



PRESS RELEASE
27 July 2006

Unearthed: Sparkling “Gems” Amongst Singapore’s Young Photographers

The inaugural Singapore Young Photographer Award (SYPA) achieved its aim in uncovering some photography “gems” amongst our young. The first national Award targeting at young photographers from 13 to 25 received some 3,000 prints from 500 participants.

Judging took two days and the judging panel is indeed impressed by the talent & perseverance that all the winners have clearly shown in their works. The panel includes Mr Kwek Leng Joo, Managing Director of City Developments Limited (CDL) and Chairman of SYPA Steering Committee, Ms Angelina Choy, Straits Times’ Art & Picture Editor, Mr Lee Tiah Khee, Chief Photographer of Lianhe Zaobao, Mr Ken Seet, Professional Fine Art Photographer and Dr Tan Chi Chiu, Gastroenterologist and photographer.

On why he initiated the Award, Mr Kwek replied, “I hope to help inject more young blood into our local photography community. Most major photo clubs have an average of only 5 to 10 junior members who are below 25 years old. This Award, which is long overdue, aims to seek out youths who have a talent for photography. Apart from the prizes, we will offer mentorship by experienced photographers to inspire them to hone their skills and motivate them to keep up their enthusiasm for photography. Ultimately, I sincerely hope that this new generation of photographers will do Singapore proud in the world of photographic art.”

When asked what else could be done to cultivate young talents, Mr Kwek added, “While major photo clubs do offer classes for those who are interested in photography, it will be more effective if we could have a dedicated institution to groom photographic talent like we do to train our sports talent.”

The overall SYPA winner, Ng Yong Yi, 20, a full-time National Serviceman, can be said to have photography in his blood. A self-professed photography fanatic, he picked up this hobby more seriously one and a half years ago. Because his natural inclination towards art is so strong, and because he spends much of his waking hours viewing photo works on-line and in print, he has managed to learn plenty about photography such as subjects, lighting, composition, etc. Truly, the marriage of talent and diligence is clearly consummated in the creative and impressive images he produces. He confesses that apart from his NS duties, he has spent all his weekends taking photos for the last 6 months in preparing for SYPA. In fact, his passion for photography is so great that he decided to give up a seat in the Science Faculty for one in the Art & Digital Media Faculty.

Yong Yi shared, "The Award provided me with a goal to work hard on photography. That has helped me improve in terms of skills and creative thinking. In the process of looking for subjects, I have also seen a lot more of Singapore that I had not noticed before."

The other young shutterbug, Kwok Kin Fei, 21, freshman at the Singapore Management University, clinched the City Developments Limited Young Architectural Photographer Award (CDL YAPA). He has had a penchant for buildings and architecture since the age of three. To him, buildings, including their lines and forms, are very attractive and bear the permanent stamp of Man. Besides, he is also amazed by how they are built and how they exude monumental beauty. Just a year ago, he got to know more photo enthusiasts and from the numerous outings and sharing sessions, learnt a lot more about photography. A firm believer of lifelong learning, he has an insatiable appetite for all things photography and continually seeks to improve his skills.

Apart from the overall winners, the seven consolation prize winners for both SYPA and CDL YAPA comprises three female and four male finalists, the oldest of whom is 25 and the youngest, 16. One could infer from this gender ratio that photography in Singapore is no longer a man's domain. Women, especially the younger ones, are increasingly attracted to this art form and are performing as well as their male counterparts.

Take for instance, Lam Hui Ching, 16, a student of Cedar Girls' Secondary School and a true-blue photo buff who won the SYPA consolation prize. She is so passionate about photography that she would spend almost every weekend and some weekdays shooting. Her devotion to photography took root when she joined her school's multimedia club in Secondary One. Being a young female photographer, she sometimes meets people who doubt her capability. However, she always proves them wrong with her remarkable works.

Another female prize winner is Martini Bte Abdul Talib, 25, a teacher of Henry Park Primary School. She was inspired to take up photography at 17 by her teacher, a photography aficionado who used to bring his camera to school and sometimes invited his students to be his models. Being a "hands-on" person, she receives photography tips and instruction from two close friends who are freelance photographers and they go for photo shoots every weekend. Martini simply adores fashion photography and hopes that one day in the near future, she would be able to become a full-time photographer.

The SYPA winner walks away with \$5,000 while the CDL Young Architectural Photographer Award winner takes home \$2,500. In addition, both Award and consolation winners get to enjoy free photography enrichment programmes and mentorship by experienced photographers.

The prize presentation and photo exhibition opening ceremony was held on 27 July 2006 at the Singapore Art Museum. It was graced by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts. The photo exhibition will be open to the public from 28 July to 4 August 2006. It will showcase not only the winning works, but also special pieces by guest exhibitors including veteran photographers Mr Kwek Leng Joo, Mr Lee Tiah Khee, Mr Darren Soh, Mr Russel Wong and Mr Steven Yee. All of them started photography at a young age and serve as role models for young photo buffs.

For enquiries, please contact:

Ms Esther An
DID: 6428 9318
Email: estheran@cdl.com.sg

Ms Kim Leon
DID: 6428 9302
Email: kimleon@cdl.com.sg

Profile of Winners:

	SYPA	CDL YAPA
Overall Winner	Name: Ng Yong Yi Race: Chinese Gender: Male Age : 20 Vocation: Full-time NSman	Name: Kwok Kin Fei Race: Chinese Gender: Male Age: 21 Vocation: Student, Singapore Management University
Consolation Prize Winner	Name: Lam Hui Ching Race: Chinese Gender: Female Age: 16 Vocation: Student, Cedar Girls' Secondary School	Name: Zhuo Zehai Race: Chinese Gender: Male Age: 23 Vocation: Full-time National Serviceman
Consolation Prize Winner	Name: Mackie Tan Chun Lan Race: Chinese Gender: Female Age: 25 Vocation: Student, LASALLE-SIA College of The Arts	Name: Ch'ng Yaohong Race: Chinese Gender: Male Age: 22 Vocation: Student, Singapore Management University
Consolation Prize Winner	Name: Yeap Chin Tiong Race: Chinese Gender: Male Age: 25 Vocation: Press Photographer	Nil
Consolation Prize Winner	Name: Martini Binte Abdul Talib Race: Malay Gender: Female Age: 25 Vocation: Teacher, Henry Park Primary School	Nil
Consolation Prize Winner	Name: Low Youjin Race: Chinese Gender: Male Age: 20 Vocation: Full-time National Serviceman	Nil

Background information of Singapore Young Photographer Award:

Initiated by Kwek Leng Joo and supported by the local photography community, SAM and NYAA, SYPA aims to recognize young photography talents and nurture their passion for the art form. Launched in February this year, it is projected to be given out biennially and is open to youths between 13 and 25 years old. This Award is an extension of the *To Singapore with Love* photo tribute celebrating the nation's 40th birthday last year. The closing date was 15 June 2006.

Some fringe activities implemented include "A Peek at Photojournalism", a talk led by Lee Tiah Khee, Chief Photographer of Lianhe Zaobao on 8 April and another talk "Photography – Endless Discovery" by Steven Yee, Honorary Secretary of The Photographic Society of Singapore, held on 29 April. Throughout the months of April and May, Epson's EpBUS has been holding roadshows in various secondary schools and tertiary institutions.
