THE FUTURE OF CULTURE

CULTURE FOR THE FUTURE: WHAT LIES AHEAD?

05 DEC 2019
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About Culture Academy Singapore

The Culture Academy was established in 2015 by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth to groom the next generation of cultural leaders in the public sector. Guided by its vision to be a centre of excellence for the development of culture professionals and administrators, the Culture Academy’s work spans three areas: Education and Capability Development, Research and Scholarship and Thought Leadership. The Culture Academy also provides professional development workshops, public lectures and publishes research articles through its journal, Cultural Connections to nurture thought leaders in Singapore’s cultural scene.

One of the Academy’s popular offerings is its annual thought leadership conference which provides a common space for cultural leaders to gather and exchange ideas and best practices and to incubate new ideas. It also offers networking opportunities and platforms for collaborative ideas-sharing.

Culture Academy Steering Committee Members:
Mrs Rosa Daniel, Chairperson, Deputy Secretary (Culture), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
Ms Yvonne Tham, Chief Executive Officer, The Esplanade Co Ltd.
Mr Timothy Chin, Senior Director, Arts & Heritage Division, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
Mr Paul Tan, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, National Arts Council
Ms Jennifer Chan, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, National Heritage Board
Dr Eugene Tan, Director, National Gallery Singapore
Dr June Yap, Director, Curatorial, Programmes and Publications, Singapore Art Museum

Conference Organising Committee:
Ms Thangamma Karthigesu, Director, Culture Academy Singapore
Ms Chia Pei Jun
Ms Geraldine Soh
Ms Vaishnavi Jayasambok
Ms Nur Hummairah Binte Abdul Aziz
Ms Serene Sum

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Message from Director, Culture Academy Singapore

The Culture Academy Singapore is proud to bring to you our 4th international conference on the theme of the Future of Culture.

We live in a world where everything we have learnt, come to believe in and acknowledged as a norm is challenged, disrupted, and changed on a daily basis. It is therefore timely to look at the trends, challenges and opportunities that society as a whole will face in the next decade and discuss how cultural institutions and workers can capitalise on these new opportunities and meet the challenges posed by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

The Future of Culture will thus lie in the ability of cultural institutions to understand, foresee, and prepare for these challenges and opportunities. In the same vein, the Culture of the Future might be how the sector responds to these new trends. What will change and how? Will Culture remain a part of the lives of future societies? What value can it bring to them?

Will jobs in this sector become redundant or redefined and rescoped? What new jobs will be created or remain relevant in this new era? What new skills will the culture sector need to prepare for the next 10 to 15 years so that it is ready for, and relevant to societies of the future who will operate in an increasingly globalised, polarised and virtually connected world? These are some of the questions that will be discussed, debated and deliberated at this conference.

My colleagues and I hope that you will leave the conference enthused and excited about the future - that all of us will continue to play a crucial role in future societies. After all, what is a nation without a soul and that Soul comes from a people who have a strong sense of who they are, where they came from and where they want to be. And that sense comes from acquiring knowledge, increasing an appreciation of, and participating actively in the arts, culture and heritage.

Wishing all of you a very insightful day of deliberations.

Thangamma KARTHIGESU (Ms)
Director, Culture Academy Singapore
As we approach the end of the second decade of the 21st century, it is timely to look at the trends, challenges and opportunities that societies will face in the next decade.

This one day conference will enable cultural institutions to discuss the driving forces shaping the future of society and how they can respond to these new challenges and remain relevant in the digital era.

Some questions that will be discussed include:

- What will the future be for arts, culture and heritage? What will the operating environment in the future be like? What practices and values/ethics in cultural work will remain, change, be modified or become redundant, if at all?
- Will Culture remain a part of the lives of future societies? What value can it bring to them?
- What new skills will the culture sector need to prepare for the next 10 to 15 years so that it is ready for, and relevant to societies of the future who will operate in an increasingly globalised, polarised and impatient world?
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<td>0800</td>
<td>Registration <em>(All guests to be seated by 8.45am)</em></td>
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| 0905  | Opening Remarks by Mrs Rosa Daniel  
*Deputy Secretary (Culture), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY)* |
| 0915  | Speech by Guest of Honour  
*Ms Goh Swee Chen, Chairman of National Arts Council* |
| 0930  | Keynote Address 1: The Frontiers of Cultural Policy by Dr Geoff Mulgan  
*Chief Executive, National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA)* |
| 1030  | Tea Reception |
| 1100  | Panel 1 – Innovation and Digitalisation: How Can Cultural Institutions Respond? |
| 1230  | Lunch |
| 1400  | Keynote Address 2: Post-Algorithm: Art and Life in the Age of AI by Ms Roh Soh Yeong  
*Director, Art Center Nabi* |
| 1500  | Panel 2 – Communities of the Future |
| 1630  | Tea Reception |
| 1645  | Long Table Discussion  
*Hosted by Dr Kenson Kwok,  
Founding Director, Asian Civilisations Museum* |
| 1800  | Conference Round Up by Ms Yeoh Chee Yan  
*Senior Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY)  
Chairman, National Heritage Board (NHB)* |
| 1815  | Closing Remarks |
| 1830  | End of Conference |
Keynote Speaker 1

Geoff Mulgan CBE is Chief Executive of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), the UK’s innovation foundation.

Between 1997 and 2004, Geoff had roles in the UK government including director of the Government’s Strategy Unit and head of policy in the Prime Minister’s office. He has been a visiting professor at LSE, UCL and Melbourne University and senior visiting scholar at Harvard University, a regular lecturer at the China Executive Leadership Academy and president of the Innovation Design department of the Italian University of Design. He became a World Economic Forum Schwab Fellow in September 2019. Geoff advises many governments around the world on issues of strategy, innovation and policy. He is the co-founder of many organisations, including Demos, Action for Happiness, the Social Innovation Exchange and Uprising.

His most recent book is ‘*Big Mind: how collective intelligence can change our world*’ (Princeton); other books include ‘*The Art of Public Strategy*’ (Oxford University Press) and ‘*Good and Bad Power*’ (Penguin). His next book is ‘*Social Innovation: how societies find the power to change*’, published by Policy Press and to be launched in November 2019. His books have been translated into many languages. Geoff’s twitter handle is @geoffmulgan

**The Frontiers of Cultural Policy**

The keynote will highlight some of the new tools available for cultural policy making and some of the new dilemmas faced, mainly based on experience of NESTA’s work in the UK and elsewhere. These tools include ones for analysing the patterns and dynamics of the creative economy and creativity in jobs, using data. Other new tools include those used for finance, from impact investment to matched crowd-funding that aim to make money go further.

The presentation will also showcase new tools for R&D in the ‘frontier arts’, to help the sector experiment with new art forms, business models and relationships with audiences, and new tools for skills, including helping creatives to be entrepreneurs and help in using tools such as data analytics.

Some of the dilemmas that will be discussed include the role of cultural policy during periods of social polarisation; providing a counterweight to the chatter and noise of digital media and the role of culture in relation to social challenges like mental health or dementia, where there are many promising examples but not enough hard evidence. The presentation ends with a look at the exciting possibilities of collective intelligence and culture.
Warren Fernandez is Editor-in-Chief of English/Malay/Tamil Media in Singapore Press Holdings. He is also Editor of The Straits Times, Singapore’s biggest selling English daily newspaper. He joined the paper in 1990 as a political reporter and rose to become News Editor. He later also served as Foreign Editor and Deputy Editor. He left to join Royal Dutch Shell in 2008 as a Global Manager for its Future Energy project, before returning to the paper in February 2012 as its editor.

He graduated with First Class Honours from Oxford University, where he read Philosophy, Politics and Economics, and also has a Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. Both degrees were obtained on Singapore Press Holdings scholarships.

He is a board member of the National Parks Board (NParks), SPH (Overseas) Ltd, Straits Times Press Pte Ltd, The Straits Times Press (1975) Limited, Asia News Network (ANN), Singapore Symphony Group (SSO), National Arts Council (NAC) and Chairman of The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund.

