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NTU AIMS HIGH WITH NEW SCHOOL OF ART, DESIGN AND MEDIA

Fancy being the next creative mind and power behind the hottest animation or film, a mind-blowing game, design or comic? Or be part of some ground-breaking interactive art, virtual reality creation or other futuristic exploits within the new media? Now there’s a school in Singapore that will help you take one step closer towards fulfilling your dream.

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has set up the new School of Art, Design & Media. The first of its kind in Singapore, the school will launch in July 2005 with an initial intake of 100 students and will offer tertiary programmes in arts, design and media.

The establishment of the school is in line with Singapore’s vision to be a vibrant global arts and media hub. In 2000, the government agreed to invest some $50 million over five years to transform Singapore in a Renaissance City for the arts. In 2003, it also rolled out a Media 21 blueprint to turn the island into a global media city. Since then, a slew of foreign media and production companies have set up bases in Singapore. These include UK-based Pilot Film & TV Productions, MidiTech and UTV, both from India, and Southern Star, an integrated film and television production group from Australia which established an animation studio in Singapore.
These companies provide job opportunities for local companies and create new demands for trained professionals in the areas of art, design and media. Coupled with the increasing trend of global spending on media and entertainment, the formation of the new school cannot be timelier, as its students will be able to form a core pool of talent to support the growth of as well as to stimulate new forms, genres and venues for creative intellectual properties within arts and industries.

Mr Viswa Sadasivan, Chairman of The Right Angle Group and member of the Media Development Authority Board, is encouraged by the establishment of the new school. "The media and creative industry in Singapore is at a point of take-off, and tertiary institutions can be a critical enabler for the industries. I am encouraged by what the School of Art, Design & Media sets out to do, especially in requiring students to first have a good foundation in arts and humanities, and building domain knowledge in high-growth areas such as animation and digital cinema.

“Yes, a good course in scriptwriting is long overdue and the specialist graduate diploma programme can prove to be an effective antidote to burnout in industry professionals. A key challenge for the School is to nurture young homegrown talent that is creative yet in-sync with the realities and demands of the industry.”

The School of Arts, Deign and Media

The concept behind the school is driven by a present critical need to shape a creative culture in Singapore and position the country as a leader in creative intellectual property development in this region. The curriculum is designed to take advantage of the existing strengths of Singapore to expand the scope and scale of creative and artistic education as well as creative production within this region. To achieve such aspirations, the School of Art, Design & Media will develop partnerships with educational, production and cultural institutions around the world so that the programmes offered are truly international in scope and thinking.
“Students who enrol into the school will train to become creative artists in areas such as animation, digital cinema, scriptwriting, game and interactive design, visual communication, object design, photo and sequential arts, installation, spatial design, virtual reality environment, ride films and emotive robotics and maybe even performing arts, just to name a few. And this is just the beginning - as the school expands, so will its gamut of exciting offerings”, says Vice-Dean, Professor Edward Bakst who came from the United States of America eight months ago to help shape the design and philosophy of the new school.

The school will offer a four-year direct honours programme leading to an internationally-recognised Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Students will undergo a year of foundation studies, during which they will be exposed to the various genres of arts, humanities and international ideas. This is followed by three years of focused studies, during which they will have an option of either specialising within one of the several disciplines or choosing a more open, integrated and self defined program of studies.

Professor Bakst stresses: “We want to nurture a thinking talent who will mould the artistic landscape of Singapore and the region at large, and propel the country into a new and infinite creative future. Our curriculum is thus designed to offer students a good balance of the intellectual, conceptual and practical aspects of the many complimentary disciplines. International artists, scholars and presenters will be invited to teach and present at the school. Coupled with student and faculty exchanges, this will create a vibrant and challenging environment that injects the world’s creativity, cultures, ideas, arts, and global history into the school.”

Associate Professor Lutz Presser, the other Vice-Dean of the school, shares, “The programme offered by the new School of Art, Design and Media is different from that offered by NIE, NTU. The latter aims to arm student-teachers with theory and methodology for designing and conducting art education lessons in either primary or secondary schools, whereas the School of Art, Design & Media will train students to take up leadership positions in the creative arts.”
The school will also be launching Masters and PhD programmes, where students can develop original scripts, designs, productions, innovative media, games, as well as research new technologies, arts, literary and scholarly ventures. Special studios, such as a “Visiting Artist Atelier”, will be built to provide a stimulating environment for internationally renowned creative artists, scholars and professionals in media, design and arts to realise their own projects while mentoring the students. “We want our students to treat this school as a “creative asylum”, where they are free to explore new ideas, express their creativity and push the creative boundaries of tomorrow. Who knows, in the future, we may be able to send our students’ works to participate in international festivals,” says Professor Bakst.

NTU students from other faculties will have a chance to have a taste of what this new school has to offer. In line with NTU’s mission to offer its students a broad based curriculum, the School of Arts, Design & Media will offer Minors and general elective courses to other undergraduate and graduate students. The school will also run a specialist graduate diploma programme as part of continuing education, for working professionals interested in expanding their creative, conceptual, and production skills in both traditional and new forms of art & technology, design and media.

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About Nanyang Technological University

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is a top-tier university, ranked among the best science and technological universities in Asia. It has a business school that is consistently ranked among the top ten in Asia.

Established in 1991, the university has since been positioning itself to be a global university of excellence and is committed to its mission in Educating Leaders and Advancing Knowledge for Singapore and Beyond. NTU has an undergraduate and graduate enrolment of about 25,000 and an international faculty of over 1,500. It offers a broad-based curriculum, which focuses on the development of global views, entrepreneurship and adaptability, through the following schools:

1. College of Engineering, which consists of five schools:
   - Civil and Environmental Engineering
   - Computer Engineering
   - Electrical and Electronic Engineering
   - Materials Engineering
   - Mechanical and Production Engineering
2. Nanyang Business School
3. School of Biological Sciences
4. School of Communication and Information
5. School of Humanities and Social Sciences
6. School of Art, Design and Media
7. School of Physical Sciences (to be established by 2005)

For more information, visit http://www.ntu.edu.sg