

NTULINK

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EDUCATING,
ADVANCING AND
CREATING ART
at NTU

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LINES OF FLIGHT

NTU's inaugural literary festival
takes off

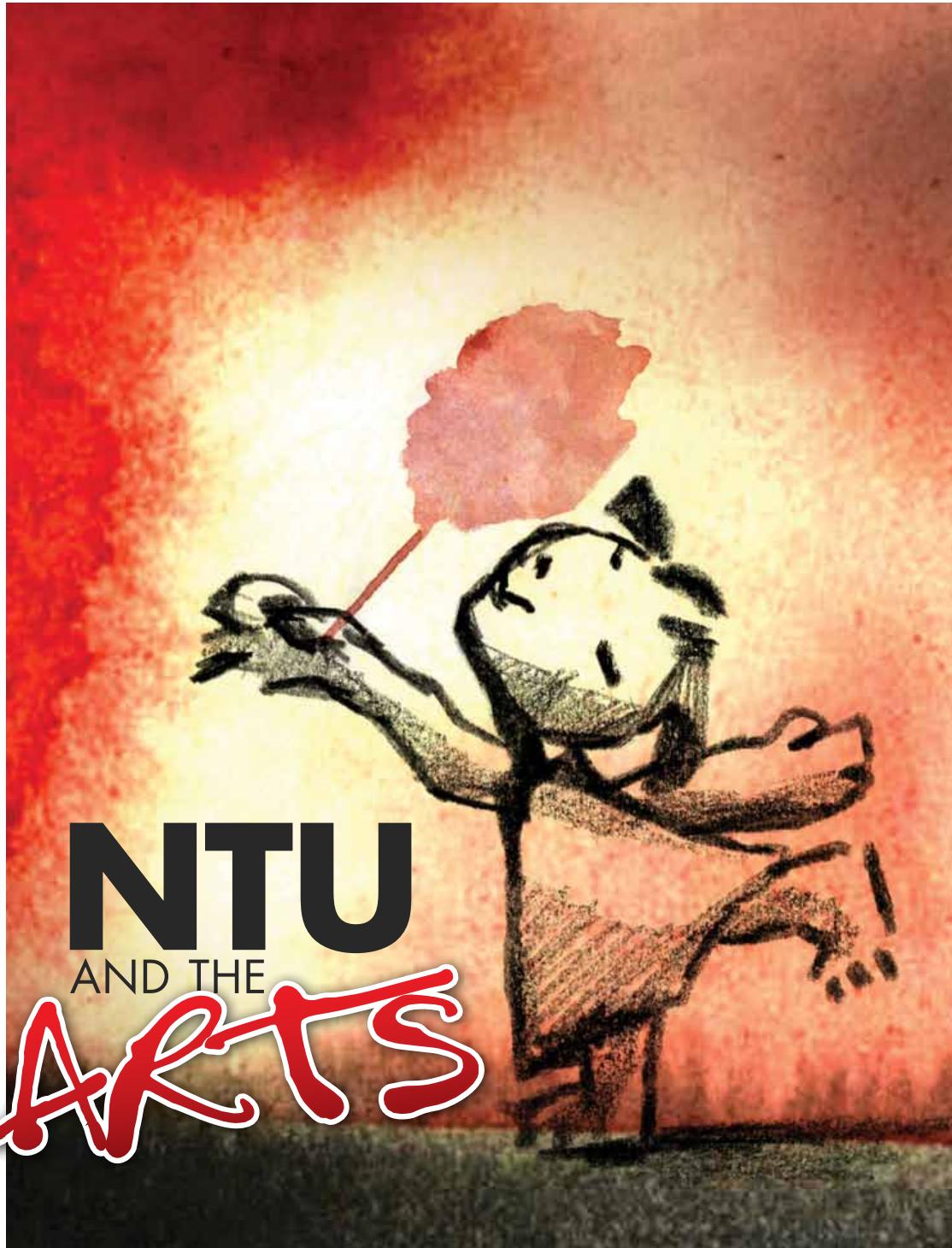
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INVESTIGATING
LOSS THROUGH ART

How ruins
help us to
appreciate
Art



NTU
AND THE
ARTS



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Message from the President



Prof Bertil Andersson
NTU President

Dear NTU alumni, faculty, staff and students,

Since its establishment, NTU has gone from strength to strength, as it journeys swiftly towards its goal of becoming a distinctive global university. A month ago, our position as a rising young star in higher education was further cemented as we were ranked fourth in the world amongst the young universities, by Quacquarelli Symonds. In the same week, we were placed 16th amongst the top 100 of the world's major young universities, by the Times Higher Education. Both these rankings attest to NTU's rapid growth as a university that is well-recognised internationally.

Acclaimed in the disciplines of engineering and science, with growing strengths in business, humanities, arts and social sciences, the University has reinforced its reputation as a major force in education and research. With the NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (a joint medical school by the Imperial College London and NTU) enrolling its first batch of students in 2013, we will be poised to further increase our recognition in related areas like biomedicine and life sciences in the years ahead. Being one

of the youngest universities amongst those ranked also means that we have the potential to raise our profile higher. The advantage of youth offers us room for innovation in our curriculum and allows us to seize new opportunities on the horizon. One example of this is how the new medical school will be able to pioneer innovative teaching methods in medical education.

A new phase for the medical school began last month, as the school held its ground-breaking ceremony – unveiling plans for a dual campus – at its new Novena Campus which comprises the School's headquarters and the high-rise Clinical Sciences Building. Ready by June 2013, the headquarters will be equipped with administrative and teaching facilities for its first intake of 50 students by August. At the Yunnan Garden Campus, a new Experimental Medicine Building that is scheduled for completion in 2015 will generate synergy with the University's engineering, sciences, business and medical disciplines and complement the practical clinical training at the Novena Campus. With the two campuses, students will have the best of both worlds. The proximity of the Novena Campus to the Tan Tock Seng hospital will provide students the necessary bedside experience and training, supported by medical professionals at the hospital. At the Yunnan Campus, students will gain from the University's research strengths and expertise in biomedical engineering, science, business and humanities.

As we continue to flourish in the research, science and engineering arenas, we are also making steady advances in the

domain of humanities and the arts. Seven years ago, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and the School of Art, Design and Media (ADM) opened their doors to the first cohort of students. Today, together with the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, both these Schools have produced students who have earned international praise for their creative work and research. The University has also secured noteworthy tie-ups in the disciplines of arts and humanities with reputable partners like Harvard University and the University of Manchester. The creation of ADM is in line with the government's long-term vision to develop the island state into a global interactive digital media hub, as well as with the University's five-year strategic blueprint – *NTU 2015* – of developing excellence in New Media.

Cross-disciplinary integration is key to all that we do at NTU, from curricula to research. In the former, we believe in providing a broad-based education in diverse disciplines to prepare our students for the global working world. In the latter, we are deeply committed to global interdisciplinary research collaborations and the discovery of new knowledge that would benefit Singapore and the world and establish us as one of the leading global universities of the 21st century.

Moving forward, NTU will continue to create important advances in education and research, making contributions that will help solve the world of its most pressing issues and enhancing Singapore's reputation as a global education hub.



"The arts are a way to understand the world condition, and to pioneer working solutions to problems that are complex."

– Prof Vibeke Sorensen

Educating, Advancing, and Creating Art at NTU

With the University's growing focus on interdisciplinary research and collaborations, and the government's vision to develop Singapore into a global interactive digital-media hub, all eyes are on NTU's School of Art, Design and Media (ADM), and how it is going to advance cross-campus-and-beyond collaborations that will transform the art and media landscape in Singapore. *NTULink* talks to ADM's Chair, Professor Vibeke Sorensen, to find out more.

Q: 'Art' is an elusive term that is at worst, indefinable and at best, subjective. If you have to define 'Art' concisely, how would you do it?

VS: Art is a personal response to the world and society, and involves the reception and expression of ideas, thoughts, or feelings that influence our cultures. Although a personal creation, it is not entirely dissimilar to science. It is, in a way, a compressed research and development cycle as it often starts with a question or hypothesis, employs an iterative process of testing to prove or disprove the hypothesis, and then uses or applies the process to some larger artwork that has to be brought to a level of refinement in order to be engaged by the public and for it to 'transcend' the technology.

Q: You assumed your current position as Chair of NTU's School of Art, Design and Media (ADM) in 2009. What are some of the initiatives you have implemented since coming onboard?

VS: Attracting animation faculty of international calibre to the faculty has been a major goal, and this has positioned ADM at the level of the very best animation schools in the world. ADM has undergone a 'culture change' from a much more traditional teaching-dominated art school to one that is balanced between teaching and research. Although the arts typically need less funding than the hard sciences and engineering, the grant income that ADM

faculty raised doubled after my first year at ADM. Not only did the grant income increase, but many more of the projects are interdisciplinary and technologically innovative across the University, including engineering, computer and materials science, and the humanities and social sciences.

Other major changes are the expansion of our undergraduate programmes, and the addition of our postgraduate PhD programme, launching in August 2012. Besides the Blue Ribbon Commission revisions to the undergraduate BFA programmes, which involved all areas of ADM (Animation, Film, Photography, Interactive Media, Visual Communication and Product Design), we added an undergraduate minor, a second major, and are about to start an undergraduate major in Art History. Whilst having an Asian Concentration, it is really an 'art histories' programme as it has a multicultural and global orientation, and includes the contemporary arts of many cultures around the world.

This is a way to understand the heritage and living cultures of the world, which are relevant to people in other fields, not just specialists in the arts. Another addition is the founding of the Centre for Asian Art and Design, and the proposing of a Tier 3 grant related to it. The Tier 3 is the most prestigious and highest amount of funding that can be applied for in Singapore. We also inaugurated our newly renovated, state of the art ADM Gallery which is now able to present major museum quality works.

Q: How can the work that is being carried out at ADM help NTU achieve its Peak of Excellence objective in *New Media* under the University's 2015 blueprint, and how can ADM help to boost Singapore's transformation into a global media city?

VS: Singapore is already a global city, and its focus on media is strategic. Some of the most creative work being done today by artists involves media. The artists are actively shaping the technology through their art. By attracting the best faculty, staff, and students, having excellent facilities and equipment, by joining university research centres, museums, galleries, and government agencies to ensure strong collaborations across high level sectors of the media ecology in Singapore, by including student internships at major companies such as Lucasfilm, and by catalysing an energetic spirit of entrepreneurship, we can play a part in this national goal. And with our new postgraduate PhD, faculty and students will be able to focus on advanced research and sophisticated creative work that is competitive internationally with some of the top research institutions worldwide. At ADM, we support all Five Peaks of Excellence, not just *New Media*.

Q: Where do you see NTU ten years from today in relation to its Arts education? What are your views on the future of the Arts in Singapore?

VS: We have seven areas in ADM: Animation, Art History, Film, Photography, Interactive Media, Product Design, and Visual Communication. Faculty are not only specialists with great depth in their

respective areas, but they have breadth and a collaborative, interdisciplinary orientation. This reinforces President Bertil Andersson's vision for the University as research intensive where the synergy between fields drives innovation and discovery. So we encourage cross-over not only between the areas mentioned, but between ADM and others schools and colleges at NTU and elsewhere in the world. This is a unique opportunity for us, and a challenge for NTU to imagine how the arts can dialogue with engineering and science in ways that go beyond stereotypes of scientists as technicians and artists as illustrators.

The opportunities are great and at ADM our faculty, students, and staff are already active in collaborative grant proposals across the University. Almost all of our faculty are involved one way or another with digital new media. The common digital foundation that links previously separate sense-based media is allowing new connections between them, and this is stimulating original collaborative work across ADM and NTU. We are in the perfect place to pioneer media and the arts. Many of our faculty either already hold PhDs or are actively involved in their own doctoral programmes at home or abroad, contributing to the attainment of our goals. I also see ADM as a cultural centre, not just a school. We will have many events, courses, artists, students, facilities, and activities and so we will be an even more interactive player in Singapore, with museums, galleries, film festivals, conferences, educational institutions, industries, research centres that include the arts and technology, and more. Singapore being multicultural already, and a gateway between East and West, has a special historical and geographic opportunity given its global view that already plays a leadership role in many fields.

