The Asian Film Archive was founded in January 2005 to preserve the rich film heritage of Asian Cinema, to encourage scholarly research and to promote a wider critical appreciation of Asian film.

We celebrated our 10th anniversary in 2015 and would like to share the gift of this special issue to commemorate our 10 years. It provides highlights and key events of our past decade.

We hope you will join us in the next leg of our journey as we continue to Save, Share and Explore the treasures of Asian Cinema.
As a lean organisation imbued with a sense of urgency in doing as much as we can to preserve and promote our Asian film heritage, the AFA has not had the luxury of pausing to contemplate something as seemingly self-indulgent as our own image. But making decisions about the logo forced us to think about where we are today, how we got here, where we would like to go, and how we might get there.

This year: celebrating 10, 20, and 50 years

Not surprisingly, this year has been a very busy year for the AFA. Our collection grew to 1,872 titles by 31 March 2016. It was also a year of important anniversaries.

To commemorate our 10th anniversary, we held a premiere screening of the restored Cathay-Keris Malay Classics film Sultan Mahmood Mangkat di-Julang (The Passing of Sultan Mahmood) (1961) by K.M. Basker. We commissioned, for the first time, an “anthology” film titled Fragment. It was composed of 10 short films specially made by Southeast Asian filmmakers, reflecting on the strength and diversity of the independent cinemas of Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Screened to sold-out audiences and with the filmmakers in attendance, Fragment drew critical attention to the very idea of a Southeast Asian cinema.

We restored five films in 2015, including Eric Khoo’s Mee Pok Man, a seminal film in 1995 that led the way for a new wave of Singapore filmmaking. To celebrate its 20th anniversary, we premiered the restored film at the Singapore International Film Festival. Like the film’s lonely and taciturn protagonist, AFA obsessively tries to keep the things that we love alive; but unlike him (we hope!), infatuation does not turn into necrophilia. We have always viewed our archive as a living thing, not a tomb for well-embalmed films.

One of the numerous items the Asian Film Archive (AFA) Board of Directors had to consider this year was the new AFA logo, which was proposed to mark the end of the archive’s first decade and the beginning of a new phase.

As a lean organisation imbued with a sense of urgency in doing as much as we can to preserve and promote our Asian film heritage, the AFA has not had the luxury of pausing to contemplate something as seemingly self-indulgent as our own image. But making decisions about the logo forced us to think about where we are today, how we got here, where we would like to go, and how we might get there.
We also supported SG50 events organised in celebration of Singapore’s jubilee year. We worked with Singapore’s Media Development Authority to restore four local films: *Chuchu Datok Merah* (Grandson of Lord Merah) (1963) by M. Amin, *狮子城* (The Lion City) (1960) by Yi Sui, *醉打金枝* (Taming of the Princess) (1958) by Xu Jiaoming, and *Patah Hati* (Broken Heart) (1952) by K.M. Basker. These films were screened at Capitol Theatre as part of the Spotlight on Singapore Cinema initiative. We partnered with Singapore Airlines to feature *Moon Over Malaya* exclusively on 13,000 flights over two months. The restored film, produced in 1957 by Kong Ngee (one of the three major studios in Singapore’s golden age of filmmaking), had been premiered in 2010, with the late President S R Nathan in attendance, to celebrate AF Asia’s 5th anniversary. *Moon Over Malaya’s* protagonist, a passionate and idealistic young man who encounters a series of challenges in his efforts to promote education in 1950s Malaya, reminded us of ourselves.

**Education and outreach continue to be central to our mission.** Through a wide range of educational talks, screenings, and events, we reached out to 174,805 people in 2015, including youths and seniors. We oversaw the production of the documentary *Lost: Cinema* that was broadcast on Channel NewsAsia and translated into different languages for a number of Mediacorp channels: Channel 5, Channel 8, Suria, and Vasantham.

For the first time, we partnered with Singapore’s National Arts Council to present *State of Motion*, an innovative interdisciplinary programme for Singapore Art Week. This comprised guided bus tours, through which audiences could visit the film locations of a selection of Cathay-Keris Malay classics films from the 1950s and 1960s; commissioned artworks inspired by these films and their locations; and an exhibition on the locations themselves. The tours were sold out. And we found new audiences and collaborators from the visual arts community.

