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TABOO TOPICS AND BOLD STORIES: *SCAPE'S 9TH NATIONAL YOUTH FILM AWARDS (NYFA) UNVEILS YOUNG FILMMAKERS TO LOOK OUT FOR

SINGAPORE, 31 AUGUST 2023 - The 9th National Youth Film Awards (NYFA) marks a new age with the emergence of cinematic trailblazers harbouring evocative storytelling skills and fresh perspectives, uncovering the next generation of youth filmmakers to look out for. Organised by *SCAPE, NYFA today announced its winners in a ceremony held at *SCAPE The Ground Theatre. This year, the award ceremony received an impressive 327 submissions with 20 awards granted, including categories such as Special Mention and Most Promising Awards to recognise our young filmmakers for their innovation, dedication, and commitment.

Ivy Lim, Executive Director of *SCAPE, said, "For nine consecutive years, the National Youth Film Awards and its myriad of initiatives as a collective platform has empowered young Singaporeans to explore their filmmaking aspirations. We make that happen by consistently introducing to our youth a thriving ecosystem and network of industry partners where they are well-guided to learn, experiment and pilot new ideas that challenge filmmaking boundaries through bold expression and novel perspectives."

The jury's sentiments this year echoed the above vision, citing multiple winning films that broke the bounds of the conventional drama trope. Notably, "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and "The Sun is Up and I Shall Live" clinched "Best Short Film" for the Open-Youth and Student categories, respectively, earning direct entry status into Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF)'s Official Selection as part of NYFA's partnership with SGIFF this year. The former delved into the sticky situation where a hapless funeral director mistakenly sent the wrong body for cremation, garnering praises from the jury as a stand-out work of merit while the latter film was admired for its expert handling of domestic stress and dementia - heavy topics that were perfectly executed by its lead characters. This collaboration with SGIFF opens doors for both films to reach a wider audience, offering the unique opportunity for both winners to showcase their films to seasoned industry veterans and underscoring *SCAPE's mission to continue nurturing young filmmakers.

NYFA 2023 Youth Inspiration Award Recipient

Nominated by a distinguished jury of celebrated filmmakers and industry veterans, the annual Youth Inspiration Award pays homage to one young filmmaker that has displayed outstanding commitment to the filmmaking industry in Singapore. Serving as an inspiration to his peers, Jeremy Chua is an exemplary figure to industry veterans and youth nominees for his exceptional commitment to Singapore's filmmaking industry.



Jeremy's journey is one of deep passion and nurturing care for the younger generation. Through his affiliations with *SCAPE, he has taken on the role of a youth mentor, dedicating his personal time to nurture and guide upcoming youth filmmakers. His deep involvement in many of *SCAPE's programmes, such as the MOV:MENT Lab and Film Facilitation Programme, showcases his dedication to fostering the next generation of cinematic talents.

Jeremy's influence goes beyond mentorship. A prominent Singaporean film producer and screenwriter, his portfolio consists of celebrated titles such as "Inside The Yellow Cocoon Shell" by Pham Thien An and "Glorious Ashes" by Bui Thac Chuyen, which won the Cannes Camera d'Or 2023 and Nantes Golden Balloon 2022, respectively.

"I'm lucky to have met many mentors and colleagues who taught me to be fearless and follow my own intuition. I'm humbled to be considered as an inspiration to my peers and juniors, and I hope this gives encouragement for anyone who find themselves drawn off the beaten track to carry on. Thanks to NYFA for creating a platform that constantly challenges filmmakers to dream!" said Jeremy Chua, NYFA Youth Inspiration 2023 Recipient.

Jeremy's biography can be found in Annex A (Page 6).

Student Submissions Transcended Boundaries of Filmmaking

This year's filmmakers also pushed the envelope by tackling sensitive topics like mental health and controversial topics. This is apparent in "Grandfather's Son", which claimed the "Best Director" award this year. The film shares a layered and personal story of a man coming to terms with his grandfather's death and his inability to attend the funeral in his homeland. Directed by Hein Htut, this film conveys profound emotional depth while faithfully capturing all its subtleties and relatable nuances.

Another outstanding entry was "Built to Scale" by Eliza Danielle Goh En, which masterfully explores the issue of toxic corporate culture and its influence on one's identity. It follows Lou, a timid company outcast, who creates a magical miniature model of her office, giving her control over her architectural firm. As she navigates her difficult work environment, Lou finds herself becoming part of the toxic culture she initially resisted, losing her sense of self in the process. With a narrative structure that allows for unexpected twists and turns, this film that won "Best Screenplay" exemplifies how our youth are exploring themes beyond themselves and transforming these insights into perspectives rarely explored.

