jiaxuan.seah@tateanzur.com



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 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, safeguards and promotes intangible cultural heritage, 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 for more information.

Who is Eligible for the Patron of Heritage Awards

To be eligible for the *Patron of Heritage Awards 2023*, organisations or individuals must have fulfilled any of the following during the qualifying period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023:

- 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.
- <Introduced in 2023> Contributed non-artefact donations that have historical or cultural significance or immovable property that support heritage causes and sector.
- <Introduced in 2023> Contributed to long term heritage-related initiatives* organised by community organisations and non-profit interest groups which benefit the heritage sector and community at large.

* *Long term heritage-related initiatives refer to those that are 5 years and above.*

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 2023

(i) Value of contributions

The total value of contributions acknowledged by the *Patron of Heritage Awards 2023* is about S\$11.67 million. The breakdown of the contributions is as follows:

Year	2023
Contributions	
Cash donations	S\$7.46 million (rounded off)
Artefact and in-kind donations	S\$4.22 million (rounded off)
Total	About S\$11.67 million

 (ii) Number of awardees in each of the award categories in *Patron of Heritage Awards 2023*:

Award categories	Number of awardees
Distinguished Patron (S\$2 million and above)	1
Patron (From S\$1 million to S\$1,999,999)	0
Partner (From S\$150,000 to S\$999,999)	12
Friend (From S\$50,000 to S\$149,999)	26
Supporter (From \$10,000 to \$49,999)	50

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

(iii) Number and percentage of patrons in 2023 that are corporations and individuals:

	Organisations/Foundation	Individuals
Number	58	31
Percentage	65.17%	34.83%

(iv) Value of contributions in 2022 and 2023

Year	Value of Contribution
2022	S\$17.73 million
2023	S\$11.67 million

Quotes from Awardees of the Patron of Heritage Awards 2023

Awardee	Quote
<p>Ms Kavita Thulasidas, Creative Director of Stylemart Pte Ltd</p>	<p>Ms Kavita Thulasidas, Creative Director of Stylemart Pte Ltd, said: “Heritage, art and culture are deeply intertwined, shaping our identity and reinforcing our sense of community. I was thrilled to contribute to the Indian Heritage Centre's Malayalees in Singapore special exhibition, as the experience has been profoundly personal, allowing me to reconnect with my roots and deepen my appreciation for my cultural heritage. Through my work in the fashion industry, I strive to give traditional garments a contemporary twist, making them more relatable to younger generations while preserving centuries-old craftsmanship. In doing so, I hope to connect people from different cultures and foster a stronger sense of belonging among Singaporeans.”</p>
<p>RSP Architects Planners & Engineers</p>	<p>Mr Mark Wong, Director, RSP Architects Planners & Engineers shared: “Designing for seniors with dementia and mild cognitive impairment is often a quite specialised subject, which RSP has experience in through our humanity-centric approach to healthcare projects. We combined our experience and expertise, and incorporated institutional research together with input gleaned from engagements with professionals and caregivers involved at every stage, from design to construction. The priceless interactions not only resulted in a functional space for the intended users and their programmes, but also truly turned Reunion into a home for all seniors where they could feel welcome and empowered to engage in the museum’s offerings.”</p>