The arts are a way to understand the world condition, and to pioneer working solutions to problems that are complex. This is one of the main ways that the arts in Singapore will be positioned, given the excellent education system, its respect for the world's cultures, and a deep concern for the ecology and sustainability. This is the context and content for much of the work being made by our students and faculty. So we are not just talking about art for art's sake, though there is always a place for aesthetically moving work that is unique to itself. But we encourage art and design that informs, solves problems, and improves life. Its content, insights, technical and conceptual originality, and its contribution to such global issues as sustainability, intercultural communication, etc are central to the work being done in ADM. The arts are changing constantly, and with such highly educated artists in such a highly engaged global context as in Singapore, the arts here will certainly flourish.

Q: How does ADM 'brand' itself differently from other Art Schools in the region? What are some of its unique strengths that potential students, teaching faculty and research staff can look forward to benefit from?

VS: We have the largest art school in Singapore and we are the first at university level in the history of the country. We are strong in digital media. We also have art history and painting. At NTU, undergraduate photography students are taught by leading international practitioners. In Visual Communication, the faculty is a group of distinguished designers from Brazil-Japan, Cuba, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United States. In Product Design,

our highly accomplished faculty hail from Italy, India, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. In Interactive Media, experts in game design, multimedia, and physical computing come from Canada, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom. So we are highly international.

We are in a different ecology of the arts from that which existed previously. The key to what we do is that we embrace depth and breadth, meaning that all of our artists are expert in one or more art and design field, and interdisciplinary in some way, for example with our College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Engineering, the College of Science, etc. This interaction helps our School to change and grow. This context is a unique potential, and we are in a state of transformation catalysed by these interactions. It is also important that we are located in Singapore, which is a multicultural and global city. The fact that we are engaged in constant 'cross-cultural communication' (between fields and human cultures) is also a key to our identity. In a way, we are a model of the world, a laboratory for creativity and innovation at the intersection of academia, the fine arts, and global industries. Artists and designers catalyse the development of new technologies, so I see ADM having a significant role to play in technological innovation through their creativity, research and collaborations.

Q: Interactive digital media research has been identified as one of Singapore's new economic growth sectors. How can ADM ensure its competitive research advantage and steer the further development of this research area and industry?



▲ Prof Vibeke Sorensen, Chair, NTU School of Art, Design and Media.

VS: Competition is valuable as it makes us all try harder. It also does not prevent cooperation. Goals can be reached through both. The best way is to continue to attract the best students and faculty, and have the best equipment and facilities to support our programmes and research, and to have active and inspired communication and collaborations between fields and industries. We need to emphasise the growth of the arts ecology in Singapore, and be a major player. This includes the design professions, the fine arts community, and academia, with high level research, key international exchanges, local and global internships. We are striving for this. In particular, the Interactive arts can be considered a form of research closely related to the design of new equipment and interfaces, often used when developing new kinds of applications and visualisations.

Art is anticipatory, often related to new developments in industry. In Richard Florida's 2002 book entitled '*The Rise of the Creative Class*', the author describes the important relationship between the arts, culture, and academia, and their catalysing effect on innovation in high technology, using Silicon Valley as a main example. And interaction is fundamental to computing technology, which is ubiquitous. The unusual ideas that stimulate the 'next big thing' often come from unusual sources. Artist-technology interactions have for many years been key to innovation, not just in computing but throughout human history, and my view is that this is a well proven paradigm for invention and growth, and the 'competitive advantage'.

Q: One of ADM's goals is to address challenging problems in the arts, culture and media, in consideration of their implications on society, humanity and the

Earth's ecosystems. Singapore as a nation is still relatively young and developing, in both the areas of Arts and Sustainability.

i) How can ADM use Art to create greater awareness and instil a greater sense of ecological responsibility in the general public; and ii) how does it prepare its students to be role models and responsible citizens of the world?

VS: Art is a compressed research and development cycle. It is a window to the future (and the past), and uses the senses to apprehend the state of the world and respond to it. From this, we can reflect on what is happening, adapt and improve our thinking and behaviour so that it is more ethical, responsible and compassionate. We can engage the world through the media arts in new ways. It is a literally a bridge to the world. We are so much better informed and this should appeal to everyone's conscience. Although there is information overload, we have access to knowledge sources previously unavailable and as stewards of the planet, we have an obligation to try to solve problems we are all facing. We have deforested our planet and melted glaciers, and there is a human induced mass extinction of species underway that will irreversibly change our planet within the next century.

We know this largely because of the images we see. At ADM, we have a strong film programme that concerns itself with both narrative and documentary, which increasingly includes scientific as well as ethnographic content. Our contemporary fine art and art history programme is also strong in this regard. Art history is opening in Singapore in response to a national demand, from increasing numbers of students wanting to study it, to a need for people with expertise and skills that can benefit a growing culture

"We encourage art and design that informs, solves problems, and improves life."

industry and the information economy. We offer courses on art and ecology that are interdisciplinary, and in both our Foundation Programme and our Product Design Programme, ecological approaches are considered fundamental. Our faculty are winning prizes and receiving commissions for works that do exactly that. For example, Professor Lucy Davis recently won a prize at the prestigious Oberhausen Film Festival for her piece '*Jalan Jati*' which addresses the disappearance of the rainforest. We have excellent visual communicators, product designers, photographers, and interaction designers all of whom teach students to be responsible citizens of the world.

At ADM, we also emphasise cultural preservation, as there is a strong link between biodiversity and cultural diversity. We involve students in research projects and events that focus on this in the local, regional and international context. A good example is a preservation project under Professor Michael Walsh, whose work in preserving the historic city of Famagusta in Cyprus has attracted attention and funding from the World Monuments Fund and the United Nations. Cultural heritage is part of the eco-system and just as endangered. There are grants, residencies, and internships increasingly available to students to pursue these and related concerns in academia, the arts and in industry. So the School is active on all levels and considers preservation a priority. This is consistent with *Sustainable Earth, New Media, and New Silk Road* – three of NTU's Five Peaks of Excellence. At ADM we emphasise all three and see them as interlinked.

Celebrating Art

In celebration of their transition from students to professional artists and designers, the graduating Class of 2012 from the School of Art, Design and Media (ADM) put together an exhibition featuring their final year projects (FYP). *NTULink* speaks to some of these passionate young individuals as they celebrate their new phase in life through Art.



"Art is something that not only expresses artists' emotions, but also evokes emotions in others."

– Nguyen Thi Nam Phuong

Name:
Nguyen Thi Nam Phuong
Major:
Digital Animation
Project:
Innocent Memory
Medium:
Film



'Innocent Memory' captures the artist's childhood memories and contrasts the themes of Hope and Reality.

It was quite by chance that Phuong fell in love with animation. Whilst painting one day, she wondered how her drawings would appear in motion. That question led her to discover the numerous techniques of creating animation and then onto pursuing her studies in this field.

Inspired by her parents who overcame all obstacles to give her a better life, Phuong's FYP '*Innocent Memory*' is a work of love dedicated specially to them. The short film illustrates the artist's personal reflections as she rebuilds childhood memories, connecting Hope with Reality. The hopes for a better future her mother wished for, as expressed in the lullaby she used to sing, is contrasted against the sadness of reality, as represented by the war recollections from her father. The two-minute film employs lines from the lullaby, accompanying a

series of evocative images of a girl in the midst of war.

One of the challenges Phuong faced in creating the film was the fact that there was no storyboard prior to making it. This non-linear approach however, helped broaden her knowledge about filmmaking and through it all, she learnt how to seek inspiration and how to develop and maintain her own style.

The gifted alumnus, whose interests outside of digital animation include fine art and photography, feels lucky to have studied at NTU and in a School equipped with modern facilities and fine professors who have been a constant source of inspiration to her. She hopes soon to find a job in the film animation industry and gain the experience she would need, to fulfil her dream of becoming an independent filmmaker.



"Art is an experience."
– Cheryl Teo

Name:
Cheryl Teo
Major:
Photography and Digital Imaging
Project:
The Log of Charlie Ming
Medium:
Photography



'The Log of Charlie Ming' raises questions about unnatural gender selection issues and the consequences that may arise from it.

Cheryl first became interested in making her own pictures when she was 17. At the discovery of several photographers and the power of photography to shift mindsets, she was soon convinced that constructing her own realities through photography was an avenue she truly wanted to explore.

Her FYP, 'The Log of Charlie Ming', employs a speculative and fictitious narrative to raise awareness to underlying gender selection problems that still exist in our day and age. A male individual is contextualised in a space and time beset by these problems and the audience is forced to look and connect with his pain and confusion. For her project, Cheryl researched into Asia's surplus male population and high-sex ratio societies to understand the potential problems that could arise for males living in these

societies. The work also raises questions about the consequences of artificial sex selection. Attempting to build her own sets for the project proved challenging to her at the beginning. Created mainly out of cardboard and flea market items, the world of Charlie Ming was born and her hard work was finally paid off as these invented realities came to life, through the apparatus that first opened her eyes to the many realities of our world.

Cheryl hopes that her work can render an alternative way of helping people understand difficult issues in life, in this case, that of gender selection. The talented alumnus wishes to get involved in the art world, as much as she can. One thing for sure, she will continue with building dioramas, photographing them and seeking inspiration through the works of Lori Nix.



"Art is the conscious creation of a work that breathes soul, emotion and beauty."

– Don Aravind

Name:
Don Aravind
Major:
Digital Filmmaking
Project:
Janaki
Medium:
Film

A self-confessed day-dreamer, Don could not have imagined pursuing anything else but a career that encourages limitless imagination.

His FYP '*Janaki*', documents the life of a former Indian National Army recruit who walks down memory lane collecting painful memories of World War Two. An ironic observation of the way Nature plays the role of a backdrop in times of adversity brought on by war, the film is more than just a narrative. It is a collage of a fighter's memories and the images in her head.

Four years at ADM have equipped Don with a keen understanding of how important Art is and how crucial it is to contribute in any way that he can to the

world of Art. He feels that this is the only way to make good use of the training he has received. Apart from his love for film making, Don is passionate about music and often writes his own. He is also part of a band called Taalmenz.

Currently, Don is already busy with his second film entitled '*Heartbeat*'. Loosely based on his own life experiences, the film explores the complexities of human relationships through the themes of pain, loneliness and unconditional love.

When asked what he hopes to achieve five years down the road, the creative alumnus wants to be presenting a pair of movie tickets – not just of any movie, but of one directed by him – to his parents.





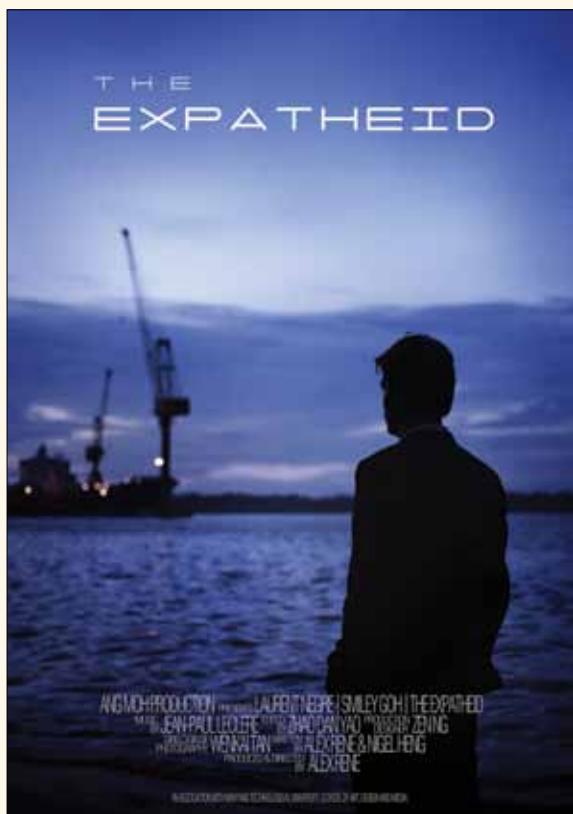
"Art is the external expression of your inner feelings."

– Alex René

Name:
Alex René
Major:
Digital Filmmaking
Project:
The Expatheid
Medium:
Film

What would you do if three days of your hard work was entirely erased? That was what happened to Alex when three days worth of filming came to nothing as the major hard drive carrying his film footages crashed in a transfer process. Still, nothing would daunt the ambitious film graduate who went on successfully to complete '*The Expatriot*', a short film that serves as a social and political commentary on Singaporean society in general.

Drawing from his own personal experiences of being a French expatriate living in Singapore, Alex looks into the



themes of alienation and isolation as issues confronted by both the expatriate and local communities. From societal alienation through long hours at work, to combating isolation through recreating the lifestyle of one's native land, '*The Expatheid*' forces audiences to address the very real issues facing day-to-day life.