Beyond technical filmmaking and storytelling abilities, *SCAPE continues to recognise exceeding qualities shown in our young filmmakers. Elizabeth Xu was awarded the "Special Mention Award" for her double entry and the artistic range shown in her films, "Acid Green" and "Conversations with a Koel Bird". Leong Yong Jia, Tiffany, from the Institute of Technical Education received the "Most Promising Award" for demonstrating potential in her use of creative shots and engaging editing choices for her film "Ah Fen". These awards are given



to encourage youth to continue freely expressing their determination and innovation, cementing NYFA as a platform that opens doors of possibilities for aspiring individuals.

Introducing A Defining New Wave of Youth Filmmakers with Open-Youth Winners

As NYFA grows as a platform to create boundless possibilities for youth filmmakers, it has also allowed them to transcend beyond filmmaking and bring to life topics that truly matter to today's youth anchored at the crossroads of our volatile world. This can be seen through themes such as societal pressures and finding a sense of belonging, revealing the tenacity of our youth.

In the vein of diverse and expressive storytelling, filmmakers this year also explored sensitive topics in hopes to ignite meaningful conversations among their audiences, as shown in Open-Youth category films "Love at Fifty" and "Motherland".

The former, directed by Tan Wei Ting, claimed "Best Director" showcases her signature flair of unearthing nuanced aspects of Singaporean society. "Love at Fifty" chronicles the life of Kee, a divorced mother in her 50s, who ponders the prospect of an unexpected romance with an inexperienced yet charismatic delivery person she encounters at her coffeeshop job. Showcased through the perspective of Kee, this moving film amplifies the often-unspeoken complexities faced by individuals encountering late-life romance in Singapore.

"Motherland" by Denise Khng, recipient of "Best Screenplay", boldly challenges the entrenched societal norms of filial piety and systemic obedience in Singapore. The film's narrative spotlights how these conventions enable abusive parenting and often shape how people—especially children—are perceived in our society.

The Jury also commended "The Parade" for its originality and unconventional take on serious subject matters. This animation by Ryan Benjamin Lee that won "Best Editing" daringly conceptualises the political landscape as a vibrant dance and manic carnival of pop culture, karaoke and colours. Yet underneath it all, it reveals a critical commentary on a nation's political state and mindset—cautious, measured and often tangoing in stagnation—one step forward, two steps back.

The full list of winners for NYFA 2023 can be found in Annex B (Page 7). Winners will walk away with cash and prizes worth up to a total of totalling an estimated S\$70,000, including a S\$1,000 cash prize each and prizes from SONY, Cathay Photo, Mocha Chai Laboratories and more.

Catapulting Next-Generation Filmmakers and Waymakers

All winners this year will receive an Industry Pass to the 34th edition of SGIFF, providing complimentary access to the festival's screenings and events. In addition, six winners will



also embark on an itinerary of regional film festivals, such as the 28th BUSAN International Film Festival through this first-of-its-kind opportunity to connect with international networks. This invaluable expedition not only exposes the young filmmakers to a variety of film cultures and narratives but also provides an opportunity for youth to find their own voices in their works.

As a vibrant epicentre for budding filmmakers in Singapore, *SCAPE continues nurturing talents to showcase their unique voice both locally and internationally through multiple initiatives. As part of *SCAPE's partnership with DigiCon6 Asia, NYFA Nominees Yuan Li Elizabeth Xu of "Acid Green", as well as Alex Sng Yin Hao and Adeline Teo Yi Lin of "Albert" have been conferred as the Singapore winners of DigiCon6 Asia. They will also stand a chance to head to Japan to compete with the rest of Asia.

Further developing these filmmakers beyond the awards ceremony, such as the NYFA Lab and NYFA Mentorship programme, *SCAPE continues to play a pivotal role in empowering young filmmakers to fine-tune their craft by pairing them with acclaimed mentors to broaden their horizons.

On a macro level, these initiatives dovetail with *SCAPE's ongoing vision to support the development of youth, talent and leadership. As part of its brand rejuvenation plans, *SCAPE is set to unveil a new vibrant youth-centric concept in the heart of Somerset Belt in 2024. This refresh will introduce an exciting curation of elevated experiences, collaborative possibilities, and a limitless haven for creativity and exciting retail options, serving as a hub where youth can explore, experiment and express their interests in the creative, digital and technology and sustainability sectors.

