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National Youth Film Awards 2019 Nominees Address Bold and Sensitive Conversations Through Films

SINGAPORE, 9 JULY 2019 – 2019's [National Youth Film Awards](#) (NYFA) nominees are certainly not shying away from difficult subjects. These aspiring filmmakers deep dived into controversial topics such as public nudity, sugar dating, and pitfalls of being a social media celebrity. Others took to exploring the intricate complexities of familial versus personal identity, as well as Singaporean experiences such as National Service.

These films stood out from the 446 unique submissions that were received this year with a record-breaking 303 coming from the Media Student category, affirming the role NYFA has to play as a platform for film students in Singapore. Furthermore, several award-winning directors are returning to participate in NYFA, such as Shoki Lin and Jerrold Chong, who are past NYFA winners.

“The subject matters our youth filmmakers have chosen to portray reflects the Gen Z and millennial mindset with themes that are current and tackles a search for identity. This is truly exciting as it reaffirms NYFA as a safe place that encourages youths to pursue their passions and to tell stories that they want the world to hear,” says Goh Kok Wee, Executive Director at *SCAPE.

Tackling the Unconventional

Art has always been and always will be a place for discourse on societal issues and youths are finding their place in the arts scene, using film as one of the mediums to tell their stories.

This year's crop of NYFA nominees have taken this to the limits with films such as “BARE”, where director Martin Loh looks at naturism and questions society's treatment of naked bodies, and “Life is Live” by Keziah Wei, which follows the journey of a live-streaming celebrity and uncovers the impact of technological advancements on human interactions in this new age. These films, in particular, were all submitted under the Media Student Documentary category.

The Open Youth category also examined themes such as citizenship and what it means to be Singaporean in Leon Cheo's “SIN-SFO”, as well as inter-racial relationships and expectations with “Rojak Romance” by Christine Seow.



The full list of Media Student nominees may be found in Appendix A, and the full list of Open Youth nominees in Appendix B. More information on NYFA may be found [here](#).

Record-Breaking Submissions

Since their inception, NYFA has always been warmly received by the film community and it is most apparent this year. The film schools have come out in full force with the highest number of entries so far compared to previous editions of NYFA, while NYFA 2019 sees the highest number of returning alumni to the competition.

A record number of 303 submissions were received in the Media Student category, an increase of close to 20% from 2018. LASALLE College of the Arts submitted the greatest number of entries with 101 submissions, beating out Nanyang Technological University who had held the record for the previous 4 years. There was also an increase in submissions from institutions such as ITEs, LASALLE College of the Arts, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, and Temasek Polytechnic.

Not to be outdone, the Open Youth category features multiple returning past NYFA participants, reinforcing NYFA as a platform that allows youths to continue pursuing their passions beyond a scholastic environment. This year's returning participants include several award-winning directors who have made their mark internationally, such as Jerrold Chong, recipient of the NYFA 2018 Best Animated Film. Jerrold returns to NYFA 2019 fresh off his successful Cannes debut, and is up for the Open Youth Best Animated Film Award this year with "Automatonomy". Tang Kang Sheng and Yeo Zhi Qi, NYFA participants in 2018 return this year, this time earning a nomination in the Open Youth Live Action category with their film "Enlistment" that explores themes of friendship and National Service.

Currently in its fifth year, NYFA 2019 announced its refreshed award categories this year, along with a new National Youth Inspiration Award which was awarded to Nicole Midori Woodford, a Singaporean director, writer and editor. Shortlisted entries from the Media Student and Open Youth categories will each compete for 10 different awards, with Best Overall School unique to the Media Student category. Additionally, both categories will also be judged for Best Actor and Best Actress.

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Media Contact

PRecious Communications

Danielle Chow/ Kally Chua/ Sarah Almodiel

+65 6303 0567

nyfa@preciouscomms.com

About National Youth Film Awards

Since its inception in 2015, NYFA has been cultivating a community of likeminded media enthusiasts and is the connecting point for youths to network and collaborate. Through NYFA, some of our alumni have been commissioned for various video campaigns by corporate and industry partners such as Adobe, PAVE and SONY.

Together with industry partners, veterans, and institutes of higher learning, the NYFA programme is designed to spark deeper conversations amongst likeminded individuals and hone their crafts in filmmaking. NYFA supports artistic works from both aspiring and professional filmmakers and is committed to nurture the aspiration, vision, and creative spirit of these youths.

About Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF)

Founded in 1987, the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) is the largest and longest running film event in Singapore. It has become an iconic event in the local arts calendar that is widely attended by international film critics; and known for its dynamic programming and focus on ground-breaking Asian cinema for Singapore and the region. Committed to nurturing and championing local and regional talent, its competition component, the Silver Screen Awards, brings together emerging filmmakers from Asia and Southeast Asia while paying tribute to acclaimed cinema legends.

With its mentorship programmes, masterclasses and dialogues with attending filmmakers, the Festival also serves as a catalyst for igniting public interest, artistic dialogue, and cultural exchanges in the art of filmmaking. The SGIFF is organized by the Singapore International Film Festival Ltd, a non-profit organization with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status.

For more information, please visit www.sgiff.com. Follow us on Instagram @SGIFFest and on Facebook @sginternationalfilmfestival.

About *SCAPE

*SCAPE Co. Ltd is a non-profit organization with its mission and vision rooted in support of youth, talent and leadership development and exists to serve and support youths to live their dreams and realize their full potentials. It offers a holistic



network of programmes, communities, partners and facilities for youths to explore, create and strive.

About NYC

NYC believes in a world where young people are respected and heard, and have the ability to influence and make a difference to the world. Together with their partners, they develop future-ready youth who are committed to Singapore by instilling in them a heart for service, resilience and an enterprising spirit.

APPENDIX A: List of Nominated Films – Media Student

LIVE ACTION			
Institution	Film Title	Director	Synopsis
Nanyang Technological University	Ave Maria	Andrea Flavia William	An Indian woman seeks help from a catholic family in the middle of the night. She goes through a rite of passage with the hope of self-redemption. Over the course of that night, she slowly starts to reveal herself.
Nanyang Technological University	Bodhi / 菩提	Zhen Yu Png	The film follows a single mum, Li Ping, who is affected by her Son, Jun Hao's decision to ordain as a monk. When reality kicks in the day before her son's ordination, Li Ping's fear for loneliness becomes prominent as her son prepares to embark on a new journey as a monastic. She begins to cast doubts on her faith and struggles to choose between her faith and her only son.
Nanyang Technological University	Foul Ball	Kayue Li	<p>A determined boy attempts numerous rounds of base-running at a baseball pitch, striving for his desired timing.</p> <p>Despite his progressive improvement, different obstacles came his way - the weather, an injury, and his fatigue. Finally, his watch malfunctions and he was left in a hopeless disposition, where the purpose of his pursuit was questioned.</p> <p>He takes a moment to ponder and soak in his circumstance. Floating beyond control, he can only let go and let nature take its course.</p>

Nanyang Technological University	Progress	Alistair Quak	<p>Far into the future, in a dystopic, totalitarian state, we follow a regular day in the life of Sergeant Major Lam, as he oversees his troops on a mission to take down a rebel building. However, as the film unravels he is forced to come to terms with himself, as we explore the true extents of his relationship between work life and family...</p> <p>Oh and also, a heck of a lot of intense violent action.</p>
Nanyang Technological University	Adam	Junxian Shoki Lin	Tired of his turbulent family life and caught between identities, Adam seeks out an alternative arrangement in hopes of finding his place.
Nanyang Technological University	Boys Will Be Boys	Shannen Mok	Sixteen-year-old schoolboy Thomas gets a call one night from his ex-best friend Chanel, who hasn't spoken to him properly since getting attached. His initial defenses fade as she tells him about her break-up. Their camaraderie rekindles his previously-suppressed feelings for her. When she rejects his confession, he pretends he is joking and advises her to block her ex-boyfriend on social media. This aggravates the ex-boyfriend, who starts spreading rumours about Chanel. Thomas confronts him to defend Chanel, complicating the situation.
LASALLE College of the Arts	Farah	Pavithran Nathan	A semi-retired seamstress attempts to mend the relationship with her daughter when strange phenomena starts to occur in her house.

DOCUMENTARY			
Institution	Film Title	Director	Synopsis
Nanyang Technological University	Bare	Martin Loh	In a surreal take on the documentary form, the film questions our treatment of naked bodies. Richard, curious about naturism, chances upon a YouTube video discussing public nudity in Singapore. With his interest piqued, Richard manages to contact two Singaporean naturists, Lim and B, and they decide to meet up in real life. As they begin sharing their reasons for being naturists, Richard imagination comes alive. Eventually, he grows to understand what it means to bare it all.
Nanyang Technological University	Life is Live	Keziah Wei	Life is Live follows the journey of a live-streaming celebrity in China, Danny, whose life is built on today's digital entertainment culture of instantaneous user-generated content. We dive deeper into his relationship with his fan, uncovering the impact of technological advancements on human interactions in this new age.
Nanyang Technological University	China Man	Jerrell Zhi Hong Chow	At the age of five, Ek Kiat left his family and village in China to be adopted by new parents in Singapore. This drastic transition led to a troubled childhood, as he grew up with the self-inflicted pressure to suppress his past. China Man, a 24-minute documentary short, follows Ek Kiat as he confronts the deep-seated insecurities that have plagued him the past 20 years.

