

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ROLLS OUT \$55 MILLION ARTS AND CULTURE RESILIENCE PACKAGE (ACRP) TO SUPPORT THE SECTOR

Singapore, 7 April 2020 – As part of the Resilience Budget announced by DPM on 26 March 2020, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) will invest \$55 million through an Arts and Culture Resilience Package (ACRP). This seeks to protect the ecosystem, provide support and opportunities for arts and culture organisations and professionals, as well as develop longer-term capabilities for the post-COVID-19 recovery. It will promote the preparation of our arts and culture sector to seize the opportunities that will be available when the current situation improves. The ACRP is in addition to the \$1.6 million announced at MCCY’s Committee of Supply debate on 6 March 2020.

2 Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu said, “Since the onset of COVID-19, we have heard many calls for help from the arts and culture sector. They are worried about their livelihoods and careers, as all events and activities have been cancelled or postponed. That is why the Government came up with the Resilience Budget, to support workers, stabilise businesses, and build economic and social resilience in these unprecedented challenging times.”

3 “As part of this budget, we have set aside \$55 million for the Arts and Culture Resilience Package (ACRP). This will protect livelihoods, defray costs, enhance capabilities, and encourage innovative digital presentations of artworks. It will also help our arts and culture practitioners continue to inspire and uplift us during this time, and prepare themselves well for the recovery. These ACRP measures will provide some immediate relief for our arts and culture practitioners, and allow them to use this period – when they are working from home – to plan for the future with greater assurance and certainty”, Minister Fu added.

The Arts and Culture Resilience Package

4 The ACRP comprises four components:

- a) [Enhanced] Jobs Support Scheme for major companies and leading arts groups;
- b) [Enhanced] Rental waivers for tenants on MCCY-owned properties.
- c) [Enhanced] Capability Development Scheme for the Arts (CDSA); and
- d) [New] Digitalisation Fund (DF).

[Enhanced] Jobs support

5 The measures to support businesses announced by DPM will apply to arts and culture companies. The government will co-fund 25% on the first \$4,600 of gross monthly wages of each local employee on their Central Provident Fund (CPF) payroll for nine months. This level of support will be increased to 75% for the month of April, in view of the heightened measures. All arts and culture organisations which are employers and who pay CPF contributions, will be eligible under this broad-based Job Support Scheme administered by the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS).

6 MCCY will announce additional jobs support for major companies, as well as other leading arts groups, at a later date.

[Enhanced] Rental waivers for tenants on MCCY-owned properties

7 Eligible tenants, including commercial retail, F&B tenants, Volunteer Welfare Organisations, Social Service Agencies, and Registered Charities on MCCY-owned properties, will receive two months of rental waivers under ACRP. In addition, all non-residential tenants on government-owned properties who do not qualify for the two months of waiver will receive 1 month of rental waiver. This will benefit over 300 tenants, who will be informed directly by their respective landlords of their eligibility.

[Enhanced] Capability Development Scheme for the Arts (CDSA)

8 At COS 2020, MCCY announced that NAC will provide a one-time CDSA grant for eligible arts organisations and individuals to encourage upskilling and grow organisational capabilities. Under the ACRP, the CDSA will be enhanced to raise the maximum funding quantum for organisations and SEPs, and cover a wider group of Self-Employed Persons. This will cover course fees as well as absentee payroll or training allowance of \$10 per hour (up from \$7.50 per hour). For the period from now until 4 May 2020 (inclusive), applicants should only attend online courses. Up to 200 companies and 6,000 practitioners will benefit from this scheme for their training:

- a) NAC's Major Companies and Seed Grant Companies (MCSG) can apply for up to \$20,000 (up from \$10,000);
- b) Other arts and culture organisations and companies can apply for up to \$6,000 (up from \$3,000); and
- c) Individuals can also apply for up to \$1,000 (up from \$600).

9 CDSA can support a wide range of courses, including those available online, in areas such as digital technology, entrepreneurship, audience engagement and art-form training. NAC will continue to provide suggestions to arts professionals on training programmes, and point them to how they can tap on CDSA to attend courses in areas relevant to their work. Such courses can include those by our major arts companies and established professionals who are willing to share their skills and expertise with their community.

10 The CDSA will complement broad-based schemes like the Enhanced Absentee Payroll and Course Fee Support for the Arts and Culture Sector, and the Self-Employed Persons (SEPs) Training Support Scheme. SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), together with NAC, will curate a list of sector-specific training courses in collaboration with training providers to roll out courses for employees in the larger Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector. While some of the courses will not be available online, arts and culture organisations and companies, their employees, as well as individual practitioners, can use this time to plan their future training, and apply for the CDSA.