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About *SCAPE

*SCAPE Co., Ltd. is a non-profit organisation, a registered charity, and an Institution of a Public Character that engages and nurtures youth by developing their talents. At *SCAPE, we offer a holistic network of programmes, communities, and facilities to support youth in their pursuit of interests and passion areas. Together with our partners, we inspire and empower our youth to **DREAM IT, LIVE IT!**

For more information, visit www.scape.sg

About National Youth Film Awards

Since its inception in 2015, the National Youth Film Awards (NYFA) serves as a community that connects youths with an interest in filmmaking. It aims to be the launching pad for emerging filmmakers into the industry. Through NYFA, our alumni have gone on to earn further accolades on other regional and international film awards & festivals, some of whom have also been commissioned for various video campaigns by corporate and industry partners. Beyond an award platform, NYFA is committed to nurture the aspiration, vision, and creative spirit of our youths. Together with industry partners and institutes of higher learning, the NYFA programme is designed to spark deeper conversations amongst like-minded individuals and supports artistic works from both aspiring and professional filmmakers. To date, NYFA has supported more than 4,000 youths, and received over 2,800 short films across the Student and Open Youth categories.

About Singapore International Film Festival

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 is 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 culture exchanges in the art of filming. The SGIFF is organised by the Singapore International Film Festival Ltd, a non-profit organization with Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status.

The 34th edition of SGIFF will return at the end of 2023. For more information, please visit <https://www.sgiff.com>.

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ANNEX A - Youth Inspiration Award Recipient Biography

Jeremy Chua is a Singaporean film producer and screenwriter. He started his career as a programme assistant at The Substation, a distribution assistant at Lowave Paris, and then an assistant producer at Akanga Film Asia. In 2014, he founded Singapore-based independent film label, Potocol, as a creative house for distinctive Asian auteurs to produce films, videos, installations and artwork.

His work as producer include "Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell" by Pham Thien An (Cannes Camera d'Or 2023), "Tomorrow is a Long Time" by Jow Zhi Wei (Berlinale 2023), "Last Shadow at First Light" by Nicole Midori Woodford (San Sebastian 2023), "Autobiography" by Makbul Mubarak (FIPRESCI Venice 2022), "Glorious Ashes" by Bui Thac Chuyen (Nantes Golden Balloon 2022), "Rehana Maryam Noor" by Abdullah Mohammad Saad (Cannes UCR 2021), "A Family Tour" by Ying Liang (Opening Film International Competition Locarno 2018), "A Yellow Bird" by K. Rajagopal (Cannes Critics' Week 2016) and "A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery" by Lav Diaz (Silver Bear Berlinale 2016). He is an alumnus of EAVE Ties That Bind 2013, Produire au sud 2015, Berlinale Talents 2017, SEAFIC 2017 and Torino Film Lab 2018. He is also a programmer at Pingyao International Film Festival under Jia Zhangke and Marco Mueller since 2017.

ANNEX B - Winners of 9th NYFA

S/N	Category	Award	Winner (Film Title)
1	Student	Best Director	HEIN HTUT LASALLE College of the Arts "Pho Tha (Grandfather's Son)"
2		Best Sound Design	NIRANJAN SAMUEL BENNE LASALLE College of the Arts "Dragonflies 蜻蜓"
3		Best Art Direction	TAN KER WEI LASALLE College of the Arts "The World I Live In Doesn't Exist"
4		Best Editing	RYAN GOH CHOON TAT Nanyang Technological University "no ragrets"
5		Best Screenplay	ELIZA DANIELLE GOH EN EN Nanyang Technological University "Built to Scale"
6		Best Cinematography	WINSTON HONG LASALLE College of the Arts "Dragonflies 蜻蜓"
7		Best Short Film	MACARIUS CHIA Nanyang Technological University "The Sun is Up and I Shall Live"
8		Most Promising Award	LEONG YONG JIA, TIFFANY Institute of Technical Education "AH FEN"
9	Open Youth	Best Director	TAN WEI TING "中年情 (Love at Fifty)"
10		Best Sound Design	ALISTAIR QUAK "Dark"
11		Best Art Direction	AERYN CHONG JIA WEI "Duka Lara"
12		Best Editing	RYAN BENJAMIN LEE "The Parade"
13		Best Screenplay	KHNG LANYUE DENISE "Motherland"
14		Best Cinematography	CLYDE KAM "波罗蜜 (Beyond the Other Shore)"
15		Best Short Film	ALVIN LEE, ANGELINA BOK, CHEW PEI YI "烟熏到了眼睛 (Smoke Gets in Your Eyes)"
16		Special Mention	ELIZABETH XU "Conversations with a Koel Bird" & "Acid Green"



17	Joint Awards	Best Original Music	JAZREEL LOW Nanyang Technological University "Pulau"
18		Best Lead Performance	XENIA TAN "A Sorry Love Story"
19		Best Supporting Performance	ANG YE CHYI "The Sun is Up and I Shall Live"