To ensure he had full control of the film, Alex decided to be both producer and director. This meant that he had to write the script, find actors, but at the same time look for sponsors, funding and take care of all other aspects of making a film.

Shooting in two different countries – sunny Singapore and snowy France – added to that challenge.

Things are looking good for the active alumnus who hopes to be a producer or director five years down the road. The favourable publicity he received for '*The Expatheid*' has already secured him a new sponsorship to shoot a short film in France. Pre-production for the new film began in mid-June and production is scheduled for December. A black and white film, his new project will be set in the 1940s in Rouen, France.

‘The Expatheid’ explores the themes of alienation and isolation.



"Art is and should be a way of communication."

– Nguyen Duong Quynh Anh

What's the best way to communicate good hygiene habits in young children? A handwashing basin that creates music when water runs through it. 'Musical Basin' is the result of a study on how design influences user behaviours, and the FYP of Anh, who wanted to incorporate educational and fun elements into her design work. Research conducted in some elementary schools convinced Anh that ergonomical requirements for this group of students (ages six to 12) differ, because of their varying stages of physical growth. For this, the basin is cleverly designed to operate at different levels, to cater to children of different heights.

Outside of her interest for product design, Anh is also a writer and is currently engaged in a translation project for a Singaporean novel. She hopes that projects of these kinds would help encourage more cultural exchanges between Singapore and Vietnam. Anh hopes to continue her work and further her studies in product design, but also to establish herself as a writer in her own country one day in the not-too-far future.



▼ The 'Musical Basin' encourages good handwashing habits in children.

▲ The 'Musical Basin' as seen from above.



Name:
Nguyen Duong Quynh Anh
Major:
Product Design
Project:
Musical Basin
Medium:
Chemical Wood & 3D Printing Prototype



"Art is a visual, auditory, tactile, experiential expression of one's creativity and imagination."

– Jane Chang

Name:
Jane Chang

Major:
Visual Communications

Project:
Politikally

Medium:
Publication

17th century English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes examined political scenes in three categories – the Body, Man and State. Drawing inspiration from this and from the 2011 General Elections and Presidential Elections in Singapore, the concept for '*Politikally*' was born.

The project explores the impact of graphic design on political campaigning, with a special focus on visual communication with the youths of Singapore. Jane chose this target group



for her project because she believes that they are visually sensitive and politically demanding of change. She intended for '*Politikally*' to highlight design as a crucial mode of communication even in areas like political activism, and not just as an ornamental flourish.

Today, Jane attributes her increased confidence to the conceptual thinking, research and technical skills ADM has equipped her with. The School has also helped her become a more independent learner. The next stop for this bubbly young alumnus is an internship at the Singapore-MIT Gambit Game lab in Boston, before she returns home to look for a job proper.

◀
'Politikally' examines the impact design plays on political campaigning.



"Art is everything in Life!"

– Kelvin Atmadibrata

Name:
Kelvin Atmadibrata

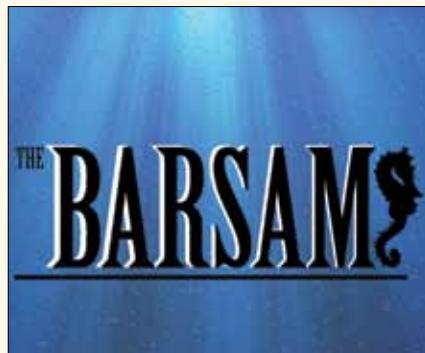
Major:
Interactive Media

Project:
The Barsam

Medium:
Visual novel

Kelvin is unflustered by the fact that his FYP '*The Barsam*' elicited more negative responses than positive ones. To him, people reject that which challenges conventions and makes them uncomfortable.

'*The Barsam*' re-tells the story of Sang Nila Utama's discovery of Singapura, with a fictional twist incorporating demi-



humans (Seahorsemen or Barsams) as the island's indigenous creatures into the narrative. Drawing from characters and incidences recorded in the Malay Annals, Kelvin's project was inspired by Japanese role-playing video games. Delivered in Malay, the visual novel examines the role and importance of the Malay race in the Malayan Peninsula and serves as a social commentary on racism, sexuality and colonialism.

The affable alumnus believes that audiences must be free and given limitless ways of exploring and experiencing Art. Somewhere down the road, he hopes to be able to open up an independent art space in his hometown, Jakarta, to provide people an avenue for experiencing contemporary artworks.

◀
Cover print for '*The Barsam*'.



南洋校友奖

NANYANG ALUMNI *Awards* 2012

In recognition of our outstanding alumni, nominations
for the Nanyang Alumni Awards 2012 are now open.

为表扬在各个领域杰出的校友，
2012南洋校友奖开始公开提名

- | | |
|---|---|
| ◆ Nanyang Distinguished Alumni Award
南洋卓越校友奖 | ◆ Nanyang Outstanding Young Alumni Award
南洋杰出青年校友奖 |
| ◆ Nanyang Alumni Achievement Award
南洋校友成就奖 | ◆ Nanyang Alumni Service Award
南洋校友服务奖 |

Nominations close on 15 July 2012

For more details, please visit www.ntu.edu.sg/NanyangAlumniAwards,
or contact Alumni Affairs Office by phone: 6790 6769 / 6790 5919,
or email: nanyangalumniawards@ntu.edu.sg

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For the love of literary arts

The launch of NTU's inaugural literary festival, '*Lines of Flight*', reflects not only an increasing awareness and appreciation for the creative writing arts on campus, but also the University's commitment to developing literary arts education. Assistant Professor Jennifer Crawford, from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) tells *NTULink* more about the festival and how it will help to further enhance literary appreciation here.



▲ Assistant Professor Jennifer Crawford, from NTU's School of HSS.

"The Arts is an essential part of our working and social community. We realise that when we integrate these different ways of thinking, more happens. For example, when we look at innovation and the desire for business growth, we also need to look at creative practice as part of fostering that."

– Prof Jennifer Crawford

Lines of Flight

Much progress has been made in literary arts education at NTU, since the establishment of its College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences eight years ago. Its Arts and Humanities programme, in spite of being one of the University's youngest, is now ranked within the world's top 100th, having risen significantly in the subject rankings of the 2011 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World Universities Rankings. The University also launched the Singapore Writing Residencies (National and International) programme in April 2011. A collaboration between NTU and the National Arts Council, the residencies provide an avenue for national and international writers with a record of creative excellence to contribute to teaching and mentorship within NTU's creative writing programme*, whilst working on their own literary projects.

More recently, the inaugural literary festival, '*Lines of Flight*', was held and organised by HSS' Division of English, to provide an avenue for the public and students to enjoy some of the literary products of the programme and its writers. The festival featured a programme suitable for all fans of creative writing and even for those who were new to this art form. It included readings and multimedia performances, discussion panels, writing workshops, and an 'open mike' event to foster

student and public participation. Organised with the aim of increasing awareness of HSS' creative writing programme, the festival also highlighted the School's direction in developing literary arts education in NTU.

"Through the festival, we also wanted to create an opportunity for the many practising writers in HSS to share their work and network with one another. We wanted an event to celebrate the creative writing programme in HSS, giving students a chance to see the work of faculty members and to explore different issues about literary arts," shares Prof Crawford.

Featuring renowned local and international Singapore Writers-in-Residence, Ms Grace Chia Krakovic and Mr Timothy O'Grady, as well as leading writers and poets such as Ms Jay Bernard, Mr Ng Yi-Sheng and Ms Kristina Marie Tom, the one-day festival was held on 17 March on HSS grounds. The world of theatre and films was represented by leading screenwriter and director Mr Ben Slater, and playwrights Ms Jocelyn Chua and Prof Quah Sy Ren who discussed their works.

Prof Crawford believes that the success of the literary festival shows the emphasis the University places on arts education, and the students' increased interest in literary arts. "As a result I have been receiving an increasing number of enquiries on our graduate programmes in creative writing. There has been strong response from

members of the public and local writers, who said that they enjoyed the festival. I also noticed many students discussing various issues brought up during the festival, in their journals," she says.

When asked what more can be done at future literary festivals, Prof Crawford shares: "We are discussing this and there is so much we can do at future festivals. We have new writers-in-residence joining us, students working on new creative projects and the regular readings we have had since the beginning of the creative programme. We have a good relationship with the literary community in Singapore, and we have had good exchange and discussions. We hope to be able to bring more of this to the festival next time."

Creative writing on campus

The creative writing minor programme in HSS is open to all NTU students who are interested and passionate about the literary arts. In this programme, they take up modules on poetry, fiction, playwriting, monologue writing, screen writing, and many others. There is also an introductory course which has been very popular with students from other Schools.

"There are many students who dream about being writers but do not necessarily have the chance to explore writing in practice and with guidance. This programme allows them to do so," says Prof Crawford. "It also offers students the chance to learn a number of transferable skills. It provides them the opportunity to learn more about creative practice, to manage creative projects, and to challenge their own thinking. They can then contribute to their own fields with skills picked up here. Once one is in touch with one's creative ability, one can bring that skill to any profession," she adds.

NTU and Arts education

Prof Crawford feels that it is almost natural for NTU, a research intensive university with great infrastructure, to expand into the area of Arts education. "The Arts is an essential part of our working and social community. We realise that when we integrate these different ways of thinking, more happens. For example, when we look at innovation and the desire for business growth, we also need to look at creative practice as part of fostering that," she emphasises.

"We have great resources here for dedicated studies and production of new works, regardless of the field. There is increasing awareness about the Arts and creative traditions in Singapore. When these traditions blend with other traditions and technologies, there are endless possibilities," says Prof Crawford.

She adds that Arts educators will always be interested in finding ways that will urge students to be more responsive, and to encourage them to improvise according to circumstances. "We have a real interest to teach students how to be aware of what is going on around them, and how to interact in positive and productive ways. The technology surrounding the Arts is developing all the time. This new territory is really amazing in terms of Arts development. Whilst it can be a challenge to educators, it is a very exciting one," says Prof Crawford.

* NTU's creative writing programme is offered to undergraduates and graduate students who wish to pursue an education in literary arts. They learn the techniques necessary for crafting well-written poetry, fiction, drama, and screenplays, and are encouraged to nurture their creative and innovative abilities.

About Assistant Professor Jennifer Crawford:



Prof Crawford joined the Division of English at HSS as an Assistant Professor in 2009. She is a poet with critical interests in contemporary creative and experimental writings, particularly those which emerge in (post)colonial, collaborative and digital environments. Her poetry collections include '*Admissions*' (Five Islands Press, 2000), '*Bad Appendix*' (Titus Books, 2008) and '*Napoleon Swings*' (Soapbox Press, 2009). She received her PhD from the University of Wollongong in 2005, for a dissertation which focused on magical child characters as they appear in contemporary New Zealand fiction. Her research interests are in contemporary poetry and poetics, New Zealand and Australian literature, and creative, experimental and multimedia writing. Her current research focuses on collaborative and improvisational poetics.

MR TIMOTHY EDWARD O'GRADY

The Writer-in-Residence (International) at HSS' Division of English, Mr O'Grady is an author best known for his novel, 'I Could Read The Sky' which won him the Encore Award in 1998 and was subsequently adapted for screenplay.

What does creative writing mean to you and what encouraged you to pursue this career?

In it you say who you are. It contributes to your finding that out. It is a challenge and a companion. It can be one of the very few things in your life that approaches purity. I was drawn to it at first out of a sense of wonder at things I read.

What inspires you to write and how do you handle writers' block?

You feel the world all the time and some innate process selects something. A novel is probably different from other arts. It could be in you for many years before it is developed enough for you to begin. You have to wait, but not too long.

Your book, 'I Could Read The Sky' is a favourite of many. What gave you the inspiration to collaborate with a photographer to write this lyrical novel? What were some of the obstacles you faced in writing this book and how did you overcome them?

I was asked by a publisher to write something to go along with Steve Pyke's photographs. It took two years for me to get round to the idea that this collaboration could be a novel. I wanted to find a way in which the pictures and words could be born out of the same act but would do what only each can individually

do. We had to find a way where one would not just serve the other. I tried to give the pieces of prose the immediacy of the photographs, so they would feel like they were coming straight out of the narrator's head without an explanatory context. I found this unexpectedly liberating.

You are the Writer-in-Residence (International) in NTU's School of HSS. In your interactions with the School's students, how do you think they can become successful creative writers? In what ways can they improve themselves if they wish to pursue a career similar to yours?