Nanyang Technological University	Sweet Like Sugar	Chin Yun Ru	Sugar dating platforms are growing and gaining more traction with Singaporeans but society views it as glorified prostitution, where girls provide sexual favours in exchange for a glamorous life. However, reality is not always as it seems and these sugar babies have to hide their identities in fear of the shame. We delve deeper into the psyche and circumstances of those in this lifestyle to understand why they took part in it and to challenge society's perception of sex.
Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts	阿芥 A Jie	Lian Ying	A documentary basic on real family life, telling the story of my grandparents who live in the southern towns, recording their support for the last days of their lives, and the grandfather's care for the sick grandmother.
Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts	Blaq	Damien Eu	An intimate portrait of a youth born with a birthmark on his face, how he copes with his discriminating environment growing up and how he finds acceptance within himself.
LASALLE College of the Arts	Pigeonhole	Mei Fong Lim	Mdm Chua and Ah Hong live together in a one-room rental flat. Despite getting along well initially, their relationship turns sour when Mdm Chua confronted Ah Hong one night as she assumed that Ah Hong has meddled with the television. As the pair becomes more open about the issues they have with each other behind the other's back, Ah Hong eventually finds another flat to move into with the help of a cleaner, leaving Mdm Chua alone in the end.

ANIMATION			
Institution	Film Title	Director	Synopsis
Nanyang Technological University	For Lorn	Hoo Yan Han & Im Eun Sue	<p>Stationed on a satellite orbiting the moon, Naut finds herself trying to reach Earth to no avail. As her circumstances become dire, her reality begins to merge with her memories.</p> <p>Taking cues from films like THE RED TURTLE and SOLARIS, For Lorn is an atmospheric film hoping to convey a sense of melancholy, solitude and longing. It hopes to reassure people that, despite everything, happiness is possible.</p>
Nanyang Technological University	Balance	Raymond Limantara Sutisna	Balance is a 2D animated short film about a boy and a girl fighting for painting space. Both refusing to give in until the mess they create goes out of control. They then realise the only way out is to work together and strive for coexistence.
Nanyang Technological University	Dandelion in the Wind	Do Thi Ngan Giang	A man, while looking for his dog, stumbles upon a magical world of dreams. The main character, through the journey, discovers himself and his unwavering determination to be united with his beloved pet. The film pays homage to Renee Magritte, the master of illusions, dreams and the uncanny



LASALLE College of the Arts	The Growth	Sarah Cheok Ling Fay	Boy leaves home to pursue his ambition.
LASALLE College of the Arts	To Be Apart	Jamie Goh	A pigeon tries to fit in with a community of Mynahs.
LASALLE College of the Arts	Reversion	Yu Sichao	A creative young girl who fights to pursue her dreams.
LASALLE College of the Arts	Now Or Later	Muhammad Yusri Bin Muhammad Yusof	Two train crew members need to deliver an ice sculpture across a vast desert filled with distractions within a day.

APPENDIX B: List of Nominated Films – Open Youth

LIVE ACTION		
Film Title	Director	Synopsis
萍水相逢 A Time For Us	Alvin Lee	A pregnant woman from the countryside travels to Beijing to purchase a Beijing Hukou (Residency Permit) for her unborn child through the black market. There, she was arranged into a sham marriage with a man who can't express himself vocally.
Enlistment	Tang Kang Sheng	Ron, Jacky and Navin hang out for one last night before enlisting into two years of military service. Through the night they reflect on their time together only to discover that the cracks in their friendship were deeper than they thought. This leads to an escalation and they will never be able to return to how they were before.
Sarah	Andre Chong	'Sarah' is a short film on a newly inducted Singapore Airlines (SIA) flight attendant who faces difficulty adjusting to her job. Together with her Filipino domestic helper, the two form an unusual bond over their conscious sacrifices of being away from home.
A Spectacular Sight	Rifyal Giffari	A young woman, Lynn, is getting dressed as her family hounds her to hasten. There's excitement outside her room and as she goes out she sees her family dressed and their faces are painted. Excitement builds as they listen to National Day songs in the car. However, Lynn's father suddenly clutches the wheel and

		begins sweating profusely. The National Day parade plays out on the hospital TV. A sliver of the fireworks is seen bursting outside the window.
STILL	Lee Jing Wei	STILL is an audio and visual journey centered on an old lady whom is forgotten by the people she loves.
You Idiot	Kris Ong	'You Idiot' follows Darren and Matt, two Singaporean teenagers at a crossroads of their life. On a night spent wandering around the city-state, the pair write a song about what is to come in their happy-go-lucky world. 'You Idiot' is an observation of a gentle and playful friendship between two young men, set against the backdrop of a relentlessly developing country that demands more from them than they can give.
SIN-SFO	Leon Cheo	As they drive to San Francisco, married couple Angie and Danny debate a decision which will change their lives forever.