AF Asia continues to be internationally connected and regionally oriented. We hosted the high-profile 19th Southeast Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) Conference and General Assembly from 22 to 28 April 2015. Over 188 international delegates from 28 countries attended 43 concurrent symposium sessions based on the theme Advocate, Connect, Engage. Other conference activities included poster sessions, archival gems screenings, and Restoration Asia II, a session dedicated to discussing the challenges and technological possibilities related to restoration works from the Southeast Asia-Pacific region.

**How We Got Here**

By any measure, our archive is very young. Nevertheless, when I reflect on the past ten to eleven years of its existence, it seems like it was such a long time ago when we started. It was a very modest start. In 2004, a recent engineering graduate from the National University of Singapore met me at my office in the NUS University Scholars Programme, when I was still a young Assistant Professor there, to hear what I thought about his idea for setting up a film archive that would be independent from the state and transnationally Asian rather than just Singaporean in its scope. As an educator, I was very impressed by his idealism, entrepreneurial energy, practical sensibility, and sense of urgency. As a political scientist who was starting to become academically interested in film and the arts, I appreciated the value of what he was proposing. I gave him my full support and very shortly after accepted

Restored local films were screened at Spotlight on Singapore Cinema as part of Singapore’s jubilee celebrations.
his invitation to be AFK’s founding chair. The young man was Tan Bee Thiam, who became its executive director up until 2010, when he stepped down and Karen Chan, our current executive director, took over.

In 2005, we quickly formed the Board of Directors, consisting of academic Kenneth Chan, lecturer Jacqueline Tan, and journalist Ong Sor Fern. Not long after, we invited several noted academics and practitioners to form the International Advisory Board. We forged important partnerships with government agencies such as the National Archives of Singapore, the Singapore Film Commission, the Media Development Authority, and the National Library Board (NLB). These partnerships gave us access to expensive facilities that we could not afford and equipment that would be necessary for us to do our work.

Most of this work was done by committed volunteers and interns, who were very ably managed by our skeletal staff. Our Board met regularly not only to define ourselves more clearly, set directions, and make foundational decisions, but also to view and assess the large number of films that were already flowing into the archive right from the start.

Along the way, we faced a number of challenges, but we learnt from them and improved. As our collection of my home in Lothian Terrace, where we were sustained by my mother’s cooking. It was a lively group, whose discussions were punctuated with boisterous laughter, even when things got tough. That we would one day be successful enough to have a building of our own, which we would launch with a star-studded gala event, was a running joke that kept us amused over the years.

The AFA was fortunate to have a passionate and creative team of people – as well as supporters – who never failed to come up with new ideas for programmes. We collaborated with various institutions, including educational organisations, on campaigns to grow the collection, attract donations, and raise awareness. We designed, for instance, innovative projects that brought together teams of students to organise mini film festivals in their schools and devise business models to sustain them, all with the help of assigned mentors from the film industry. And of course there were numerous film screenings, workshops, and conferences organised to get the films out to the public.

One of the most difficult challenges has been fund-raising. And it became increasingly challenging as we got more established. In 2014, we realised that it would not be possible to move to the next level without making some fundamental changes. We did not want to be as morbidly possessive as the Mee Pok Man in the final scenes of the film, holding onto something we loved even as it risked decay. As one of the very few archives in the world that had remained structurally independent from the state, AFA made the radical decision to become a subsidiary of Singapore’s National Library Board, after exploring numerous options. This has turned out to be a wise decision. Today, we worry much less about having to raise funds just to stay alive and do the basic work of an archive. We can channel our energy and creativity once again to the core business of preserving and cataloguing Asian cinematic gems, while also designing and running programmes to promote them to new and existing audiences around the world.

With NLB’s solid institutional support, Singapore’s heightened interest in film and cinema, the creative autonomy that AFA enjoys in its effort to grow and promote the collection, and a diversifying pool of supporters and collaborators, AFAs future is bound to be an exciting one. Hopefully, our new logo reflects the optimism that will power us into the next stage. More importantly, we hope you will continue to journey with us.