He has recently been elected President of the World Editors Forum (WEF) which is the leading network for print and digital editors of newspapers and news organisations around the world. WEF is part of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).
Self-taught in art and technology, Soh Yeong is said to have pioneered the new media art scene in Korea by founding Art Center Nabi in 2000. Her experience in the field goes back to 1991 when she served as head of Art and Technology Exhibition at Daejeon Expo. Seeing the possibility of the digital technology transforming much of our lives, Soh Yeong began to explore how we could use technology to serve humanity, which has become her lifelong mission. Besides running Art Center Nabi, a powerhouse of media art with its lab and education programmes, she also serves as a board member at Advanced Institutes of Convergence Technology, Creative Commons Korea, and P.A.T.I., an alternative design school. She is also an adjunct professor at the Graduate School of Convergence Science and Technology, Seoul National University, and a visiting professor at the Department of Art and Technology, Sogang University.

Post-Algorithm: Art and Life in the Age of AI
They call it ‘error’, the random component, in stochastic processes. Algorithm was invented in order to kill it, thereby achieving precise predictions. From the attack of missiles to the recommendation of our choice music, algorithm was developed to better command and control the world around us. Recent developments in neural network algorithms enable us to achieve some super-human level of intelligence in the realm of pattern recognition. At a rate faster than we ever imagined, these pattern recognition algorithms dictate not only what we see, hear and think, but what we like to follow and believe.

We call it ‘art’, that error term, in the mathematical model of the world. By nature, art resists programming, be it social or technological. By re-thinking, re-shaping, re-purposing and re-presenting what is given, art constantly pursues what lies outside the box. The opposite of art is a life that is homogenous and conforming, yet formless and disorderly, and in the end, unrealised and meaningless. We can overcome this state of stupor by ascertaining the subjective capabilities dwelling in each and every one of us and projecting to the world what is inside of us: by becoming creators.

Media artists working with AI is a case in point. They first learn the new technology, apply it, play with it, and understand its strengths and limitations. They use the technology as a tool, not as a purpose. These artists point to a future of post-algorithmic society where technology serves humanity, not vice versa.
Paul Tan is the Deputy Chief Executive Officer at National Arts Council (NAC) Singapore which champions the arts by nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement. Through comprehensive support from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing, the NAC ensures that the arts inspire Singaporeans, connect communities and position Singapore internationally.

Paul joined NAC in 2011 as the Festival Director of the Singapore Writers Festival and Director, Literary Arts, and helmed four editions of the successful literary festival, while overseeing the development of the national literary arts landscape. He currently sits on the boards of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, the Singapore Symphony Group and the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre.

Paul has also published five volumes of poetry; the most recent "When the Lights Went Off" which was launched in August 2018.
Panel 1: Innovation and Digitalisation: How Can Cultural Institutions Respond?

This panel will discuss how arts and culture workers must prepare themselves now for the future where digital and innovation will be the driving forces for growth and sustainability. Based on the drivers of future society, how can cultural institutions embrace the digital and remain relevant in the future? What new jobs will be available in the sector and what jobs will become redundant? What new skills must culture workers have?

How will the digital change our concepts of Culture, the way it is defined, collected, preserved and disseminated?

Speakers & Moderator:

**Cultural Innovation in Form and Format, a.k.a. Don’t Just Slap an iPad on It**
Dr Noah Raford  
Chief Operating Officer and Futurist-in-Chief, Dubai Future Foundation

**Meaningful Engagements**
Mr Nicholas Pan  
Managing Director, Strategy & Commerce, VMLY&R Asia

**Digital at the Front: Building a New Gallery in the Digital Age**
Ms Lee Casey  
Head of Communications and Engagement, Science Gallery Melbourne (SGM)

**Moderator**
Mr Chng Hak-Peng  
Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Symphony Group
Dr Noah Raford is the Chief Operating Officer, “Futurist-in-Chief” at the Dubai Future Foundation and a former advisor on futures, foresight, and innovation in the UAE Prime Minister’s Office.

Noah helped to establish the country’s first national foresight unit, the Dubai Future Foundation and the Museum of the Future, and is part of a team that identifies emerging opportunities, develops strategic partnerships, and prototypes future initiatives for the Government of Dubai.

Some of the projects he has recently been involved with include:

- The Museum of the Future
- The Dubai Global Blockchain Council
- The UAE Drones for Good Award
- The UAE Robotics for Good Award
- The Dubai 3D Printing Strategy
- The Dubai Self-Driving Vehicle Strategy
- The International Council on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (iCAIR)
- The “Office of the Future”; the world’s first fully functional 3D printed building.

