

Photo by: Farhanah Dyanah

MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

Dear readers,

July and August being the months when Singapore commemorates Racial Harmony Day and our National Day respectively, we thought it is opportune to reflect and think about integration and inclusion in this month's picks. The story of crime-ridden Flemish city Mechelen's transformation through integration is especially thought-provoking. Also, the 2019 edition of *Cultural Connections* is out! Read on to get a teaser of the exciting contents!

From all of us at Culture Academy Singapore, here's wishing all our readers a Happy 54th National Day!

EDITOR'S PICKS

On cultural institutions embracing cultural diversity

In this age of multiculturalism and diversity, are cultural institutions doing enough to consider the heterogeneity of their audiences and in fostering diverse workplaces? David J. Skorton, secretary of Smithsonian Institution addressed the World Economic Forum this year, urging, "*As tellers of history and protectors of culture, it is our responsibility to give flight to the dreams of all generations –no matter their ethnicities, religions, backgrounds or abilities—by letting everyone see themselves in our work, our personnel and our values.*" Read this article to find out how cultural institutions can build bridges of understanding and literally bring diverse communities together.



Transforming a crime-ridden city through integration policies

Till recent years, Belgium's city of Mechelen used to have the highest national crime rate. Women were afraid to step out at night for fear of gangs of migrant youth. The election of a young liberal mayor, however, turned the city around. Law and order policies, intensive integration efforts and partnerships with sports associations pushed the crime rate to below the national average. Find out how Mechelen reinvented itself.



CULTURE VULTURE

In a few words, tell us what makes this issue of *Cultural Connections* surprising.

A juvenile Malayan tapir, a century-old essay on classical music in Singapore and musings on what home means from multiple perspectives.

So, how is this related to the bicentennial year theme?

Well, 200 years on, it is timely to look at what the Singapore story is, what makes this place 'home', and what goes into the making of the Singaporean identity. We are really quite fortunate to get some very eminent scholars and thought leaders to contribute really thoughtful pieces exploring these topics from different angles.

It's hard to see how a tapir is connected to musings on identity.

That's why this is a must-read. The contributions this round are really quite fascinating. Just to highlight some pieces —Professor Tommy Koh and Dr Meira Chand offer their thought-provoking contemplations on what home means; we have two illuminating essays on music in Singapore that are bound to get you looking at the topic in a different way and how music is also part of our identity; and Asian Civilisations Museum director, Kennie Ting has pulled together an impressive array of artefacts from our national collections, bringing together monumental, poignant and quirky stories that makes Singapore who she is. That's where the tapir comes in. So, you must read this issue to get the full story!



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