The AFA team and supporters celebrate the move into AFA’s new office at the NLB building.
MESSAGE FROM CEO, NLB

Chief Executive Officer
Mrs Elaine Ng
National Library Board

Congratulations to the Asian Film Archive (AFA) on turning 10!

Over the last decade, the AFA Board and staff have put in much hard work and effort into promoting and sustaining the important work of preserving Singapore’s and Asia’s cinematic heritage. So much creativity abounds from the Asian filmmaking community and the number of Asian films made annually has grown exponentially. Films hold the cultural and socio-political memories of a country, enabling future audiences including scholars, researchers, filmmakers and students to gain inspiration and a deeper understanding of a particular place and time.

To save these cinematic treasures for future generations, preservation work by heritage institutions such as the AFA is key and needs to be supported.

The AFA became a subsidiary of the National Library Board (NLB) in 2014. NLB is pleased to support AFA’s mission, and to collaborate with the AFA on different outreach programmes. For instance, more than 500 titles from the AFA collection are available for public reference at the library@esplanade. The various regional and public libraries’ spaces have also become platforms for the AFA to organise film screenings, talks, exhibitions and other film-related activities to introduce and educate library goers about Asian films. Through NLB’s Read@School programme, AFA’s film literacy assembly talks have reached more students, teachers and schools.

NLB will continue collaborating with the AFA so that more audiences, young and old, will experience the wondrous magic of the moving image and enjoy the rich heritage of Singapore and Asian Cinema.
- **2005**
  - AFA is founded and moves into its office at the National University of Singapore (above)
  - Memorandum of Understanding is signed with National Archives of Singapore
  - Launch of Singapore Shorts: Vol. 1 DVD anthology
  - Asian Film Symposium is co-presented by AFA and the Substation

- **2006**
  - AFA is granted Institution of Public Character status
  - Launch of Educators’ Workshop series (above)
  - Launch of Royston’s Shorts DVD
  - AFA becomes an institutional member of the Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA)

- **2007**
  - AFA signs Memorandum of Understanding with National Library Board and Singapore Film Commission
  - AFA moves into its new office at Library Supply Centre in Changi South
  - AFA becomes the first Singaporean associate member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP)
  - AFA presents Southeast Asian Digital Cinema Roundtable and Symposium
  - Cathay-Keris Films donates Malay Classics collection to AFA for preservation

- **2008**
  - Launch of AFA Reference Collection at library@esplanade
  - Launch of AFA Reference Collection at AFA for preservation

- **2009**
  - First charity screening of restored film Moon Over Malaya

- **2010**
  - Masterclass by Apichatpong Weerasethakul presented by AFA, NYU Tisch School of the Arts Asia and Nanyang Technological University (above)
  - First charity screening of restored film Moon Over Malaya

- **2011**
  - Charity screening and Singapore premiere of Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (1957) by Chun Kim and Chor Yuen

- **2012**
  - Asian Film Archive Collection: Cathay-Keris Malay Classics is successfully inscribed into UNESCO Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register (above)

- **2013**
  - Asia Pacific Film Festival: AFA presents Southeast Asian Digital Cinema Roundtable and Symposium
  - AFA signs Memorandum of Understanding with National Library Board and Singapore Film Commission
  - AFA moves into its new office at Library Supply Centre in Changi South
  - AFA becomes the first Singaporean associate member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP)
  - AFA presents Southeast Asian Digital Cinema Roundtable and Symposium

- **2014**
  - AFA becomes a subsidiary of the National Library Board
  - Asian Film Archive Collection: Cathay-Keris Malay Classics is successfully inscribed into UNESCO Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register (above)

**OUR MILESTONES: 2005-2014**

The Asian Film Archive has witnessed many major events and developments over the past decade. Here are some highlights:
Developing and preserving the collection is the core business of the AFA. Much effort goes into cultivating personal and institutional relationships, built on mutual trust between the filmmakers, distributors, rights owners and the Archive. The very nature of the archiving business is to ensure that the films and existing accompanying materials (posters, stills, scripts, storyboards, music etc) will be available for generations to come. This means that preservation guidelines need to be in place and constantly reviewed so that obsolete formats are migrated to contemporary and accessible formats.