Prior to his work in the UAE, Noah was a senior manager at the strategy consultancy, Monitor / GBN, CEO of the technology foresight company Futurescaper LLC, the North American Director of Space Syntax Limited, and the Senior Research Advisor to the Prince’s Foundation for the Built Environment.

Noah completed his PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), his master’s degree at the Bartlett School of Architecture, and his undergraduate studies at Brown University. He is a member of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Agenda Council on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, a Senior Research Fellow at the London School of Economics, a fellow at the Bartlett School of Architecture and a member of the International Futures Forum.

Cultural Innovation in Form and Format, a.k.a. Don’t Just Slap an iPad on It

The tremendous potential of audio visual and ICT innovation is clear, as is the pressure to engage new audiences in new ways. Yet as is often the case, the most interesting innovations are usually categorically different from what has come before, not just extensions or elaboration of the status quo. This talk will explore several categorical innovations in the culture sector and suggest that the most interesting and effective means of “modernisation” may look surprisingly different than what is often envisioned when discussing 21st century cultural institutions.
Nickolas started his digital career in the mid-90s with web design and development projects. Since then, he has built more than 100 websites by hand and launched countless digital marketing campaigns.

Having held different roles in the industry, he started as a creative and became a technologist, project lead and now leads strategy. He has spent 10 years at VMLY&R and is currently the Managing Director of Strategy & Commerce at VMLY&R Asia and is based in Singapore.

Having clients in the region and locally such as Temasek, Channel News Asia, MetLife, Beiersdorf, Mattel, BMW and Grab, he also has clients in the public sector in Singapore such as the Prime Minister’s Office, the Infocomm Media Development Authority, Ministry of Defence, GIC Pte Ltd, National Heritage Board, Changi Airport Group and Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority. Nicholas brings to the table a holistic experience with a strong focus on addressing business needs.

Meaningful Engagements

No one can be sure of what the future holds for Cultural Institutions, but we can already see a major shift as people spend more time with their devices and have access to content like never before. With this digital lifestyle, we are in a time where there is just too much data; so how can cultural institutions harness this data to formulate meaningful engagements?

While investing in digitalisation and innovation, our busy and distracted audience headspace is filled with the next fad or viral meme, the next eCommerce sales and the Instagram worthy holiday they have been saving for. How do we know if we are investing in the right things that our audience will engage with and find meaningful?

Nicholas will be sharing how we need to harness creativity, technology and culture to create connected brands that drive value for cultural institutions and their audiences. In his sharing, he will recommend a simple approach to better understand audiences so as to create better content and to employ the right formats and be able to design meaningful engagements.
Lee is the Head of Communications and Engagement for Science Gallery Melbourne. Lee’s background is in the cultural sector, having held various roles across marketing, communications, sponsorship and general management over the past 15 years. She has led campaigns for organisations such as Melbourne Festival, Southbank Centre London and Arts Hub, was the Marketing & Sponsorship Director of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, and more recently, was the Executive Producer at Arena Theatre Company. During this time, Lee was selected for the Australia Council for the Arts' Emerging Cultural Leaders Programme.

Lee is particularly passionate about engaging young audiences in the creative industries and the transformation that arts and culture can create in a young person’s life. She serves on the Board of Outer Urban Projects, a performance company which works with marginalised young people in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne.

**Digital at the Front: Building a New Gallery in the Digital Age**

Science Gallery Melbourne (SGM) is part of a global network of galleries committed to inspiring young people through the collision of art and science. SGM will open in 2021 as the front door to The University of Melbourne’s innovation precinct, Melbourne Connect.

With a target audience of 15-25 year olds, SGM is creating a space that blurs boundaries of traditional institutions, and places young people at the heart of its programmes and processes. Part exhibition, part experiment, part gallery, part laboratory, SGM is creating not only a building, but an organisation for the future.