A poet told me when I was 22 that in order to write, you have to fail, just as you do in order to walk. That is how it is, I think. There is not one way to write. I never thought of it as a career, nor was I interested in trying to produce something someone else or I thought the market wished for. But that is not to say it is not a valid thing to want or try to do these things.

The students I have met all have a strong inclination to tell stories or use language or both. I could say that you have to be alert, to open yourself, to read and read and read, to fail, to be patient, but if your inclination to use language or tell stories or both is strong enough, then these things tend to look after themselves.

What are some of your favourite authors and why?

I have had wonderful times reading Flaubert, Gogol and Faulkner, amongst many others. But if I were to think of the writers who really opened up something in me about writing, who showed me a way forward generally or somehow revealed a way of doing something specifically, they would be Garcia Marquez, Bob Dylan, Dermot Healy and John Berger.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR QUAH SY REN

An essayist and playwright, Prof Quah lectures at the HSS' Division of Chinese. He has had four collections of essays published, and four plays produced.

Your areas of interest include modern Chinese literature and culture, theatre and performance. How

different do you think these areas of specialisations are, when compared to English literature and culture? How similar are they?

The texts I am studying are basically written or performed in the Chinese language(s). In the present global context, however, frequent intercultural exchanges and integrations make it harder to identify a 'pure' form of culture or language, although cultural interactions have always been happening in various degrees.

In contemporary literary and cultural studies, regardless of the language of texts, approaches and theories that inspired the study are usually not that different.

What do you think of the future of Chinese literature in Singapore? How do you think more people can be encouraged to read Chinese literature?

That is the primary objective of the Division of Chinese. I certainly hope the readership of Chinese literature will grow with the growth of our very own Chinese major programme at NTU.

You are a professor in the School of HSS. How do you think students in creative writing can improve themselves?

They should continue to read a lot, think out of the box and always be prepared to challenge the norms.

MS BEVERLY AW CHING YI

An HSS' Class of 2011 alumnus, Ms Aw pursued the creative writing minor programme.

What does creative writing mean to you and what encouraged you to pursue this minor programme in NTU?

Literature has been a big part of my life ever since I was young. I took up the minor because it gave me the rare opportunity to be mentored by experienced and published writers. When I was pursuing this minor, I was forced to really look into myself to find a subject matter that really mattered to me. In a way, taking this minor programme was also a journey of self-discovery.

How do you think the programme has assisted you and your fellow classmates in becoming successful creative writers?

My classmates and I feel that the workshop sessions were very useful. We received constructive feedback from our lecturers and peers. Prof Crawford was very helpful in assisting us with our writing pieces and showing us the different ways of thinking about issues our work attempted to engage.

Are you in contact with HSS alumni? What have they shared with you about pursuing their careers in literature or creative writing?

Many of them continue to read literature after leaving NTU. Literature and creative writing may not be an established profession in the present Singapore context and hence, not really an imaginable career option in this respect. Our alumni however, have made literature part of their lives and also integrated literature in their various careers in education, journalism, administrative work, and even business.

What are some of your favourite Chinese authors and why?

I think I have too many to name! I especially love alternative writings, meaning works that are not yet canonised. That is my job – to present hidden gems to the world.

What inspires you to write and how do you manage writers' block?

I am inspired by the beauty in the things and people around me, or by any images or moments that strike me in some way at any point in time. To manage a writers' block, I would just take a short break from writing the piece and then continue working on it after some time. Most of the time this would do the trick!

You completed an internship programme at the National Arts Council. What can you share about your experience there?

I learnt that a huge amount of preparatory work goes on behind the scenes for a rather short (slightly more than a week) festival! I was part of the team which organised the Singapore Writers Festival. I also realised that many people in the Arts industry in Singapore are well connected to one another and I feel that this offers countless opportunities.

What are some of your favourite authors, and why?

I really like Italo Calvino, in particular '*Invisible Cities*' and his short stories. I like the lyricism of the writing (credit goes to his translator William Weaver), and all the imagination that goes into his works. I also enjoy the works of local poet Marc Nair, who started out as a slam poet. His poetry captures really well the local culture.

Chasing Butterflies

"Happiness is like a butterfly; the more you chase it, the more it will elude you..." said Henry David Thoreau, famed 19th century American poet and philosopher. So how does one get close to this elusive creature called *Happiness*? Associate Professor Neihart

Maureen Frances and Assistant Professor Nattavudh

Powdthavee share a tip or two about 'chasing butterflies' and keeping them close by.

Prof Neihart Maureen Frances (left), Head, Psychological Studies, NIE and Prof Nattavudh Powdthavee, former economics professor at NTU's School of HSS. ►



"Happiness just is," some people might say. But what is happiness? This seemingly simple emotion often defies definition, especially in affluent societies where many equate it with the acquisition of material comfort and the pursuit of the bigger and better.

What is happiness?

To Prof Neihart, happiness means living a life according to one's values and principles. The head of the National Institute of Education (NIE)'s Psychological Studies department, believes that people do not consciously think about what happiness means to them. "Happiness, or even unhappiness, sometimes sneaks up on people. After awhile, one realises that one is not quite happy and that a certain situation is not suiting one. But if the situation is favourable, the pleasant nature of it comes into one's conscious and awareness, and one may then try to replicate the situation to stay happy," she explains.

Prof Powdthavee, the author of several articles on the economics of happiness who, at the time of this interview, taught economics at NTU's School of Humanities and Social Sciences elaborates: "Happiness is feeling good about one's life and living a life that is meaningful in some way. But there are so many definitions to it and it is difficult to define the concept in any one way. Basically if you are happy, you feel good about yourself, your environment and your life."

"Happiness is such an elusive concept that even today we do not really know what it is all about. However, through scientific research, we have found out some of the objectives that determine happiness. And from data collected over the years of conducting this research, we have found out that happiness has a lot to do with social relationships," says Prof Powdthavee. He explains that situations that make people unhappy, for example, unemployment, can also be used to understand happiness better.

Who are the happy ones?

Prof Neihart advises that one should spend more time improving social relationships in order to stay happy. This can be done by spending more time with loved ones. One should also have a purpose in life and take pleasure in certain things that give them this sense of purpose. "If you think about how important it is to live life with a purpose and you know what you are living for, you will then make a conscious effort to live your life that way. This will make you a happier person," explains Prof Neihart.

"In general, humans tend to think that if they work hard today, they are going to enjoy the rewards in the future. But when they get there, the fruit is not as sweet as they thought it would be." – Prof Powdthavee

"Living one's life according to one's set goals and expectations, instead of those set by others, counting one's blessings and being the person one is are some of the ways one can practise, to become happier. Happy people have a clear sense of meaning and purpose in life. They are well connected to others and have strong positive relationships," Prof Neihart adds.

"Happy people are an optimistic bunch, with a hopeful outlook on the future. They are able to achieve more and are very healthy both physically and mentally. One can learn to be happier, more optimistic and less depressed. It is not very difficult, it just takes constant practice," she advises.

Singaporeans and happiness

When asked if they think Singaporeans are a happy bunch, Prof Powdthavee says: "If I were to speculate on Singaporeans' level of happiness, I personally do not think that they are very happy. They work some of the longest hours compared to people in other developed countries, and one of the more worrying trends is that a large percentage of the population is showing signs of trying to '*Keep up with the Joneses*'. This behaviour puts them at risk of neglecting social relationships, and in turn, becoming unhappy."

Prof Powdthavee explains that the above phenomenon is seen in most developed countries where most people have more than enough of basic needs. Hence, they try to find other stimuli to keep themselves happy and this becomes a vicious cycle.

"In general, humans tend to think that if they work hard today, they are going to enjoy the rewards in the future. But when they get there, the fruit is not as sweet as they thought it would be. We do not spend money on what makes us happy; in fact, we do not even have time to spend it. Instead, we spend on the first thing we can think of, which is usually material. We might be happy for awhile when we get something new for ourselves, but that feeling does not last forever," says Prof Powdthavee.

"People adapt very quickly to new things in their lives. But once they get the new item, even if their life continues to improve, they do not seem to become happier because they have adapted to the new purchase," Prof Neihart adds, in relation to the way one pursues happiness through working hard to acquire new comforts in life.

Can happiness be measured?

Bhutan first invented the idea of using happiness as a measure of good governance. In 1972, the former King Wangchuk suggested that instead of relying on Gross National Product (GNP) as a measurement of success, the country should consider instead using a Gross National Happiness (GNH) index to measure success. The indicators of this measurement could include its peoples' sense of being well-governed, their relationship with the environment, satisfaction with the pace of economic development, and a sense of cultural and national belonging.

Economists tend to pay close attention to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as it is quantitative, and can clearly show if a country is progressing well. Since Singapore has one of the highest GDP, does that mean that Singaporeans are happier than their counterparts in the South-East Asian region?

"I do not think we can compare the level of happiness amongst people in different countries just by observing the countries' GDP rates, simply because happiness is very subjective. The measurement scale in itself is a subjective one. For example, if we ask someone in Singapore to rank his happiness on a scale

of one to ten, he might rank it at six but say that he is fairly happy. But someone in Japan might rank his happiness at four, but say he is ecstatic! It would not be fair to compare these two scales as there might be other subjective underlying measures resulting in the above rankings by people from two different countries," Prof Powdthavee explains.

"Researchers are currently trying to find a more objective happiness scale. Once they are able to come up with something less subjective, it will then be more accurate to make inter-country comparisons using the scale," he shares.



▲ Prof Neihart (right) and Prof Powdthavee sharing their views on the meaning of happiness.

About the professors:

Associate Professor Neihart Maureen Frances, Psy D, is licensed in the US as a clinical child psychologist. Early in her career she worked as a secondary school science teacher, an elementary and middle school counsellor and a coordinator of gifted programmes. She is the Co-Editor of the book, '*The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What do we know*' and a former member of the board of directors of the National Association for Gifted Children. Prof Neihart serves on the editorial boards of '*Gifted Child Quarterly*', '*Roeper Review*', '*Gifted Education Communicator*' and '*Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*'.

Assistant Professor Nattavudh Powdthavee obtained his PhD in Economics in 2006 from the University of Warwick, UK. Much of his current research lies at the border between economics, psychology and medical science. His latest work involves investigating how morality in economic judgments is shaped by moods and how an exogenous shift in the schooling level affects biomarkers; as well as estimating the rate at which people adapt from different life shocks. He is also a co-founding editor of the '*International Journal of Wellbeing*'.

Associate Professor Neihart and **Assistant Professor Powdthavee** spoke about the pursuit of happiness at a TEDxNTU forum on 17 March. TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a US-based, non-profit organisation that holds conferences aimed at sharing ideas and inspiring people. The TEDxNTU is an independently organised series of biannual talks organised by the TED community of NTU.

Relationships and happiness

Alumnus and psychologist Mr Neo Eng Chuan explains how good conversation can improve a relationship, and why one should seek psychotherapy to solve a relationship problem.

It has been well established that humans are social beings. What is not very well-acknowledged is that we have a need ‘to be known’. This need drives us to seek out and maintain relationships with others. Positive relating brings about happiness.

Happiness through positive relationships

But how does one create positive relationships and achieve happiness?

We have regular conversations with persons we value. We express our emotions, fears, anxieties, aspirations, excitement and joy in these conversations. This exchange of emotions often strengthens a relationship. When you feel that you are being understood, you experience happiness. A good conversation occurs when a range of emotions are being communicated between two persons.

Conversation is more listening and less talking. We communicate through non-verbal modes such as facial expression, tone of voice and body language. The true meaning of what is being said is often embodied in non-verbal communication. For example, when one’s eyebrows are drawn together, it suggests that one is perplexed. It would be excellent if there were mandatory classes in listening skills. Very often we listen, but fail to hear.

One of the secrets to happiness is to maintain frequent conversations with significant others. In a marriage, making

time for conversations is crucial. The longer a couple has been married, the greater the number of hours they ought to have spent having conversations. Digital communication modes such as SMS, emails and postings on social media, do not constitute conversations, as these mediums do not carry the full band wave of emotions a face-to-face conversation can offer. Digital communication can augment, but not replace conversation.

People sometimes encounter difficulties in their relationships with their significant others. This happens when they feel that the other party does not understand him/her. That is the reason why people stop listening to each other, causing good conversations to cease. When that happens, seeking help from a counselling psychologist or a psychotherapist can be considered.

What is counselling or psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy is about ‘change’. In the case of an unhappy couple who have encountered relationship difficulties, the change process facilitated by a professional introduces ‘differences’ in the way the couple relates to or communicates with each other. For example, the unhappy couple might have developed ‘biases’ towards each other. Perhaps one is seen as being overly controlling, where every action or word he/she does or say is being interpreted as exertive or controlling by the other party. Or perhaps one is seen as lacking enterprise and being too easy going.

