

Donations to arts, culture down by half last year

But individual contributions doubled; big gap due to exceptional collection for SG50 in 2015

Nabilah Said

Singapore's arts scene received \$64.7 million in donations of cash and kind last year, about half the \$136.1 million received in 2015.

While corporates gave almost two-thirds less, individual contributions – which totalled \$19.4 million – were double that of 2015.

In-kind contributions, which included artwork loans and donations for the first time last year, also peaked in 2016 at \$20.6 million.

A total of 302 individuals and corporates were honoured at the 34th Patron of the Arts Awards last night, organised by the National Arts Council (NAC).

The award ceremony, held at the Conrad Centennial, was officiated by Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu.

Ms Fu acknowledged the various forms of support given by patrons, such as the United Overseas Bank helping to fund visual arts pro-



Patron of the Arts Chan Kok Hua (far left) with Mr Terence Ho Wee San, executive director of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, which Mr Chan supports.
ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

grammes run by non-profit organisation The Red Pencil, which specialises in art therapy. "To nurture the next generation of artistic talent and arts supporters, your contributions towards arts education are invaluable," she said.

She also announced that the NAC will be refreshing its mission and vision to show its "renewed commitment to grow the arts and cultural sector".

And to encourage culture philanthropy, she reiterated the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth's commitment to inject \$150 million

into the Cultural Matching Fund.

The fund, set up by MCCY, provides a matching grant for private cash donations to arts and heritage groups. "Perhaps, it is precisely in these difficult times, that we need the arts to uplift our spirits and enrich our lives," she said.

The NAC said in a media statement that contributions to the arts last year were expected to be lower due to the "exceptional record of contributions" in 2015.

This, it said, was due to Singapore's Jubilee Year celebrations and increased awareness of the Cul-

tural Matching Fund in 2015.

The Patron of the Arts Awards was introduced in 1983 to recognise corporates and individuals who give significantly to the arts in Singapore.

There are three tiers of awards – Friend of the Arts, Patron of the Arts and Distinguished Patron of the Arts.

The Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award is given to corporates that give \$1.5 million and above, and individuals who give at least \$100,000. There were 26 Distinguished Patrons in 2016, including the Singapore Press Holdings.

Art collector Chan Kok Hua, 61, received a Patron of the Arts award for his contributions to the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) and Nam Hwa Opera.

The award is given out to individuals who give between \$50,000 and under \$100,000.

"When we talk about giving to charity, it's not just about giving money to hospitals and seniors' homes. It can also be to orchestras and other arts groups, because art is a very important part of society," Mr Chan said.

Mr Terence Ho, 47, the executive director of the SCO, acknowledged Ms Fu's comments about the need for the arts in an "economically challenging climate".

He said: "During a difficult time, the arts become more important to boost the morale of the people. We don't cut concerts, we want to perform more. With the support of our partners and donors, we can do more."

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302

Number of individuals and corporates honoured at the 34th Patron of the Arts Awards last night, organised by the National Arts Council.

This picture of the finalists in the Miss Singapore Beauty Pageant 2017 was taken at a talent and fashion showcase last Saturday. The women are due to have makeovers over subsequent weeks as part of the contest.
PHOTO: JOSEPH JUBAN



Beauty pageant finalists' photo draws ugly online comments

Revathi Valluvar and Lee Si Xuan

An unofficial photo of the finalists in a local beauty pageant has brought out the ugly side of some netizens.

Comments on the 19 finalists for the Miss Singapore Beauty Pageant 2017 range from their looks being "ugly" and "not pretty enough", to questioning if they even look "Singaporean".

The organiser of the pageant, ERM Singapore Marketing, confirmed that six of the finalists are permanent residents, with three originating from China and three from Malaysia. A spokesman said the pageant is open to both Singaporeans and Singapore PRs from 17 years old.

Finalist Nur Amelina, 21, did not understand why their countries of birth are a point of contention.

She said: "As long as they are Singaporeans or residents, they are allowed to join the competition. So I don't see why they can't represent Singapore."

Of the Singaporeans, one was born in Myanmar and another two were born in China, said the spokesman. China-born finalist

Honey Tian, 25, has been in Singapore since she was eight. She said it should not matter where contestants were originally from.

