NTU launches Singapore’s first master’s in museum studies and curatorial practices

SINGAPORE - Singapore’s first master’s programme in museum studies and curatorial practices was formally launched on Wednesday (Jan 17) to meet the demand for more experts in the growing arts and heritage sectors that have registered record crowd numbers.

The Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) Master of Arts in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices focuses on grooming leaders in the administration, management, interpretation and development of heritage and the arts in the public and private sectors.
Developed in consultation with the National Heritage Board (NHB), the master’s programme will address the rising demand for experts in the growing arts and heritage sectors, the university said.

The first cohort of around 20 students will begin classes in August. Applications for the second intake will start around Sept 1 and end in April next year.

Students can opt for a full-time study programme which can take between one and three years or a part-time one of between two and four years. They have to choose from three tracks - in Museum Studies or Curatorial Practices, or a combination of the the two.

The courses include curatorship, education and outreach, global art histories, planning and design exhibitions for art galleries and public spaces and creative and critical writing.

ADVERTISING

As part of the requirements for graduation, students must complete either a dissertation, or undergo a 10-week internship at local or overseas museums or art institutions and write a report after that.

The pioneering postgraduate programme will complement undergraduate courses such as the National University of Singapore’s Minor in Art History, launched last year, the Singapore Management University’s Introduction to Museum Management course, launched in 2014, and the NTU’s own double major in Art History and English Literature launched in 2016.

NTU’s master’s programme was launched on Wednesday evening at the Asian Civilisations Museum by the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu.

At the ceremony, she said that local cultural developments cannot be divorced from international developments while noting that the forces of globalisation were resulting in greater divisions and polarisations in society.

She said museums play a critical role in Singapore.

"To safeguard and promote the cultural heritage which makes us uniquely Singaporean, museums must continue to play a critical role
in telling the Singapore story and how we relate to the rest of the world," she said.

Also present were NTU president Subra Suresh, and NHB chief executive officer Chang Hwee Nee.

"Adaptation of technology cannot happen in isolation without any impact on humans and society. History has shown us how humans have used - and also misused...technology," Professor Suresh said.

Referring to the new programme, he said there was no better way to connect technology and humanity than through the arts.

Official figures show that interest has been rising in museums as well as heritage institutions and performing arts events.

Data from the Singapore Cultural Statistics 2017 report released last December showed some 9.2 million people attending arts and culture activities in 2016, a new high since 2012.

The figure includes 5.1 million visitorship to the national museums and heritage institutions, up from about 2.7 million in 2010. Attendances at ticketed performing arts events stood at about 1.8 million in 2016, around 300,000 more than in 2010.

Government funding for these sectors has also soared from $495.9 million in 2010 to $712.7 million in 2016.

Applications for the programme are still open.

Interested applicants can visit http://www.adm.ntu.edu.sg/Programmes/Masters%20Programme%20(Coursework)/Pages/Home.aspx for more information.