The psychotherapist proceeds to assist the unhappy couple to uncover such biases, explore how these might have originated, and develop ways to talk about difficult topics without hurting each other. The process of psychotherapy aims to disrupt unhealthy patterns of relating and to bring about positive change.

Psychotherapy is conducted in a ‘safe’ environment. By safe, it means that the process adopted by the psychotherapist is non-judgmental. This would facilitate the couple to express their vulnerable sides and allow difficult emotions to surface. The couple is then able to see beyond the facade, and look deeper into a partner who might be struggling with certain difficulties. A safe environment allows two persons to have a real conversation.

Unhappy couples sometimes wait too long before seeking professional help. This is partly attributed to the desire of wanting to appear strong. By not addressing the issues, both parties may continue to suffer in their unhappiness. Intense and prolonged unhappiness can lead to maladaptive responses such as subscribing to addictive activities which include gambling, pornography, alcohol consumption and sexual affairs. These behaviours cause further harm to the relationship. If the couple has children, the latter would be adversely affected. Couples who are in difficult relationships should seek help early.



Mr Neo Eng Chuan is a psychologist in private practice and lectures at James Cook University and SIM University. He pursued his Masters of Arts in Applied Psychology (Counselling) at NIE, graduating in 2009. As a practitioner, he is curious about the role of emotions and how they are being communicated in relationships.

'Farm-ily' fun

At the first-ever NTU Alumni Farm Visit, alumni and their families explore different farms in Singapore.



▲ Alumni saw how wheatgrass is grown at the organic farm.

As city-dwellers, not many Singaporeans may be aware of the numerous farms tucked away in the 'corners' of our modern isle. But if they were to explore areas like Kranji and Lim Chu Kang, they would realise that there are still a number of farms thriving out there.

About 375 NTU alumni and their families did just that during the recent NTU Alumni Farm Visit organised by the Alumni Affairs Office. They visited a goat farm, a wheatgrass/mushroom and organic produce farm, a freshwater fish farm and a vegetable farm. Excitement filled the air as participants gathered to set off, many being first-time visitors to these farms.

For Ms Siau Jia Ling (MAE/2007) who attended the event with her family, the farm visit provided her an opportunity for some family bonding. She found the goat farm the most interesting of all, as participants learnt how nanny goats were milked and how the milk was then processed. Her niece, Casey, and her nephew, Caleb, both aged seven, were seen happily drinking the chocolate-flavoured goats' milk given free to all farm visitors.



▲ A kid at Hay Dairies curiously eyes its visitors.



▲ Alumni busy buying fresh produce at the vegetable farm.



▲ Alumni were thrilled to observe the milking process upclose.



▲ Besides seeing a variety of fish at the fish farm, alumni learnt about bullfrogs too.



▲ Caleb (left) and Casey (right) Yeo, both aged seven, gave two thumbs up for the delicious chocolate-flavoured goats' milk they drank.

"I enjoyed the visit to the organic produce farm too. In fact, I have always thought that cacti were consumed only out of desperation, when one wants to stay alive in deserts. But now I have learnt that we can prepare delicious soups with cacti," Jia Ling commented, with reference to how these spiky plants were cooked in soup and served to farm visitors that day. "I like the organic produce farm too!" her niece Casey pipes in. "I was hungry and got to try out different types of yummy mushrooms fried with vegetables!" she says, beaming with satisfaction.

The NTU Alumni Farm Visit was held on Saturday, 26 May.

欢乐的农庄行

在现代都市中寻找纯朴的农家气息 – 南大校友与家人们的第一次新加坡农庄之旅。

身处都市之中，并没有很多新加坡人发现，农庄已经不知不觉的被挤藏在城市的某个角落中。殊不知就在克兰芝和林厝港，还有许多欣欣向荣的美丽农庄。

在南大校友事务处近期主办的农场半日游活动中，参加的校友与他们的家人约有375人。大家在活动当天参观了山羊饲养场，麦田/蘑菇种植场和有机作物农场，淡水鱼养殖场和蔬菜菜地。因为多数人都是第一次去农场，所以大家出发时的兴奋心情溢于言表。

箫佳玲校友(机械与宇航工程学院/2007)与她的家人参加了这次的活动，农场游为她提供了维系家庭成员间的凝聚力。她觉得其中最有趣的就是山羊牧场；大家在那里看到了挤羊奶和羊奶的后续生产过程。她7岁的侄子和侄女愉快的享用了牧场免费为大家提供的巧克力羊奶。

"我非常喜欢参观有机农场。本以为只有在沙漠中濒临绝境的人才会食用的仙人掌，竟也可以用来烹制成鲜美的汤。"她一边讲述，一边解释农场的人如何烹调这些多刺的植物变成佳肴并供给大家食用。"我也喜欢有机农场！"她的侄女凯西抢着说"刚刚很饿就尝了很多种好吃的蘑菇炒蔬菜！"说着还流露出满足的神情。

南大校友事务处是于5月26日，星期六举办校友农庄之旅的。



▲ 南大副校长（国际事务）余明华教授（左）将南大校旗授予南大山西校友会赵宏生会长（右）。

开启山西 校友们的 新天地

始于龙城太原，南大山
西校友会正式启动。

南大在山西的校友齐聚于被称为龙城的太原市 – 迎来了热切期盼的新加坡南洋理工大学山西校友会的成立典礼。

2012年5月19日，南大山西校友会成立大会在太原迎泽宾馆隆重举行。南洋理工大学副校长余明华教授、荣誉校长徐冠林教授、山西省政协副主席周然先生、南大校友事务处孙敏炎主任等嘉宾莅临成立大会，见证了这一激动人心的时刻。

大会开始前，现任国务院发展研究中心主任的刘勇博士为校友们做了题为《中国经济的未来和山西产业结构的调整》的专题讲座。他分析了当前中国经济的现状，并对中国经济的未来走势进行了详尽阐释。关于山西的产业结构调整，他从煤炭资源优势、铝土资源优势和水

资源情况等省情出发，乐观地为山西描绘了一幅生动的发展蓝图。

南大山西校友会会长赵宏生在致欢迎辞中回忆起在南大求学的美好时光，表达了对母校的深情厚谊。他认为，南大山西校友会的成立，为在山西省的190名校友搭建了一个相互交流、关爱和联系母校的平台。

南大副校长余明华教授向校友们通报了母校近年来的发展状态，并希望校友们继续与南大保持联系，支持母校的发展。当余副校长把南大校旗亲手授予赵会长时，标志着南大山西校友会正式宣告成立。

联欢晚宴在伴随着山西地方特色的歌曲与舞蹈和嘉宾及校友们的喜悦声中结束了。

A new networking platform for Shanxi alumni

In Shanxi's historical capital Dragon City, a new NTU Alumni Association is born.



▲ NTU alumni gathered in Taiyuan City to support the launch of NTU's latest Alumni Association.

Alumni gathered in Taiyuan City – also known as Dragon City – for the long-awaited official launch ceremony of NTU Alumni Association (Shanxi).

Held on 19 May, the distinguished guests present at the launch ceremony included Professor Er Meng Hwa, NTU's Vice-President of International Affairs, Professor Su Guanling, NTU's President Emeritus, Mr Zhou Ran, Vice-President of Shanxi People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC) and Mr Soon Min Yam, Director of NTU's Alumni Affairs.

As a prelude to the official ceremony, alumni listened to an academic lecture titled '*Future of China's Economy and the Adjustments of Industrial Structure in Shanxi Province*' by alumnus Dr Liu Yong, the Director of the Development Research Centre under the Chinese State Council. In his lecture, Dr Liu presented a brief analysis of the present economic situation in China before giving an explanation of the country's future economic trends.

In relation to Shanxi's industrial structure, Dr Liu expressed positive belief in the successful future development of the province, with its abundant natural resources in coal, aluminium and water.

In his welcome speech, Mr Zhao Hongsheng, President of the NTU Alumni Association (Shanxi), recalled the exciting days on campus and expressed his sense of pride for the University.



▲ (From left) Mr Pang Jin Long, Honorary President, NTU Alumni Association (Shanxi); Mr Zhou Ran, Vice President, Shanxi PPCC; Mr Zhao Hong Sheng, President, NTU Alumni Association (Shanxi); Prof Er Meng Hwa, NTU Vice President (International Affairs); Prof Su Guanling, NTU President Emeritus, and Mr Soon Min Yam, Director, NTU Alumni Affairs, officiate the launch of the NTU Alumni Association (Shanxi).

With the new association, NTU alumni in the Shanxi province (numbering over 190 to-date), will now have a platform to network with one another, and connect with their alma mater.

Prof Er spoke about NTU's recent developments and urged alumni to stay connected with, and to support the University. He then presented the NTU flag to Mr Zhao, signifying the official establishment of NTU's overseas chapter in Shanxi.

The ceremony ended with a dinner where guests were entertained with local songs and dances.

Budget 2012 overview

At the 20th Distinguished Alumni Forum, expert speakers discussed new initiatives and improvements to various government schemes announced in Singapore's 2012 Budget. Mr Sarjit Singh (NBS/1991), President of the Nanyang Business School Alumni Association, and Mr Teo Wee Hwee (NBS/1997), Tax Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, share their views on building an inclusive society and how future socio-economic issues can be managed.

Through this year's Budget announcement, the Government hopes to build an inclusive society.

In your opinion, how do you think the Government can best do that?

SS: Building an inclusive society is about creating and maintaining a respectful environment that provides the necessary support and opportunity for each member of our community to prosper.

The primary challenge would be to reduce income inequality. For immediate positive effect, the Government can assist by providing more support to lower income groups. This can be carried out by enhancing public housing subsidies, keeping healthcare costs affordable and expanding education subsidies.

Whilst housing and healthcare are basic needs, education helps one to leave the poverty track. Poverty is much more than just an economic condition where one's finances are below a certain level. Until one replaces how one thinks with new information, it would be very difficult for one's circumstances to change.

Creating an inclusive society in the long term depends also on how we grow our economy on a sustainable basis. We must also preserve social mobility and distribute resources through a fair system of tax and benefits. The Government needs to ensure that our tax regime provides greater benefits to the lower income group, and prevents an excessive burden on the middle income group.

Many feel that the income divide between the rich and the poor is increasing.

Why do you think this is happening in Singapore?

SS: Our growth model has propelled us for the past 20 years and Singapore has been highly successful in attracting multinational companies which build high-end manufacturing plants and contribute to a vibrant financial and services sector. This growth model has also resulted in income inequality. Solidarity and social cohesion would be undermined if there is too great a gap between the rich and the poor.

How do you think the Government can narrow the gap? Do you feel that the new initiatives announced will adequately address this issue?

SS: The Government is taking a measured approach in tackling the challenge of income inequality. Whilst I support the thrust of the Budget and the direction the Government is taking in this regard, I am concerned about the middle income group, especially those families with young children and elderly parents who will feel the effect of rising costs the most. The Government's financial and social assistance schemes must remain flexible enough to ensure that no deserving family is turned away because of certain unfulfilled criteria. Instead of a 'rule-book' approach, good judgement is required by the administrators of the various schemes.

The Government has announced several measures to help SMEs restructure, attract local workers, and grow. These include the Special Employment Credit, SME Cash Grant, Productivity & Innovation Credit scheme, and more.

Do you think that these schemes will help SMEs in future economic uncertainty?

SS: SMEs are an essential part of Singapore as they are mainly owned by Singaporeans and employ a majority of Singaporean workers. I believe that the economic policies outlined in the 2012 Budget have correctly identified their key concerns as these companies operate in a tough environment where labour costs and rentals have increased and are expected to continue to rise. Whilst the Government has committed to mitigate or slow down the pace of increasing costs for SMEs, I think it is equally important that SMEs continue to innovate and adapt to the changing environment as Singapore is no longer a low-cost business location.

What more do you think can be done?

SS: There are two areas where a paradigm shift is essential to achieve success in the SME sector. Firstly, SMEs will need to recognise that over reliance on foreign workers will not improve their businesses, as wages in Singapore will not always remain at the present level. SMEs will need to make better use of technology and invest in skills training.

Secondly, the Government can help identify new markets abroad, including niche markets, for specialised products or services. But it is imperative that SMEs have the courage and willingness to seize the opportunities that are presented.

The Government will also be providing support for companies to capture new opportunities for growth. Local companies must seize opportunities to grow in overseas markets.

