

NTU arts centre to open

THE Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is diving into the arts with its new Centre for Contemporary Art at Gillman Barracks. The centre, which opens on Oct 23, will study subjects such as the impact of art. PAGE B5

NTU delves into arts research

It expands horizons with new contemporary art centre in Gillman Barracks

By DAVID EE

THE Nanyang Technological University (NTU), which in the past has been traditionally known for its focus on engineering, is extending its research capabilities into a surprising arena – the arts.

On Oct 23, it will open its Centre for Contemporary Art in Gillman Barracks, an enclave of art galleries off Alexandra Road. NTU did not comment on how much is being pumped into the new 2,200 sq m centre, which is supported by the Economic Development Board.

It will house an as yet unspecified number of research fellows and curators, who will delve into subjects as varied and esoteric as the patterns of art consumption, new media of art production, and the sociological value and impact of art.

The centre will be helmed by 55-year-old German-born Professor Ute Meta Bauer, formerly dean

of the School of Fine Arts at the Royal College of Art in Britain.

The centre will hold exhibitions and host artists, writers and academics from near and far on residencies and fellowships. It will also showcase emerging, home-grown work.

These fit into the university's larger vision, said NTU president Bertil Andersson.

"Art plays a significant role in NTU's academic and research agenda, precisely because it can bring together different pathways to knowledge," he said.

For instance, it could lead to new aesthetic forms or even

intellectual viewpoints, he explained.

Contemporary art has already found a place in other universities here. The National University of Singapore Museum's South and South-east Asian Gallery showcases paintings from the Nanyang school of the 1960s, while The Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore is located at Lasalle College of the Arts.

The National Arts Council's deputy chief executive Yvonne Tham said that she was "excited" to see what the new centre could offer, particularly through nurturing new talent and allowing local artists to take on large-scale commissioned works.

The centre will occupy a third of the 15 blocks in Gillman Barracks, which has been struggling to bring in the crowds, despite opening to great fanfare last year. Visitors have bemoaned a lack of sheltered walkways across the grounds, clear signs providing direction, and dining options.

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ARTISTIC VALUE

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