DOCUMENTARY

Film Title	Director	Synopsis
Trailer Boys	Yusri Shaggy Sapari	Trailer Boys follows the journey of Muhammad Irfan Rafieh, a key member of Abam2 Trailer Singapura, which is a community of heavy vehicle drivers from Singapore. Truck drivers are mostly seen as uneducated and unskilled compared to the rest of society, especially in fast-paced competitive Singapore. This film explores how young truck drivers in Singapore such as Irfan find ways

		to break stereotypes and improve how society perceives them through their day to day work and their trailer club.
White Gorilla	Charles Packer	Filmmaker chronicles his grandfather's life using old photographs, home videos, interviews, letters, and footage taken while following in his grandfather's footsteps, exploring how we remember our departed loved ones.
Rojak Romance	Christine Seow	In this documentary film, a young mixed-race couple (a Malaysian Ceylonese Tamil male and a Chinese American female) interrogate differing religious backgrounds, expectations on children, and meeting each others' families, as they speculate on how to exist as a mixed-race couple in multiracial, yet CMIO-centric Singapore. Through Tinesh and Jane's personal journey, Rojak Romance examines the history and identity of the Ceylonese Tamil community.
Corridors of Diversity	Kevin Siyuan Ma	Filmed in Singapore, "Corridors of Diversity" is a multi-layered showcase of urban planning, architectural and day-to-day elements that characterised the urban image of this high density city state. This short film is a montage of communal corridors along various HDB blocks of different regions, subzones and neighbourhoods, of different designs, each offering a unique view that forms an integral piece of the Singapore built environment.
Religious Procession	Dave Lim	Religious Procession is an experimental documentary film of public religious processions undertaken Hinduism and Taoism. In heavily contested and regulated space, syncretic religions intermix with each other, forming a curious mixture of religious harmony. Shot over the period of 2 years, the 17-minute two channels film compares trance, acts of penance and rituals. Weaving between

		<p>histories and contrasting understandings of religious processions, the film throws a question at the audience: How do we build religious harmony in increasingly fragmented societies?</p>
<p>Trespass: Stories from Singapore's Thieves Market</p>	<p>Ong Kah Jing</p>	<p>In 2017, the infamous Sungei Road Thieves Market, which predates the founding of Singapore by over 30 years, was forced to close and make way for the future. Its impending closure ignited dialogues about the value of heritage, heart for the disenfranchised, and sentimentality for history.</p> <p>In documenting its final days, this documentary also serves as a one-of-a-kind time capsule for future generations to experience the sun-baked streets of the Thieves Market, its characters and items galore.</p>
<p>回娘家 / Moving on</p>	<p>Vanessa Tan</p>	<p>Moving on is a documentary short film telling of Madam Hsueh's return to her last home in Pingtung, Taiwan. The house built by her late father stands preserved in time, its items fading yellow under a thick layer of dust. As Madam Hsueh sieves through the belongings, sweet and painful memories bubble to the surface. She recalls her experiences decades later, scrubbing the house clean before the next owner calls it their new home.</p>

ANIMATION		
Film Title	Director	Synopsis
Kingdom	Wei Keong Tan	A lost man falls apart in a forest. The quiet, atmospheric terrain of the forest is undisturbed until a man comes along. Seemingly lost, he enters the unknown space, observing and exploring the area, before he starts to fall apart. Beneath the deceptively simple actions of the character lies a layered approach to his psyche, which hinges on isolation and a sense of belonging.
The Way Home	Kai Lun Pang	Ana crash lands on a dangerous planet and meets a curious creature while waiting for rescue. When it ruins her one-way ticket back, Ana must learn to trust her newfound friend to find the way home.
Automatonomy	Jerrold Chong	In a dystopian sci-fi society amidst social unrest between Humans and Automatons, an orphan rescues an injured girl from the rumble of violence. As they hide out together in a bunkerlike room, their burgeoning friendship gets tested as external forces threaten to fracture how one sees the Other.