She added: "A lot of us (PRs) have been here for a really long time and we love this country. We are proud to represent Singapore."

The pageant will yield four winners under different titles who will go on to represent Singapore internationally under each title.

The four titles are: Miss Singapore Tourism Queen, Miss Singapore Chinatown, Miss Singapore Global Beauty Queen and Miss Grand Singapore.

Miss Singapore Global Beauty Queen 2016 winner Priscilla Martin said while she cannot recall PRs taking part last year, she does not think Singaporeans should be close-minded.

She said: "Singapore is so diverse, and Singaporeans need to be more understanding of that."

Many netizens also questioned the legitimacy of the event, but the organiser said the pageant has been running for 29 years with its winners going on to represent Singapore globally.

Contestants will have makeovers over subsequent weeks as part of the contest, and the pageant organ-

iser said the picture circulating online was taken before the makeovers.

The photo was taken when the women were doing a talent and fashion showcase at OneKM mall in Katong last Saturday.

Unlike this pageant, the Miss Universe Singapore and Miss Tourism Global Singapore pageants are open only to citizens.

The Miss Singapore Beauty Pageant had about 60 applications and finalists were chosen by a committee of former pageant winners.

Contestants from other pageants have faced harsh criticism too.

Ms Shi Lim, 28, was repeatedly called "too short" and "too fat" when she vied for the Miss Universe Singapore title in 2013, which she won.

The Miss Singapore Beauty Pageant will hold its finals on Aug 25. Finalist Tricia Koh, 24, said she was affected by the online vitriol.

The financial adviser added: "Honestly, it was very upsetting, especially for all of the girls."

"But at the end of the day, we can't stop people from saying or posting certain things."

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Missed diagnosis 'human error, not negligence'

FROM B1

The doctors said the missed diagnosis was human error and not negligence. "The suspension imposed in this case is likely to prompt health practitioners to lean towards defensive practice, resulting in over-diagnosis of KD, and leading to unnecessary use of intravenous immunoglobulin (a costly blood product)," they wrote.

Kawasaki disease is an uncommon childhood illness occurring in 0.0325 per cent of children younger than five years old here. This works out to about five cases a month. It is not known what causes it but the disease is not infectious.

The doctors noted that there is no test to confirm it, and the child in question did not have all the symptoms – known in medical parlance as incomplete KD.

"Diagnosing KD in young children can be challenging as the clinical signs may evolve with time", said the petition. "Incomplete KD is even more difficult to diagnose conclusively. This is an inevitable and inadvertent limitation of clinical practice."

During the court hearing, expert witnesses for the SMC and Dr Chia had agreed it is not easy to diagnose. But the SMC argued that as it is the most commonly acquired severe cardiac condition, it is reasonable to expect a paediatrician to diagnose and treat it competently.

Its expert witness, Associate Professor Chao Sing Ming, a senior consultant at KK Women's and Children's Hospital, had said Dr Chia's treatment of the child amounted to serious negligence and was wholly unacceptable.

The baby's condition was diagnosed and treated correctly when the parents sought a second opinion with another paediatrician in private practice. They later made the complaint.

The specialist, Dr Lee Bee Wah, said the patient had come to her later, with more symptoms. She was one of 180 paediatricians, including prominent teachers like Professor Quak Seng Hock and Associate Professor Marion Margaret Aw, both of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, who signed the petition. The other 840 are from other specialities.

Two doctors have also written to The Straits Times Forum in support of Dr Chia. One of them, Dr William Yip, said he was trained by Dr Tomisaku Kawasaki himself and has treated children with the disease for 40 years. He said the disease can be "confidently diagnosed only after the first week of illness". He added: "Unnecessary referral and erroneous diagnosis of KD results in significantly costly investigations and inappropriate treatment."

In upholding the tribunal's decision, the court had said it would be "slow" to interfere with its findings unless they were "unsafe, unreasonable or contrary to the evidence".

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SEE FORUM A26

RISK OF DEFENSIVE PRACTICE

The suspension imposed in this case is likely to prompt health practitioners to lean towards defensive practice, resulting in over-diagnosis of KD, and leading to unnecessary use of intravenous immunoglobulin (a costly blood product).



THE DOCTORS, in their petition to the Director of Medical Services.



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