How do you feel companies can expand successfully overseas, with the support being provided by the Government?

SS: To successfully expand overseas, SMEs should consider joint ventures and consolidation where appropriate. One way to influence consolidation is to provide suitable grants to assist SMEs to manage the post-merger integration costs. The SME sector will clearly need an overhaul in order to seize the business opportunities which emerge from the global economic environment.

Besides what has been announced in Budget 2012, what other tax adjustments or initiatives do you think would help SMEs go international?

SS: The SME sector will need support to invest in better branding. Our SMEs should aspire to be like the Singapore Airlines brand – one that is internationally recognised, of the highest standard, and one that inspires trust and confidence.



▲ (From left) Mr Teo Wee Hwee, Mr Puah Kok Keong, Assoc Prof Walter Edgar Theseira and Mr Sarjit Singh discussed various issues on Budget 2012 at the 20th Distinguished Alumni Forum.

Mr Teo Wee Hwee

At the forum, Mr Teo highlighted some of the future issues that need to be addressed.

To manage the ageing population, also known as the ‘Silver Tsunami’, Mr Teo suggested reforming the Supplementary Retirement Scheme (SRS) and Section 5 pension plans to supplement CPF for retirement planning. Limits on tax-deductible voluntary CPF contributions can also be removed in order to encourage younger employees to save for their own retirement.

He also proposed increasing the income threshold for Parent Relief to allow children, who are supporting low-earning parents, to qualify for tax relief. Corporate tax deductions to companies hiring workers aged 55 and above can also be increased, to reduce the companies’ business costs and at the same time encourage more firms to hire older workers.

Mr Teo suggested initiatives which could help to boost Singapore’s birth rate. For example, organisations should be encouraged to develop flexible working practices to enable mothers to return to work after giving birth. The Government may also consider providing funding for employers’ CPF contributions to companies which recruit mothers shortly after childbirth. In addition, increased corporate tax deductions for the cost of hiring temporary staff to cover full-time female employees away on maternity leave, may be offered.

As Singaporean workers face stiff competition from cheaper foreign labour, more needs to be done to equalise the cost between employing Singaporeans and foreigners. For example, CPF contributions for foreign workers may be introduced.

Mr Sarjit Singh and Mr Teo Wee Hwee were speakers at the 20th Distinguished Alumni Forum where they discussed Singapore’s 2012 Budget announcement. Mr Puah Kok Keong, the Director of Fiscal Policy at the Ministry of Finance also spoke at the forum, providing an informative summary of the year’s ‘Budget for the Future’.

The session was chaired by Associate Professor Walter Edgar Theseira from the Division of Economics at NTU’s School

of Humanities and Social Sciences. Prof Theseira offered his opinion of the Budget 2012 from the perspective of a social scientist. He spoke of the importance of seeking feedback from the public via similar forums. He mentioned that for constructive engagement with policy-makers, there must be a shared basic level of understanding and transparency from the Government in order to effect the relevance of policies to the masses.

The forum was held on 12 March 2012 at NTU’s one north campus.

南大校友体育嘉年华

NTU ALUMNI

Sports Fiesta 2012

Date : Saturday, 25 August 2012

Venue: NTU Sports & Recreation Centre

Time : 9am - 1pm



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Mixed
- 3-on-3 Basketball
Men's / Women's
- 5-a-side Men's Soccer
- Badminton
Men's Doubles / Women's Doubles
- Table-Tennis
Men's Doubles / Women's Doubles
- Tennis
Men's Doubles / Women's Doubles

For more information and registration, please visit <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/alumnievnts>
Closing date for registration: 15 July 2012

Life stories of NTU's engineering pioneers

The University's Class of 1985 alumni share their experiences in engineering, in a book written to encourage the pursuit of an engineering education.

If one was interested in learning more about a career in the engineering field, what better way than to hear from NTU's engineering pioneers themselves. With a wealth of knowledge and experience on the topic, the Class of 1985 alumni are no doubt the best advocates of the benefits of an engineering education. In a move to encourage more students to consider an engineering degree, these alumni have produced a book documenting the diverse career paths of their engineering cohort classmates.

Titled '*One Degree, Many Choices*', the book traces the achievements of these pioneer graduates from Nanyang Technological Institute (NTI) and illustrates the versatility of an engineering degree as evidenced by the graduates' success in diverse industries spanning engineering, finance, life sciences, academia and public service.

Co-published by the NTU Alumni Club and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, the book contains life stories of the pioneer graduates and of how their engineering education played an important role in the economic development of Singapore over the past 25 years.

The Chairman of the book committee behind '*One Degree, Many Choices*', Mr Liu Fook Thim (MPE/1985), said that he and his fellow committee members wanted to share the life stories of these graduates to inspire the new generation to choose engineering. Written in a style suitable for 16 to 18-year-olds, the stories highlight the versatility of an engineering education which provides many different career options.

Mr Liu added: "We wanted as many as possible of the life stories of the 557 NTI pioneers to be captured in the book and we succeeded in persuading slightly more than a third of the cohort to share their profiles. The book also captured the detailed contributions of the NTI pioneers in virtually every industry that is vital to Singapore's economy."

The book was officially launched by Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean on 2 May 2012. DPM Teo, who is also Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs, is currently the most senior politician in Singapore with an engineering background.

"An engineering education does not just prepare a person to become an engineer, but opens up many more options, as can be seen in the diverse career paths of this pioneer cohort of NTI engineering graduates. Besides the many who have been successful as engineers, there are those who have successfully branched into a wide range of areas, including media, entertainment, hospitality, finance, education, entrepreneurship,



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean (centre) sharing his views with Mr R Sinnakaruppan (left), President, NTU Alumni Club and Prof Er Meng Hwa, NTU Vice President (International Affairs).

and management," said DPM Teo in his speech at the book launch ceremony.

DPM Teo hopes that the book will inspire more students to consider engineering as a promising field of study. He trusts that the new generations of engineers will continue to contribute in their own ways to Singapore's development, just as those from the Class of 1985 have done for the past 25 years.

Clean water, health care and energy are amongst the greatest challenges facing society today, and engineering can make significant and lasting contributions that will help address these problems and improve quality of life. Professor Bertil Andersson, NTU's President, said: "Engineering education has to broaden. Students need to go beyond hydraulics, electrical circuits and applied mathematics to study other things such as communication, social behaviour, environment and biology. NTU has all these elements under one roof."

A fundraising initiative was also held in conjunction with the book launch. Contributions from about 30 organisations and individuals were received to start NTU's new Student Leadership Development Fund.

"I am pleased to announce tonight that with a lot of hard work and support, we have managed to raise approximately \$1.1 million. This includes donations received, pledges and the matching grant from government," said Mr R Sinnakaruppan, President of the NTU Alumni Club, during the book launch ceremony.

The fund aims to provide financial support for the development of student leaders at NTU in general, and engineering undergraduates in particular.

This includes, but is not restricted to, sending student leaders to leadership development programmes both locally and overseas where these students will represent NTU at student events, and financing community projects initiated by the student leaders that will benefit the poor and the underprivileged.

A commendable spirit

Alumni generosity and spirit of volunteerism were recognised, at an appreciation dinner hosted by NTU.

► Guest-of-honour, Prof Bertil Andersson, thanking alumni volunteers in his speech, for giving their time, talent and resources unreservedly.

Jim Lim, who graduated from the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering in 1999, is a familiar face at initiatives organised by the Alumni Affairs Office (AAO). Apart from attending major events like the annual homecoming organised for alumni to return to their alma mater, Jim also sat in the interview panel for the selection of students receiving bursaries in 2009. The busy director of sales engineering at Amdocs Ltd and part-time Global MBA student finds time out of his hectic schedule to give back to his alma mater.

"I was active in the NTU Students' Union and stayed in the hostel during my university days. I enjoyed my time on campus and made many good friends. The education I received in NTU also provided me with a good foundation for my career. Hence, I wish to contribute to my alma mater. Hopefully I'll meet more like-minded alumni volunteers through volunteering," Jim shares, when asked of his motivations for contributing back to NTU.



The active alumnus was also the Class Chairperson representing the cohort of 1999 in the combined class reunion celebration AAO organised for four classes in 2009. "It was a great experience serving as the Class Chairperson. I hoped that by volunteering, I played my part in contributing to the reunion's success. No doubt, finding time to volunteer is a challenge, especially in the face of balancing work, life, family and studies. However, if our efforts are appreciated, I believe more volunteers will come forward," Jim says.

Jessica Lim from the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), Class of 1997, hopes to play a part in developing NTU's alumni network to help it become one that is strong and renowned. The President of the NTU School of CEE Alumni Association believes that more alumni need to understand how powerful a strong alumni network can be, and the various opportunities a strong network can bring to the entire alumni community.

Alumni like Jim and Jessica, who give generously of their time, talent and resources, are the ambassadors of the University. In their different capacities and through numerous ways, they have served their alma mater and carried forward the good name of their university. The volunteering spirit of NTU's 2200 local alumni volunteers were applauded and given thanks to at an appreciation dinner held at the Joy Garden restaurant on 13 April this year. The dinner was attended by 263 alumni and guests. Professor Kam Chan Hin, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education was amongst some of the evening's distinguished guests.

President Bertil Andersson, who was Guest-of-Honour for that night, gave a memorable speech in praise and appreciation of the generosity and dedication of the University's alumni volunteers. He likened NTU to a great tree with its alumni body being the far-reaching root system that keeps it upright, providing nourishment for the tree to grow to greater heights.

值得称赞的精神

南洋理工大学为其校友志工们举办答谢晚宴，赞扬他们的慷慨奉献和志愿精神。

在南大校友事务处所组织的各种活动中，1999年毕业于南大电机与电子工程学院的林宣明校友，是大家很熟悉的面孔。他除了经常参加为校友们举办的校友回校日的活动之外，还于2009年参加了面试委员会，以便遴选那些可以获得助学金的学生。他是Amdocs私人有限公司工程销售部的主任，也是MBA的半日制学生，他在百忙中抽出宝贵时间“回馈”母校。

在被问到他为什么努力为南大做贡献时，他说：“我在南大学生会很活跃，在南大求学时住在宿舍里。我生活在校园里很愉快，也结交了很多好朋友。我

在南大所接受的教育为我的职业生涯打下了很好的基础。因此，我很希望为母校做些事情。值得庆幸的是，我在做义工时遇见了更多志同道合的校友志工。”

这位活跃的校友也是2009年由南大校友事务处举办的4个班级联合大聚会的工委会主席（代表1999年班级）。他说：“作为代表班级的工委会主席，我的体会确实很好。我希望通过义工，可以对联合大聚会的成功做出贡献。毫无疑问，找些时间做义工是一项挑战，特别是在面对如何把工作、家庭和学习加以平衡的问题时。然而，如果我们的努力得到赞赏，我相信会有更多的人成为义工。”

南大土木与环境工程学院1997年校友林淑慧希望协助扩大南大校友联络网，以便使南大成为强大与知名的高等学府。她是南大土木与环境工程学院校友会会长

长，她认为有必要使更多的校友理解，一个强大的校友联络网会多么有力量，一个强大的联络网如何能为整个校友社群带来各种各样的机遇。

像林宣明以及林淑慧这样的付出时间、精力和智慧的校友，是南大的大使。他们在不同的领域并且通过各种方式为母校服务，把母校的荣誉发扬光大。南大2200名本地校友志工志愿献精神在今年4月13日假美满楼举行的答谢晚宴上受到赞扬与感谢。出席晚宴的有263名来宾。南大副教务长（本科生事务）甘灿兴教授是晚宴的嘉宾之一。

当晚的主宾是南大校长安博迪教授，他发表了令人难忘的讲话，赞扬校友志工的慷慨义举和奉献精神。他把南大比做一颗大树，而校友群体是伸向远处的、使大树傲然挺立的树根系统，树根为大树提供养分，使它不断成长壮大。



