



PRESS RELEASE

10 July 2008

Winners of 2nd Singapore Young Photographer Award 2008 unveiled

Following a successful inaugural Singapore Young Photographer Award (SYPA) in 2006, the much anticipated national photo competition is back to unearth more photography "gems" amongst our young. The biennial Award targets young photographers from 13 to 25 years old. This year, some 850 entries were received from schools, youth organisations, photo clubs as well as freelance photographers. The participation rate has doubled that of 2006.

Judging of the some 5,000 prints was conducted in two rounds – a preliminary screening was necessary prior to the selection of the final winners. The panel of judges which comprised Mr Kwek Leng Joo, Managing Director of City Developments Limited (CDL) and Chairman of SYPA Steering Committee, Mr Lee Tiah Khee, Chief Photographer of Lianhe Zaobao, Mr Ken Seet, professional fine art photographer, Dr Graeme Guy, nature and wildlife photographer and Mr Darren Soh, independent full-time photographer, was in unanimous agreement that the standard and quality of photo works show a significant improvement. This testifies to the growing popularity and the passion our young lensmen possess for the art form.

An avid photographer whose interest in photography ignited when he was only 10, Mr Kwek initiated the Award to serve two primary objectives. He explains, "Photography in Singapore is increasingly an accessible hobby and a powerful channel for artistic self-expressions. Our youths should always be granted the opportunity to develop their talents for they are the ones who will one day put Singapore prominently on the world map of photography. More peripheral activities will elevate the profile of photography and hasten its integration into the mainstream fine art form. The local photography community will be more vibrant with the injection of new blood and fresh creativity. Ultimately, this will become a key facet of Singapore's arts scene."

The Prize Presentation and Photo Exhibition Opening Ceremony will be held at The Concourse, National Museum of Singapore on 10 July 2008. Gracing the event as Guest-of-Honour will be Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports. Dr Balakrishnan, who also witnessed the inaugural ceremony, shares his views, "Singapore Young Photographer Award has been an opportunity for the interaction of creative minds, inspiration of experimental ideas and exchange of artistic thoughts. I am pleased to hear that the standard of this year's competition has improved quite substantially. I am also heartened to note that despite the stringent requirements of the Award, the participants gamely took on the challenge as an opportunity to improve

oneself. In fact, I understand from the organisers that many participants are self-taught – driven by passion, they hone their skills through constant practice and experiments. This is highly commendable.”

The overall SYPA winner, Cheoh Wee Keat, 20, is an Economics student with the London School of Economics and Political Science. Despite being overseas, he decided to enter the competition at the encouragement of fellow photography hobbyists. A self-taught shutterbug who is keen to capture details often neglected by the naked eye, Wee Keat honed his skills through reading photography-related literature and hands-on experimentation. His talent in the art form is evident in his ability to master technical skills and an eye for aesthetics in a short span of two years. Wee Keat’s works reflect an observant character and a deep appreciation for his surroundings.

Wee Keat shared, “My interest in photography deepened when I realised that there is a lot more to it than meets the eye. To me, photography is a multi-disciplinary hobby that has a lot to offer on life as a whole. It will always be a big part of my life and something I can gain from and grow with.”

The other young shutterbug, Teaw Zhi Qiang, 19, a student of College East (Simei ITE), clinched the City Developments Limited Young Architectural Photographer Award (CDL YAPA). Zhi Qiang’s photography journey is an exemplary demonstration of determination and tenacity. Working around the lack of his own photographic equipment by borrowing the school photo club’s, the young man searched the island for unique architectural design and buildings, often in the late hours after his vacation job. Despite the inconveniences, Zhi Qiang feels rewarded when he is able to express his creative thoughts through the lens.

SYPA 2008 may be proof to a gender shift in what used to be a male-dominated territory. Female participants took a majority this year and a promising one of them is Zhao Wan Ting, a student of Raffles Girls’ Secondary School. At only 16, she may be the youngest winner this year but Wan Ting recognises the compelling power of photography. Her ambition is to become a National Geographic photographer so that she could give a voice to the people who deserve to be heard.

The SYPA Overall Winner and CDL Young Architectural Photographer Award winner receive a prize money of \$5,000 and \$2,500 respectively, while all merit winners receive \$500. All winners are also entitled to one-to-one mentorship by veteran photographers.

All winning entries, reproduced by HP, will be on display from 11 to 27 July 2008. The photo exhibition also features the photo works of guest exhibitors - Mr Kwek Leng Joo, Mr Lee Tiah Khee, Mr Ken Seet, Dr Graeme Guy and Mr Darren Soh – and the recent works of SYPA 2006 winners – Ng Yong Yi, Jonathan Yeap and Kwok Kin Fei.

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Winners' Profile

2nd Singapore Young Photographer Award 2008

Overall Winner

Cheoh Wee Keat, 22

Student, London School of Economics & Political Science

Merit Prize Winners

Derrick Heng Yun, 20

Student, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Raymond Phang, 23

Freelance photographer

Jake Sng, 18

Student, Nanyang Junior College

Daniel Chia, 20

Student, Temasek Polytechnic

Zhao Wan Ting, 16

Student, Raffles Girls' School

CDL Young Architectural Photographer Award

Winner

Teaw Zhi Qiang, 19

Student, College East (Simei ITE)

Merit Winners

Hu Qiren, 24

Freelance architectural designer

Lawrence Liu, 20

Full-time NSman



Steering Committee

Boon Lay CC Photographic Club
City Developments Limited
National Youth Achievement Award Council
Photo-Art Association of Singapore
SAFRA Photographic Club
Singapore Colour Photographic Society
The Photographic Society of Singapore

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