SGM is incorporating digital infrastructure, as well as large scale digital interventions as a means to communicate research, culture and to spark big ideas in young people through exploring themes such as AI, surveillance, facial recognition software, mental health and human relationships. But what does this digital take-over mean for both the audience, and the workforce? This presentation will share learnings and questions from the process of building a gallery from the ground-up, hand-in-hand with a young audience with the digital at the forefront.
Chng Hak-Peng is the Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Symphony Group (SSG). Hak-Peng’s involvement with the Orchestra began 10 years ago as a volunteer, contributing to a number of key strategic projects for SSG’s management and musicians. This led to his being appointed Deputy Chairman of its board, where he focused on strategic and organisational reviews, highlights of which included leading a team that integrated the Singapore National Youth Orchestra into the company. He enjoyed playing in school orchestras and wind bands as well as singing in choirs. Music of any genre and Chinese history are his two loves.
Panel 2: Communities of the Future

This panel will discuss how communities will be organised in the future and what must be done now to engage and remain relevant to them in the future. What policies must change or what new policies must be introduced? What new skills must the sector have, to meet the expectations, needs and aspiration of these future “communities”?

Speakers & Moderator:

**The World Is Young: The VICE Guide to Communities of the Future**
Ms Stephanie Winkler  
Director, (Research and Insights) VICE, Asia Pacific

**Engaging Communities of the Future In the Arts and Culture**
Ms Tisa Ho  
Executive Director, Hong Kong Arts Festival

**The Story Behind the Singapore Bicentennial**
Mr Gene Tan  
Executive Director, Singapore Bicentennial Office

**Moderator**
Ms Honor Harger  
Executive Director, ArtScience Museum
Stephanie Winkler is an Australian cultural researcher, and Head of Insights for VICE Media in APAC. She is a data-nerd with background in youth media, trends-spotting and analytics, and has a passion for helping brands, creatives and publishers make an authentic connection with young audiences. Her career with VICE has seen her author several prominent youth studies, from The Big Shrink (Australia, 2018) to Travel is the new Religion (APAC, 2019), and hold return keynote speaking spots for prominent industry events such as Pause Festival and AdWeek APAC.

Ms Stephanie Winkler
Director (Research and Insights),
VICE, Asia Pacific

The World Is Young: The VICE Guide to Communities of the Future
VICE is a global youth media company with a cross-platform audience of over 40M young people across Asia. They believe that the world is young; that the old guard is changing and making room for dynamic new ideas that come with an increasingly informed, empowered and connected new generation. In a time where it’s easy to get swept up in the “end of the world,” VICE believes that it’s the beginning of the beginning. In this presentation, Stephanie Winkler, shifts her focus to the future; our worries and our hopes, but chiefly to our communities, and how we’ll connect with one another in generations to come. Will our addiction to technology have positive impacts on our sense of community? Are we doomed to be lonely, or is there hope for us yet? The insights shared within this presentation will help brands and creatives make authentic connections with Asia’s diverse youth audience.
Engaging Communities of the Future In the Arts and Culture

Starting from the premise that culture is an integral part of human society, it follows that there must be a clear and intimate understanding of the communities served in order to be effective in cultural management.

In the absence of cataclysmic events, communities tend to evolve over time rather than make dramatic shifts. Therefore, it should be possible to imagine short and medium term futures extrapolating from present trends. Two are offered for consideration in this presentation, together with speculative comments about possible responses to convergence of these two trends.

The first is the professionalisation of the arts resulting in the separation of career performers from amateurs, and in the separation between artists and audiences. The proscenium arch is perhaps the strongest physical manifestation of this phenomenon. A secondary industry of arts education arose from the need to groom audiences, subsequent to the establishment of institutions to groom performers.

The second is the increasing isolation of individuals. With material needs mostly satisfied following long periods of peace and prosperity, the desire for connection and experience rather than acquisition of objects is an emerging trend. We see this in travel offerings and other lifestyle options, and in the proliferation of co-living and co-working spaces.

In response, a few leading artists and cultural institutions are increasing the scope for participation and co-creation to bring audiences together with each other, and with artists whose role is evolving from simple performance to engagement and animation. The next phase may see a pivot away from artist centric thinking to an audience centric approach.
Gene Tan is the Executive Director of the Singapore Bicentennial Office and helms the planning of the commemoration including its flagship event, *From Singapore to Singaporean: The Bicentennial Experience*.

He was formerly a director at the National Library of Singapore and Director of the Singapore Memory Project, and President of the Library Association of Singapore. Gene was also the Creative Director of *The Future of Us* Exhibition which was the capstone event for Singapore's SG50 celebrations in 2015. The exhibition pieced together the hopes and dreams of Singaporeans for their future.

**The Story Behind the Singapore Bicentennial**

*From Singapore to Singaporean: The Bicentennial Experience* was initially meant to run for 3.5 months. Due to hugely popular demand with many expressing that they were not able to get tickets, it was extended by another 3 months.