[New] Digitalisation Fund (DF)

11 MCCY and its agencies will support arts and culture organisations and practitioners' efforts to enhance the digitalisation of their work, and create new experiences for Singaporeans. The new DF will comprise:

- a) Digital Presentation Grant for the Arts (DPG), administered by NAC, to support the presentation of new or existing work from May 2020 onwards by arts groups and practitioners, including SEPs, in digital form or via digital medium. Successful applicants can receive up to \$20,000 per project. NAC welcomes proposals which include creative means to develop digital projects while fully working from home. Arts and culture organisations and practitioners can also submit proposals now, for future projects;
- b) Commissioned Work and Partnerships, to support large-scale projects such as the digital presentation of key festivals and events like the Singapore Heritage Festival, Arts in Your Neighbourhood, Singapore Writers Festival, and Singapore Art Week; and
- c) Museums digitalisation, to make exhibitions and collections accessible through virtual platforms.

12 The new digital projects will lead to the creation of more opportunities in and beyond the arts and culture sector, while also enabling art groups and practitioners, including museums, to reach out to new audiences. Over time, it will increase the digital engagement capabilities of the sector and improve the audience experience. The Digitalisation Fund will support over 200 new digital projects, and create more than 1,000 opportunities for practitioners.

13 Digital arts and culture offerings to engage Singaporeans and provide enjoyment for the entire family are already available at NAC's A-List website, a one-stop portal for cultural events. This will be regularly updated to include new content being made available online. Interested audiences can visit a-list.sg.

14 Further details of the above measures will be communicated by NAC and NHB.

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About the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

The Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth seeks to inspire Singaporeans through the arts and sports, strengthen community bonds, and promote volunteerism and philanthropy. Since its inception in November 2012, MCCY has been actively engaging the arts, heritage, sports, community and youth sectors. The Ministry aims to bring into sharper focus the efforts to build a more cohesive and vibrant society, and to deepen a sense of identity and belonging to the nation. MCCY will work with its stakeholders to create an environment where Singaporeans can pursue their aspirations for a better quality of life and together, build a gracious and caring society we are proud to call home.

About the National Arts Council

The National Arts Council champions the arts in Singapore. By nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement, our diverse and distinctive arts inspire our people, connect communities and profile Singapore internationally. We preserve our rich, cultural traditions as we cultivate accomplished artists and vibrant companies for the future. Our support for the arts is comprehensive – from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing. The Council welcomes greater private and corporate giving to and through the arts so that together we can make the arts an integral part of everyone's lives. For more information on the Council's mission and plans, please visit www.nac.gov.sg.

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 for more information.



MEDIA FACTSHEET

BOOST IN DIGITAL HERITAGE OFFERINGS WITH NEW DIGITALISATION FUND

SINGAPORE, 7 April 2020 – Wouldn't it be great if you could navigate your way through an exhibition and "interact" with 3D scans of artefacts, participate in virtual tours led by museum curators, or join in online workshops on intangible cultural heritage such as traditional pastry-making – all from the comfort of your home?

2 Such digital offerings will be added on to the National Heritage Board's (NHB) ongoing efforts to digitalise our museums and heritage so that more can have access to it. They will be supported by a new **Digitalisation Fund** under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth's \$55 million **Arts and Culture Resilience Package (ACRP)**. Amidst current challenges and uncertainties brought about by the outbreak of COVID-19, the \$55 million ACRP aims to support the sector in various ways – one of which is the Digitalisation Fund that supports the digitalisation of museum exhibitions and collections. Through digitalisation, NHB aims to generate demand and create opportunities for the arts and culture groups, production houses, freelancers and community partners.

3 Under the Digitalisation Fund, NHB will be organising a digital edition of *Singapore Heritage Festival (SHF) 2020* for the first time. The festival will be launched on 19 June with digitally commissioned works, webinars, demonstrations etc presented through live streaming, video and other digital formats, featuring Singapore's diverse heritage including the histories of places such as Tanjong Pagar, Kallang and Pasir Ris.

4 The exciting range of new digital offerings will allow fans of *SHF* to enjoy iconic elements of the festival such as online tours exploring lesser known spaces and places in Singapore, as well as digital workshops featuring our intangible cultural heritage such as *belachan*-making and pastry-making. As always, involvement from community partners and Singaporeans are key to the festival, and some of these digital offerings will have an interactive and participatory element such as watch parties for people to come together online. More details on *SHF 2020* will be shared closer to date.