▲ 南洋理工大学校长安博迪教授与校友志工们交谈畅饮。

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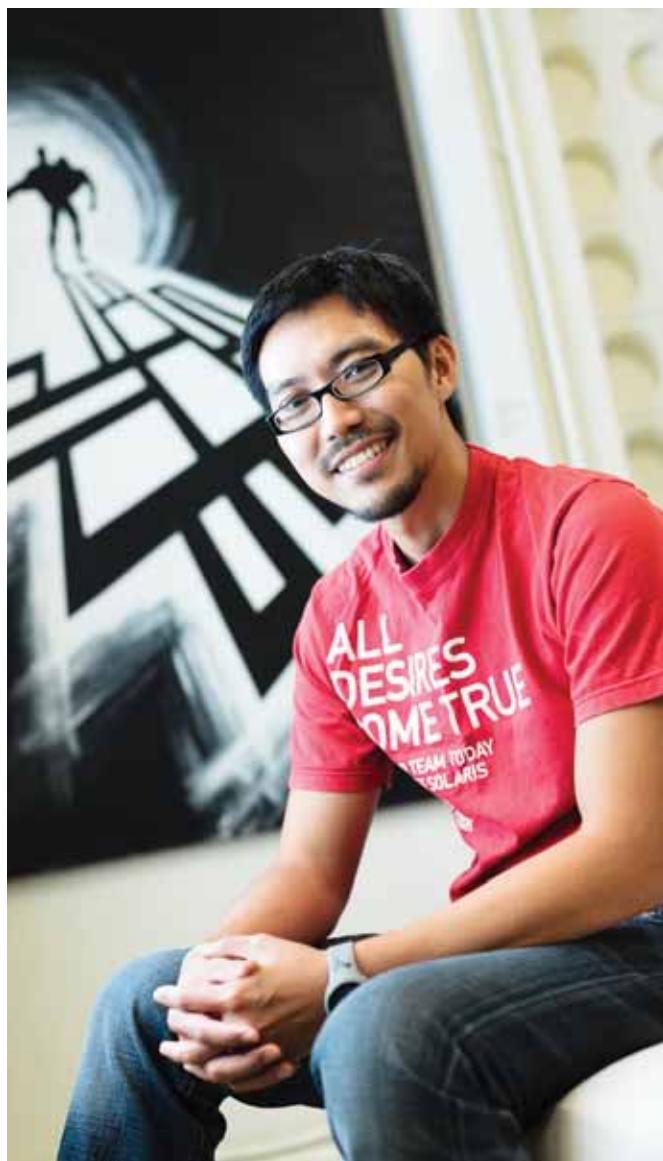
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Investigating loss through art

Successful local artist and alumnus Mr Michael Lee tells *NTULink* how he engages urban memory and loss through Art.



▲ Michael Lee, alumnus from WKWSCI's Class of 1997, uses art to investigate loss and hopes to encourage his audience to see beauty in imperfection.

When we think of Art, we associate it with beautiful paintings and sculptures. World renowned artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci and Claude Monet have produced art masterpieces which are almost close to perfection.

However, art need not always be perfect or about perfection. For local artist Michael Lee, photographing ruins serves as one way of getting his audience to understand the significance of loss through art.

"When I photographed some ruins in Beijing for my 2007 artwork series '*How Aren't Things*', I was fascinated by the ruins which were poetic and beautiful. Some may define ruins as failed spaces or structures which have lost their intentions or functions. But I think they are actually quite important in getting us to rethink our own mission with respect to ourselves, our loved ones, and the world," Michael shares.

"Today, we are told that anything that is broken or messy is to be avoided at all cost. The negative impact of that limited way of understanding would lead to different kinds of problems, such as spending too much time and money to keep things beautiful whilst neglecting other important aspects of life, like spending time with loved ones and engaging philosophical questions of existence," he adds.

Michael believes that everything has a purpose, even if it is broken. For example, if one were to see images of present buildings being destroyed, one might start to think about one's purpose in life. He encourages this line of thought through his 2011 series artwork, '*After Humans*'. Here, he speculates how the world would be like after human extinction.

Art of loss

Comprising an installation of 21 photographs of existing iconic buildings that are hypothetically ruined, the series was first shown in Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery during its annual Singapore Survey show last year. Some of these structures include that of the Taj Mahal and the Petronas Twin Towers.

"In the series '*After Humans*', I began to wonder how our environment would be like if humans were no longer around. The ruined structures shown in the photographs are fictional but based on a variety of sources of information from the internet and books that I have read. Some of them are arranged in a way to reflect real scientific speculation," shares Michael, a graduate from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI)'s Class of 1997.

Michael hopes that audience who view the future ruins in his '*After Humans*' artwork are not negatively affected by what seems like objectionable destruction of existing buildings, but instead reminded of what they wish to achieve should the most unexpected catastrophe befall. He believes that if one were to imagine that there were no more humans and that current buildings were ruined, one becomes less complacent and is better prepared for any unexpected crisis.

In some of the photographs, Michael's hand is also seen. "I am suggesting here that the collapse of a building is not intrinsically a failure, but is often perceived as one, because a structure was intended to provide shelter and safety. Ironically the perceived failure of a structure brings benefit to other living things, for example grass. Once a structure collapses, nature can take over again at exactly the same place where it was once removed

for human civilisation. The idea of loss is very much dependent on how one defines it," explains Michael.

In his 2006 project '*City Planned: Tracing Monuments*', Michael made 21 sets of models of lost monuments which represented buildings which have been demolished or have collapsed. In the latter, the case of Singapore's Hotel New World was used as an example.

Through his '*City Planned*' artwork, he wished to give form to buildings from the past which no longer exist but are still remembered by the local community. The project preserved these buildings beyond their life span so that one is able to continue appreciating their beauty.

Many of Michael's art projects such as the above-mentioned, illustrate his aim of encouraging audience to view ruins in a positive light, and to better understand the purpose these not so 'picture-perfect' artworks serve, in the understanding of one's own identity.

When asked what he hopes to achieve through his exhibitions, Michael says: "My works may first appeal to audience as attractive compositions, however, I hope that upon closer examination, each work can help bring them varied



▲ Michael Lee's installation art '*After Humans*' encourages audience to think about their purpose in life through images of buildings hypothetically destroyed.

interpretations beyond that of being attractive, especially when they associate the works in relation to their own lives."

Road to success

After his graduation from WKWSCI, Michael worked as a production assistant in a renowned local production house for a year, before returning to the School to pursue his Masters in Communication Studies course. Upon completion of his graduate studies, he started teaching at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA). He attributes his inspiration to becoming a professional artist to this period of time at NAFA.

"When I was teaching at NAFA, I began making art pieces and showing them publicly. I wanted to practise what I preached to my students. In the early years, my ambition was to become a good lecturer who occasionally produces good artwork. In 2003 however, I decided to make the swap to become a professional artist with a full time lecturing job. Since then, I have been practising as an artist in a more focussed, professional and strategic way," explains Michael.

One of his colleagues was an influencing factor in his pursuit to become a successful artist. "I remember once when I was showing my colleague a painting in progress. That was my first large painting called '3-in-1'. When she asked me what was going through my mind, I told her that I was thinking of painting like a particular artist. She then said to me that in order to innovate in art, one should not think or paint *like* the master. One should *be* the master in order to make great art. That was a very powerful message and lesson for me," Michael acknowledges.

"Tony Leung, the famous Hong Kong actor once said in an interview that the mission of beauty is to change lives. This meant a lot to me because when I make beautiful or intricate objects, my aim is hopefully to inspire people to rethink their lives, maybe modify their lives and hopefully become agents of change to other people around them," he adds.

In the early stages of his artistic career, Michael faced a number of challenges. "It is important for artists to keep on renewing their methods, continue innovating and leading, rather than just simply fulfil their supporters' expectations. This is very challenging because it takes time and effort to earn the trust of your initial supporters. And once we have obtained that trust, we still have to try to innovate even if doing so causes us to lose this support," he shares.

"I want to challenge myself, rather than just bank on a success formula. Despite the 'postmodern idea' that originality is



▲ A photograph of ruins in Beijing, for Michael Lee's 2007 series, *'How Aren't Things'*.

impossible today, the best contemporary artist still works towards innovation, though only a handful of us would succeed in making it," he adds.

In June this year, Michael left for a year-long residency in Berlin, at the German capital's renowned arts institute, Kunstlerhaus Bethanien.

Pursuing an artistic career

"The best artists are those who are self reliant, able to self-teach and constantly improve themselves," affirms Michael who believes that there will be 20 outstanding artists in Singapore in the next ten years. He agrees that the infrastructure and financial support provided by the National Arts Council (NAC) to up-and-coming artists here are excellent. "But reliance on such support can lead to complacency. To counter this tendency, one needs to develop a self-critical system. Often this system can be developed with trusted friends like fellow artists and writers who offer honest criticisms on our work," Michael adds.

For budding artists who wish to become successful, Michael has this to share: "Do something you believe in and the money will come. There is no guarantee of success, but it is a way of treating yourselves well. So instead of being worried about financial stability and material success, it is a more interesting life if we attend to what most people might think of as unimportant. And from there, we become the most unique individuals each of us can potentially be."

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ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AT NTU

Environmental endeavours in any organisation can only be effectively implemented through the efforts of all. At NTU, students, staff and alumni are engaged in this collective goal of moving the University towards *Sustainable Earth*.

Earthlink NTU, a student club founded in 1993, seeks to help reduce the carbon footprint of the University through addressing climate change in small but achievable and measurable ways. Its motto: "If I change, the world changes" reminds all that for change to be effective, change has to begin with oneself.

Since its establishment, the non-profit organisation has introduced numerous successful initiatives to help promote environmentalism amongst the University community.

The '*Environmental Awareness Campaign*' is an annual event organised by the club that conveys the green message by combining education with fun through games. Every year, a special project committee organises an overseas eco-trip called '*EcoVenture*', to places where students are able to look at the environment in new ways. Last year, a water filtration unit was installed in Buru, Indonesia, under this project.

The '*Bring Your Own Bag*' campaign is an initiative Earthlink NTU began at all supermarkets in NTU, to reduce the consumption of plastic. For every plastic bag taken, the customer is charged ten cents. For this campaign, Earthlink NTU's management committee has also set as default, double-sided printing, for all printers at NTU libraries,

to reduce the usage of paper. The committee further plans to extend its efforts to reducing the use of styrofoam in canteens. Recycling drives are conducted at the end of every semester in all sixteen halls of residence.

Earthlink NTU is also a co-organiser for global events like the '*International Coastal Cleanup*' and '*Earth Hour*' in its collaborations with external organisations. This year, a new external event that educates secondary school students about the dangers of improper e-waste disposal was introduced. The event, launched at St Joseph's Institution on 16 February, received positive response from the school.

Join Earthlink NTU in its initiatives and help NTU move towards building a more *Sustainable Earth*!



Earthlink NTU
"If I change, the world changes..."

Official Website: <http://clubs.ntu.edu.sg/earthlink/>

Reliving the good old times

NTU's PRC alumni caught up on lost years at a lunch gathering specially organised for them.



"When I received the invitation from the Alumni Affairs Office, I knew I had to get together my friends to attend this event. It has been difficult to meet up with former classmates because everyone is busy with work. But I am so glad my friends and I finally had time to catch up!"

said alumnus Mr Li Bo (EEE/2011) who attended the NTU PRC Alumni Gathering with friends.

These were the sentiments mirrored by many of the PRC alumni, working and/or residing in Singapore, who attended the

lunch gathering that afternoon. There was ample networking opportunities for those present.

In his speech, Guest-of-Honour Professor Freddy Boey, NTU's Provost, expressed his appreciation to the alumni for supporting the University and alumni events. "Your presence is helping to further shape NTU's multi-faceted and multi-cultural character. With your varied expertise, networks and resources, you are also helping to enhance NTU's standing, and to extend its sphere of influence as a global university," Prof Boey said. He also updated alumni on the recent developments and progress of the University.

Close to 255 alumni and guests attended the lunch gathering held on 31 March at the Concorde Hotel.

重现美好往昔

南洋理工大学的中国校友们在为他们专门举办的年度聚会上久别重逢、沟通交流、畅叙友情。

在2012年中国校友聚会上，李博先生（南大电机与电子工程学院2011年校友）兴奋地说：“我一收到南大校友事务处的邀请函，就知道应该赶紧联系几个同学一起过来参加。毕业后大家工作都比较忙，难得有这样的机会，能见见老同学，大家一起叙叙旧，真高兴啊！”

这些话反映了那天中午参加午餐联欢会的中国校友们的心情。这次聚会确实为校友们提供了难得的交流机会。与会者有很多机会沟通交流、畅叙友情。

午餐会主宾、南大教务长梅彦昌教授在会上向校友们致词时，对中国校友们鼎力支持母校并积极参加校友活动大加赞扬。他说：“你们的参与进一步塑造了南大的多元化和多文化的特性。



你们的多才多艺的专长、联络网和广泛的资源，使南大提高了国际地位，并且扩大了南大作为一所全球性大学的影响力。”他还向校友们介绍了南大最新的事态发展以及南大的新成就。

约有255名校友和来宾出席了于3月31日在新加坡凯煌大酒店举行的午餐联欢会。

Away from home but never apart

NTU's Malaysian alumni 'family' meet up once again to stay connected.