Gene will describe the three-year journey to conceptualise, develop and set up the Experience at the iconic historical site of Fort Canning. To address the challenge of delivering a national exhibition with the weight of the national narrative on its shoulders, Gene envisioned it as an experience that will bring across the history of Singapore over 700 years in an immersive, cinematic and emotional manner – hopefully inspiring Singaporeans to realise there is so much more to their history and so much more to being Singaporean.

Gene worked with an interdisciplinary team of filmmakers, artists, theatre directors, scriptwriters and animation artists to deliver a multi-sensory experience that many who visited described as something on Singapore history that they have never witnessed before.

The response has been overwhelming with many of the more than 600,000 visitors so far describing how moving the experience was and how it has expanded irrevocably their view of Singapore's history.
Honor Harger is the Executive Director for ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands. A curator from New Zealand, she has a strong interest in artistic uses of technologies and in science as part of culture. Honor brings with her over 15 years of experience of working at the intersection between art, science and technology. She is responsible for charting the overall direction and strategy for ArtScience Museum.

Prior to joining Marina Bay Sands, she was the artistic director of Lighthouse in Brighton, United Kingdom, from 2010 to 2014. In that role, Honor curated projects which showed the cultural impact of scientific ideas, such as Laboratory Life, Invisible Fields and Solar System. She also organised exhibitions by artists such as Trevor Paglen, Timo Arnall and David Blandy, commissioned new work by Semiconductor, Hide&Seek, The Otolith Group and James Bridle, and co-founded Brighton Digital Festival.

Honor has held several key appointments in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, and has curated many international exhibitions and events around the world. From 2009-2010 she was guest curator of Transmediale, an international festival of art and digital culture in Berlin. From 2004–2008, she was the director of the AV Festival, the UK’s largest biennial of media art, film and music. She was the first webcasting curator for Tate Modern in London from 2000-2003, where she also curated events and concerts on art and technology. Honor has also worked for Radio One and Artspace in New Zealand, and the Australian Network for Art and Technology in Australia.

Honor’s artistic practice is produced under the name r a d i o q u a l i a, which is a collaboration with Adam Hyde. One of their main projects was Radio Astronomy, a radio station broadcasting sounds from space.

Honor has lectured widely including at the conferences TED, and LIFT, as well as at the European Space Agency, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, California Institute of the Arts and the American Film Institute.
The Long Table is a format for discussion that uses the setting of a domestic dinner table as a means to generate public conversation. Conceived in 2003 by artist, Lois Weaver in response to the divided nature of conventional panel discussions, the Long Table allows voices to be heard equally, disrupting hierarchical notions of ‘expertise.’

Since then, the Table has been set at institutions and festivals worldwide, and invited hundreds of people to sit and share their views on myriad topics.

The Long Table is also a performance that people can participate in by sitting at the Table to discuss issues; they can be a spectator at the same time, by watching and listening from the outside and move between these roles as and when they choose.

The Table will moderate itself, and there is no need for anyone to ‘tie up loose ends’ at the end. However, a host can ensure everyone follows the etiquette, and close the conversation at the set time.

**THE LONG TABLE ETIQUETTE**

This is a” performance” of a dinner table conversation
Anyone seated at the table is a guest performer
Friendly Talk is the only Course
No one will moderate
But a host may assist you
It is a democracy but only topics relevant to the theme will be discussed
To participate, simply take an empty seat at the table
If the table is full, you can request for a seat
If you leave the table, you can come back again and again
There may be silence
There might be awkwardness
There could always be laughter
There is an end, but no conclusion.

(Adapted from Split-Britches.com)
HOSTED BY
Dr Kenson Kwok
Founding Director,
Asian Civilisations Museum

RESIDENT PANELLISTS

Mr Alvin Tan
Deputy Chief Executive (Policy & Community)
National Heritage Board

Mr Gene Tan
Executive Director
Singapore Bicentennial Office
(Speaker for Panel 2)

Mr Kenneth Kwok
Assistant Chief Executive (Planning & Development),
National Arts Council

Ms Stephanie Winkler
Director (Research and Insights)
VICE, Asia Pacific
(Speaker for Panel 2)
Kenson Kwok is trained as an architect and earned a PhD in environmental psychology from University College London.