5 Besides the festival, other projects in the pipeline include:

- Virtual exhibitions showcasing the galleries of NHB museums and institutions, and Museum Roundtable members. These will add on to NHB's existing digital efforts such as the upcoming digital exhibition of the National Museum of Singapore's recently concluded *An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600s – 1819*¹ (please refer to **Annex A** for more details);
- Digitalisation of the galleries and contents of our national museums and the heritage institutions, as we continue to bring our Museum-based Learning programmes online to students;
- Online curator guided tours;
- 3D scans of artefacts in our National Collection;
- Adaptation of the BalikSG app to a non-site specific version – one that does not require users to visit the site markers along the Singapore River to enjoy the Augmented Reality features and content;
- Live streaming and online broadcasting of programmes such as *e-CultureFests* at the three heritage institutions – Indian Heritage Centre, Malay Heritage Centre and Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

6 Mr Jervais Choo, Deputy Director, Organisation Design and Innovation, says of the new Digitalisation Fund, "We are pleased that we are able to support the arts and culture groups, freelancers and production houses through digitalisation during these challenging times. Heritage and culture define us and the human spirit and in times like this, can be a source of inspiration. At NHB and our museums we have always enjoyed sharing, learning and interacting with our visitors. We hope that the digital offerings we have lined up will provide a much needed 'culture boost' to uplift spirits for all of us at home. And perhaps we can all take this opportunity to be curious, and to learn something new about the world around us, even as we face this challenging moment together."

7 These digital museum and heritage offerings will be rolled out progressively in the coming months. To make such digital resources widely accessible to all, they will be made available on NHB's heritage portal Roots.sg, the respective museums' websites, A-List website, as well as other digital platforms such as YouTube.

¹ While *An Old New World: Digital Edition* is not supported under the Digitalisation Fund, it acts as a teaser to NHB's other new virtual exhibitions which will be produced under the fund.

8 Members of the Museum Roundtable can benefit from the fund by producing digitalisation projects to showcase their museums. This complements the digital offerings by NHB museums and heritage institutions, and provides Singaporeans with an even wider range of digital arts, heritage and culture offerings to be enjoyed online. NHB will be reaching out to members with details on the fund soon.

9 Dr Alexius Pereira, President, The Eurasian Association, Singapore, said: “The Digitalisation Fund provides timely and welcome support for the association, especially during this difficult time when the Eurasian Heritage Gallery is closed. The Fund could help the Association to continue presenting the rich heritage of the Eurasian community to audiences through digital means. The beauty of digital is that it can transcend the physical gallery space, to layer on more materials and stories, and these will supplement the gallery’s physical exhibits long after Singapore overcomes COVID-19.”

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An Old New World: Digital Edition

- *An Old New World: Digital Edition* is a 360 exhibition that brings visitors on a digital journey through the landmark *An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600s – 1819* blockbuster exhibition, which ran at the National Museum of Singapore from 21 September 2019 to 29 March 2020.
- This ground-breaking digital exhibition is designed specifically for the user to experience the exhibition on their tablets or laptops from the comforts of their home. It doesn't just place visitors within a 360 capture of the gallery as most online exhibitions do, but incorporates two modes of navigation, guided and self-exploratory.
- In the **guided option**, we have included two tours specially curated by National Museum of Singapore Curators Daniel Tham and Iskander Mydin for the digital edition along two themes, *Knowledge and Power*, and *Seeing the Indigenous*. Visitors are guided to digitally explore the featured artefacts and the surrounding showcases while listening to the narration by the curators along these themes.
- The guided option pays particular attention to details aimed at making it natural for visitors, such as slow panning and slight movements while the tour narration is on-going, and also background sounds and noise to add realism to the experience. An additional inclusive feature is the transcript function, where the tour script is made available through a button at the side, so that persons with hearing disabilities can also have access to the tours.
- For the **self-exploratory mode**, visitors are able to navigate through the galleries at their own pace, to view most of the artefacts in typically 360 fashion. They are also able to navigate through the sections via the map that allows them to jump from point to point, and also shows them where they are within the gallery at each step of the way. The self-exploratory mode also features the immersive opening scene video *Meeting of the Worlds* from the main exhibition, captured in great detail and resolution.
- We have also planned for additional content to be added at a later stage, including an educator's commentary for lower secondary students. Featuring artefact highlights, the commentary complements the museum's educational resource *An Old New World: Investigating Singapore's History from Pre-Colonial to the Present* released earlier in conjunction with the physical exhibition, for students to delve deeper into pre-colonial Singapore as they conduct their historical investigation of that period.
- *An Old New World: Digital Edition* is purposefully designed to change the way visitors experience digital exhibitions, and is also an important step for NHB as we continue to build upon this product and push the boundaries of innovation in digital engagement.
- The digital exhibition will be available on NHB's heritage portal Roots.sg and the National Museum of Singapore's website from 15 April onwards.