



MEDIA RELEASE

Pioneering Philanthropy: Industry Leader Initiates Bursary Fund to Support IHL students with Gift of S\$500k

SINGAPORE, 22 February 2024 – The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) hails industry veteran Mr Bert Choong’s pioneering philanthropic endeavour with the establishment of the **BertChoong Bursary Fund**, providing \$500k in support of students-in-need pursuing Diploma, Bachelor’s, and Master’s degree programmes under the Faculty of Art and Design at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), University of the Arts Singapore. Open to both local and international students, the bursary will commence from the academic year 2024, benefitting 220 students over 10 years.

Mr Bert Choong is a pioneer in Singapore’s furniture industry and SFIC member since 1981. In 1982, he founded Nobel Design Holdings Limited, a Design & Build furniture manufacturing company, which became the first interior design firm listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange in 1996. Remaining as Nobel’s Executive Chairman till 2013, his entrepreneurial spirit also led him to venture into property development.

Serving as a former President of SFIC, he spearheaded key projects in internationalisation, design and innovation, while nurturing leadership within SFIC. In his current Presidential Advisor role, he remains at the forefront, driving positive transformation to shape the future of industry talents and inspiring the next generation with his pioneering entrepreneurial spirit.

Expressing appreciation for Mr Bert Choong's visionary leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, particularly in supporting local IHLs, SFIC President Mr Phua Boon Huat said. "Education and grooming our next wave of industry talents have always been close to our hearts. The BertChoong Bursary levels the playing field by bridging the financial gap and providing equal opportunities for students-in-need to pursue education."

Aligned with SFIC's core values of design innovation, business excellence, and sustainability, the BertChoong Bursary supports emerging talents, fostering SFIC's vision of positioning the industry as the nexus of tomorrow's work-life integration for sustainable urban living. The Bursary further reinforces Singapore's commitment to education investment, as outlined in Singapore Budget 2024.

"We are deeply grateful for Mr Bert Choong's generous support in nurturing talents in the arts and creative fields. Benefactors like Mr Choong play a vital role in empowering talented students to pursue their passion in the arts and focus on their learning without worrying about finances. I hope many more industry leaders will take inspiration from Mr Choong's philanthropic gifting, as their support is instrumental in shaping and empowering the next generation of artists and creatives", said Mrs Tan-Soh Wai Lan, President of NAFA, University of the Arts Singapore.

SFIC encourages more industry leaders to join Mr Bert Choong in fostering a culture of philanthropy and excellence within the furniture industry. Let's unite in empowering the next generation, for, as Benjamin Franklin wisely said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

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About SFIC

The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture and furnishings industry. It has a membership of over 360 companies, spanning five key industry clusters: furniture manufacturers, interior fit-out specialists, retailers, designers, as well as materials/components/services providers. Collectively, our industry players have a global footprint in over 80 countries to date.

Currently, the council represents 95 per cent of established furniture manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65 per cent have subsidiary manufacturing plants in various countries across the region, including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

As an aggregator and multiplier in the furniture ecosystem, the SFIC's vision is to position the Singapore furniture industry as the nexus of tomorrow's work-life integration for sustainable urban living. In essence, the Council aims to pursue the three key pillars of market agility, urbanite-centricity and enterprise adeptness for its members in order to drive the industry further.

SFIC's priority initiatives include internationalisation, design development, business innovation, digitalisation, and sustainability to enable members to stay future-ready and competitive while upgrading enterprise and human capital capabilities within the industry.

Visit www.singaporefurniture.com for more information.

About NAFA

Established in 1938, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), University of the Arts Singapore (UAS) is Singapore's pioneer arts institution. The academy is known for its rigorous and high-quality curriculum, innovative and practitioner-led teaching approach, diverse artistic creations and community outreach.

NAFA has nurtured 13 recipients of the Cultural Medallion — Singapore's highest accolade bestowed on art practitioners who have significantly impacted arts and culture. Another 15 alumni have been presented the Young Artist Award. NAFA graduates are creative changemakers, highly skilled, and well-rounded in interdisciplinary approaches. Many of the academy's alumni have gone on to make their mark in the professional arts scene, clinching awards at prestigious international competitions such as Cannes Lions, Prix de la Photographie, Paris, Red Dot Design Awards, and Venice Biennale.

The academy offers full-time diploma, bachelor's and master's degree programmes across three faculties: Faculty of Art & Design comprising the School of Fine Art, School of 3D Design, School of Design & Media, as well as the School of Fashion Studies; Faculty of Performing Arts comprising School of Dance, School of Music, and School of Theatre; Faculty of Interdisciplinary Practices comprising School of Arts Management and School of Interdisciplinary Arts. Diploma programmes are aligned with the degree programmes offered in partnership with top universities in the world, namely University of the Arts London (ranked 2nd globally for Art and Design since 2019) and Royal College of Music, London (ranked first globally for Performing Arts in 2022), and under the auspices of University of the Arts Singapore.

NAFA's courses are designed and delivered by experienced art educators and leading industry practitioners. The academic schools regularly review and refine their curriculum to reflect the changing needs of the industry.

Guided by its belief that art is for everyone and as an advocate of lifelong learning, NAFA dedicates its effort to developing a greater appreciation of the arts for all ages. The NAFA Arts Preschool (formerly NAFA Arts Kindergarten), is the first arts-themed preschool in Singapore. Its School of Young Talents offers quality weekend courses in art, dance, drama and music to 4- to 18-year-olds. For adults, the Centre for Lifelong Education offers enrichment courses and part-time certificate programmes.

With a rich heritage, established track record and an unwavering dedication to the highest standards of arts education, NAFA continues to stay true to its mission of "inspiring learning and growth through the arts".

About Faculty of Art and Design

NAFA's Faculty of Art and Design fosters creativity through industry engagements and addressing social and community issues. Empowering students to create impactful works, it bridges the gap between art and societal concerns, enabling students to explore their artistic potential and contribute meaningfully to the world.

Visit www.nafa.edu.sg for more information.