He established three new museums in Singapore - two iterations of the Asian Civilisations Museum, and the Peranakan Museum - in the process, overseeing the conversion of two historic buildings, expanding the museums’ collections and support base, and setting new standards for curating, display and design. During his time at ACM, over 60 special exhibitions were mounted, many attracting record-breaking numbers.

He was co-curator of the exhibition, A Passage to Asia, at Bozar in Brussels in 2010, and commissioner for the exhibition Baba Bling at the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris in the same year. The latter was the first Singapore-originated exhibition that had prime billing in a major western museum.

In retirement, he remains active in the museum sector as a member of committees at the National Gallery Singapore, National Museum of Singapore, NUS Museums, Indian Heritage Centre, and ICOM (International Council of Museums).
Alvin Tan is currently Deputy Chief Executive (Policy & Community) at the National Heritage Board where he was previously Group Director (Policy) from 2013 – 2015, Director (Heritage Institutions) (2010 – 2013) and Covering Director (Industry Promotion) (2010 – 2011). As Deputy Chief Executive, he oversees strategies, operations and projects pertaining to heritage impact assessment and mitigation, National Monuments and heritage sites (including UNESCO), the National Collection, collections care and management, community outreach and education, volunteer engagement, the heritage institutions (comprising Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, Malay Heritage Centre and Indian Heritage Centre), Museum Roundtable, heritage grants, language campaigns as well as international relations. Alvin oversaw the development of the first ever Our SG Heritage Plan which was launched in March 2018. He is also a Board member of the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre and the Malay Heritage Foundation as well as a member of URA's Heritage & Identity Partnerships and the National Day Parade Executive Committee.
Gene Tan is the Executive Director of the Singapore Bicentennial Office and helms the planning of the commemoration including its flagship event, *From Singapore to Singaporean: The Bicentennial Experience*.

He was formerly a director at the National Library of Singapore and Director of the Singapore Memory Project, and President of the Library Association of Singapore. Gene was also the Creative Director of *The Future of Us* Exhibition which was the capstone event for Singapore’s SG50 celebrations in 2015. The exhibition pieced together the hopes and dreams of Singaporeans for their future.
Kenneth Kwok is the Assistant Chief Executive Officer (Planning & Development) at the National Arts Council of Singapore, overseeing the Strategic Planning, International Relations and Research departments as well as arts education and capability development policies and programmes. A former secondary school teacher and vice principal with the Ministry of Education, he holds an Ed.M in Arts in Education and has served as adjunct lecturer in Educational Drama with the National Institute of Education. He has also been involved in community arts projects over the years with various local arts groups, and has sat on the boards of Arts House Limited, *SCAPE youth centre, and Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. Kenneth is currently pursuing an MA in Creative Writing with LASALLE College of the Arts and will be moving to the Ministry of National Development as Director, Partnerships and Coordination from 1 Jan 2020.
Stephanie Winkler is an Australian cultural researcher, and Head of Insights for VICE Media in APAC. She is a data-nerd with background in youth media, trends-spotting and analytics, and has a passion for helping brands, creatives and publishers make an authentic connection with young audiences. Her career with VICE has seen her author several prominent youth studies, from The Big Shrink (Australia, 2018) to Travel is the new Religion (APAC, 2019), and hold return keynote speaking spots for prominent industry events such as Pause Festival and AdWeek APAC.

Ms Stephanie Winkler
Director (Research and Insights), VICE, Asia Pacific
Ms Yeoh Chee Yan, 59, began her public service career in 1985, and served in various appointments, among them was Head of the Scenario Planning Office in the Public Service Division, where her team developed the first set of National Scenarios.

She served as Permanent Secretary (Education Development) from 2008-2012.

In 2012, she was appointed Permanent Secretary of the new Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY). Under her leadership, MCCY embarked on new strategic plans for sports, heritage and the arts. MCCY also championed capability building in citizen engagement across the Public Service. She also led the Ministry in several successful national initiatives, including the coordination of the SG50 celebrations, the establishment of the National Gallery, the inscription of Singapore Botanic Gardens as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the successful hosting of the 28th SEA Games.

Ms Yeoh currently serves as Chairman of the National Heritage Board and as Senior Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.
Acknowledgements