▲ NTU Vice President (International Affairs), Prof Er Meng Hwa (centre), officiating the start of the dinner event. Accompanying him are, from left, Mr Soon Min Yam, Director, NTU Alumni Affairs; Ms Han Yen Qi, President, AMCISA; Mr Wilson Lim, President, MSA; and Ms Susan Tyo, Chairperson, NTU Malaysian Alumni Dinner 2012 Organising Committee.

Close to 190 alumni and guests attended the gathering jointly organised by the NTU Malaysian Students' Association (MSA), the NTU Association of Malaysian Chinese Independent Schools Alumni (AMCISA) and the NTU Alumni Affairs Office, for the University's Malaysian alumni who are residing in Singapore.

Today, the University is proud to call 12,490 Malaysians its alumni, of which 56% reside in Singapore.

In his speech, Guest-of-Honour Professor Er Meng Hwa, NTU's Vice President for International Affairs, updated alumni on the University's progress and latest developments. He also encouraged all

alumni to stay connected to their alma mater and to support the University's numerous development programmes.

Prof Er thanked the alumni for contributing to the University in various ways and for playing their part in building NTU's reputation and shaping its future.

"As NTU alumni, your relationship with your alma mater is a lifelong one – and I assure you that it is a relationship that will become even more rewarding as you partake more in the life of the University. I urge you to tap into NTU's networks and resources by supporting the University's many initiatives, and in particular, initiatives and activities organised by NTU's Malaysian students – they will be

most grateful to receive support and guidance from you, their alumni seniors," said Prof Er.

Alumnus Ms Khor Hwai Lin (SCE/2008) who attended the dinner for the first time, said: "I decided to attend this event to get in touch with fellow Malaysians, and perhaps to meet some friends whom I have lost contact with. I am glad I came as I was able to widen my network of friends, and at the same time learn more about the University's developments and alumni engagement strategies."

The NTU Malaysian Alumni Dinner was held on 1 April, at the NTU Alumni Clubhouse at one-north.



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活动预告

EVENTS CALENDAR

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17 July 2012



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08 September 2012



04 August 2012



29 September 2012



To sign up for or enquire about any of the events, email alumniaffairs@ntu.edu.sg or call +65 6790 4875 / 4434

For a regular, monthly update of events, check out <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/Alumni/Pages/Events.aspx>

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Information is accurate as of press time. Events and dates may be subject to change.



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Class Notes

Our Alumni Share



Mdm Thong
Pui Shan, Angie
(NBS/1997)

After graduating from Nanyang Business School (NBS) in 1997, I did contract teaching at St Gabriel's Primary School for a year. In mid 1998, I pursued teacher training in NIE and received my Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) a year later. I have now been teaching for 13 years in Rivervale Primary School and am the Head of Department for Citizenship and Character Education in the school.

I remember when I told my friends that I wanted to sign up to become a teacher, one of them wrote me a little note which ended with this encouraging statement: "Touch the lives of the young ones, be touchy!" I have also come across this saying: "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." This is so true for teachers, whom I feel are the engineers of human souls.

I used to be a rather quiet girl but my education in NBS and professional attachment experiences at the former Singapore Tourist Promotion Board have made me more confident and forthcoming.

I have always been passionate about integrated engineering design, specialising in automation, process control and instrumentation. After graduating with an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Liverpool in 1991, I was involved in numerous Design & Build projects for industrial process facilities both in Singapore and overseas. I then decided to pursue the Masters of Science in Computer Control and Automation course from NTU's School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE), and graduated in 2001. Soon after, I obtained a Graduate Diploma in Analytical Chemistry from NUS. In 2009, I was given the opportunity to serve as the Honorary Assistant Secretary in the School of EEE Alumni Association. It was a memorable and enriching time working together with enthusiastic and innovative committee members to create and organise meaningful activities for our alumni association members.



Mr Chai Kok Soon
(MAE/1997)

I recently joined NTU's Centre for IT Services (CITS) as a Senior IT Specialist (IT Operations, Network).

Some might find it odd that although I graduated from the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering in 1997, I did not develop my career in my field of study. I have actually always been interested in Information

Technology (IT). I started my career in IT by handling hardware repairs in personal computers and computer servers. I slowly progressed to administering computer servers and networks.

Prior to joining CITS, I was working as a Regional Network Administrator for six years with Baker Hughes Incorporated. I took care of the WAN (Wide Area Network) and LAN (Local Area Network) infrastructure in Asia-Pacific offices and travelled to remote sites for projects.

I have always been amazed at the rapid pace of IT development. These days, computers are built to mimic the real world through various ways such as artificial intelligence, computer simulation, graphics and images. These developments continue to make astonishing progress over the years. Will computers some day surpass human intelligence and perhaps show us a way to travel through space and time to explore the universe? I believe with extensive research, this could become a reality in the near future, as there are currently no laws in science that prevent this from happening.

During my free time, I enjoy travelling, jogging and swimming. These activities help me to relax and relieve stress, as well as to keep fit. I am also interested in the discussion of ufology and astronomy - areas which deal with exploring the existence of extra-terrestrial life and the mystery of the cosmos.

I strongly believe in the grooming of future engineers and in gearing them to explore new frontiers in design innovations –just as my mentors and lecturers did when they provided opportunities and guided my own learning. I am pleased to be given the opportunity to give back to NTU in whichever way possible. Recently, I accepted an invitation to sit in the interview panel for NTU's discretionary intake admissions exercise for this year. It was a very enlightening experience speaking to students with great potential and talents who were applying to study in NTU.

It is said that life is a journey with many chapters. NTU is a very important chapter in my life.



Mr Goh Han Keat
(EEE/2001)



Ms Genie Gan
(NBS/2002)

I have very fond memories of my student days in NTU when I was pursuing my Accountancy degree. My deepest memories would come from my three years of living in a hostel. It certainly enriched my life as a growing young adult.

NTU was a natural choice for pursuing an Accountancy degree. Back then, and even now, there would have been no better business school in Singapore than the Nanyang Business School.

After acquiring my Accountancy degree, I went on to pursue a Law degree.

Today I am working in a leading law firm in Singapore. Legal practice with my Accountancy background puts me in a better place than if I had been just a regular Law graduate. This is especially true as I am working in the Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions department, where financial, accounting and auditing issues frequently come up in the deals we handle. My education in NTU has definitely helped to hone the skills I find so handy at work today.

I value the professionalism in the education I received at NTU. My professors are dedicated and nurturing individuals who continued mentoring me even when I was making my career switch.



Mdm Valerie Chee
(NBS/1993)

I embarked on my teaching career in 1995, after graduating from the National Institute of Education (NIE) with a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE).

I believe that teaching is not a profession but a calling and I try my best to put in time and effort to help. For example, I would try to find new methods with related external organisations, to work with students

with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), hearing impairment or dyslexia.

During my lessons, I try to use magic tricks, games and a myriad of mediums to illustrate and educate textbook theories such as the values of a pie chart, science, grammar and many more. And I share these with my peers in the hope that this will create even more exhilarating learning opportunities for other school students.

I recently went on an expedition to cross the world's largest sand desert, the Middle East's 'Empty Quarter'. Setting off in March this year, the entire vehicular expedition took me seven days. I started from Al Ain in Abu Dhabi and travelled south to Salalah in Oman.

My typical day would begin with a quick breakfast, before the drivers and I would pack up and head off to our destination for the day. We tried to cover as much distance as possible during the day. By four in the afternoon, we would start looking for a good place to camp overnight.

I have many fond memories of the trip. The best moments were when I could see the sunrise over sand dunes whilst at campsites located in the middle of the dunes.

The 'Empty Quarter' was my first expedition and I am planning to cross Antarctica next. When planning for the former, I was looking forward to the solitude of the desert, and I am glad I found it.

This expedition was part of a two-trip series – one into the 'Empty Quarter', and the other into the 'Iraqi Marshlands' – designed to highlight the importance of protecting 'cultures on the edge'. These two destinations were chosen because they were the settings for '*The Arabian Sands*' and '*The Marsh Arabs*', two of the many books written by the explorer and travel writer, Mr Wilfred Thesiger. His books detail how the lifestyles of people in these regions changed due to the political, environmental and economic realities of the modern world.

There is a socially-conscious element to these expeditions. I hope to be able to help in developing a model for sustainable tourism for the expedition into the 'Iraqi Marshlands', which would round off the 'Empty Quarter' expedition very well.



Ms Hajar Ali
(NBS/2002)

Ms Hajar Ali
at the 'Empty Quarter' sand desert with a vehicle laden with supplies for her expedition.

It has been ten years since I graduated from NTU with a Masters in Information Studies.

I am grateful to my professors who have played a part in moulding me personally and professionally to become the person I am today.

I used to work as an Information Technology (IT) professional but recently became an IT academic in a foreign university which has a campus in Singapore. I switched careers because I wanted to do more to contribute back to society.

I value my NTU education. The University's learning and teaching strategies provided a solid training ground for the corporate world. The professors here are very knowledgeable with admirably vast experiences to share. They are very supportive as well.

When I am not busy teaching, I enjoy travelling, reading and dining. I was an avid traveller during my younger days and am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel to Europe, North and South America and part of Southeast Asia during

and after my undergraduate days. Backpacking through my travels, I have learned to appreciate the simplicity of life. When I feel closer to nature and when I see the different kinds of lives people in different parts of the world lead, I realise that life is not just about achievements and chasing dreams. It is also about sharing, developing compassion and empathy.



Mr Md Emran
(WKWSCI/2002)



Ms Liu Liu 刘柳
(RSIS/2009)

08年7月的某天，和几位同时被南洋理工大学（南大）硕士课程录取的同乡从重庆直飞新加坡。飞机降临那一刻朝窗外望去，虽已午夜时分，却是灯火通明。还记得当时心怀忐忑的我安慰自己：一年，应该会很快吧。何曾想到，这一停留，便是四年光阴。

初到新加坡的求学之路，是从南大开始。相信对很多人来说，南大是一种归属。当时学习上面临的挑战，生活上遭遇的磨练，都已变成了啼笑皆非的故事，现在讲起来还是会唏嘘不已。然而就这样步履维艰的过程中，南大赋予的一种归属感，使身在异乡的我们，不管有多么陌生害怕，进了校园便回到了熟悉的世界。

南大对我来说，更多时候却是一扇链接世界的大门。在这里，我结识了不同国家、不同文化、不同身份背景的朋友；他们乐于分享所见所闻，也激发了我从此开始“行在路上”的旅途人生。在这四年间，暹罗的街头，西贡的河边，巴黎的香榭丽大道，悉尼的港湾大桥，都有我的身影。穿过了东南亚欧洲和大洋洲，挑战了沙巴神山的峭壁，体会了泰国万千姿态的风情，拥抱了德国城堡的童话，领略了瑞士雪景的迷人，感受了台湾原味的亲切……我才明白，原来这个世界是如此的不同。当我习惯竖着审视周遭这一切的时候，忽然发现横着看它，也充满了人生百态的各种奇妙滋味。那些旅途中遇到的人和事，或善意，或单纯，或市侩，或狡黠，都让我相信，没有过不去的昨天，没有到不了的明天；他们让我学着更好的和这个世界沟通。回头想起那年那月开启的异国之路，不觉庆幸又感慨；庆幸自己坚持了过来，感慨从那以后，我便和这个世界如此的接近。

After working for four years following my first degree, I decided to pursue a Masters of Science in International Political Economy at NTU's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). The strength of NTU's reputation, especially in the region, encouraged me to take up my graduate studies here. Whilst studying in RSIS, I was able to reflect on theories and how they make sense in the real world. I am now able to analyse issues in a very methodological way which has proven to be very useful whether in industry or academia.

I am currently enrolled in a doctorate programme in economic and political geography. I hope that I will be able to come back to NTU in a postdoctoral capacity, once I have completed my doctorate. In my opinion, an NTU education opens up many opportunities for its graduates. Students from different backgrounds are given the chance to excel, as long as they persevere in their endeavours.

In my free time, I love reading and brewing and drinking quality tea and coffee.



Mr Guanie Lim Cia Lit celebrating the festive season with his girlfriend, at Oxford Street, London.

Mr Guanie Lim Cia Lit
(RSIS/2011)

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