An archive is a space managed by rational and disciplined logic but yet decisions made in those early years were based on both intuition and logic, by marrying the personal with the professional. The AFA’s survival depended on how it would manage the balancing act of creating a sustainable archive that could serve its stakeholders effectively while at the same time bringing together accessible and meaningful programmes for its users.

Within the first year of AFA’s Reel Emergency Project’s open call in 2005, over 400 Asian film titles were deposited for preservation. During the decade, the AFA collected over 5,000 physical items that included film prints, analogue and digital-video tapes, CD/DVDs and other related materials, and processed over 60,000 files of digital and digitised content. The largest, and one of AFA’s most significant collections, the Cathay-Keris Malay Classics that consist of 91 Malay films made in the 1950s to 1970s has been inscribed onto the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s (UNESCO) Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.

The AFA is also home to a large collection of films from the Singapore Film Commission, the Da Huang Pictures Collection, the Jack Neo Collection, Mike de Leon Collection, and a comprehensive film memorabilia collection by collector Wong Han Min.
The collection in 2015

The AFA Collection stands at 1,872 titles as of 31 March 2016. Amongst the new acquisitions were works by local filmmakers like Eric Khoo (12 Storeys), Glen Goei (The Blue Mansion) and Wee Li Lin (Forever). Acclaimed Asian features like The Tiger Factory and Women on Fire Looks to Water and Karaoke by Malaysian filmmakers Woo Ming Jin and Chris Chong respectively were added to the collection.

The Archive also acquired the notable short films of Singaporean filmmakers Kirsten Tan and Sherman Ong, Filipino filmmaker Christopher Gozum, and Malaysian filmmakers Azhar Rudin and Edmund Yeo.

In celebration of Singapore’s Jubilee year, the AFA partnered the Media Development Authority (MDA) to restore four Singaporean film classics – Chu Chu Datok Merah (1963) by M Amin, Taming of the Princess (1957) by Hsu Chiao Meng, Putah Hati (1952) by K M Basker and The Lion City (1960) by Yi Sui. The restored films premiered at the Capitol Theatre in August 2015. The AFA carried out a 4K restoration of Eric Khoo’s Mee Pok Man (1995) in commemoration of its 20th anniversary and presented it at the 26th Singapore International Film Festival.

In support of SGS0, Singapore Airlines (SQ) partnered AFA in screening an AFA-restored title, Moon Over Malaya. The film was featured exclusively on SQ’s 13,000 flights for two months during August and September.

The AFA supported the restoration of two Filipino classics by award winning director Mike de Leon, by facilitating the loans of the surviving negatives and prints of Kakabakaba Ka Ba? and Kung Mangarap Ka’t Magising to the Alto Broadcasting System – Chronicle Broadcasting Network (ABS-CBN) of the Philippines.
The AFA is more than just a repository of film and tape. Our aspiration is for the AFA to become a hub for the Asian film community, contributing to culture, scholarship and industry.

Since its formation, one of the key arms of outreach development within AFA is Moving Minds, a film education and preservation programme. The aims of the programme are multi-fold: to increase film literacy amongst young, inquisitive minds of students who are bombarded by visual moving images in this multimedia age; incorporate the highly accessible and relatable art form of film into the existing teaching curriculum; increase the awareness and appreciation of Asian cinema amongst students and educators.

Since the launch of the long-running Educators’ Workshop series in 2006, the AFA has introduced film literacy in schools and developed unique programmes such as CineOdeon (2008) that mentor students on film programming and in creating film discourse. Over 40 schools and educational institutions have engaged AFA for various film talks and workshops under AFA’s Moving Minds initiative, enabling thousands of students to benefit from these programmes.

Apart from schools, AFA also reaches out to the general public through specially curated film events, ranging from exhibitions, screenings, talks, tours, and workshops. Since 2015, AFA has grown its various programmes into regular series, working with different partners to reach a diverse demographic of participants. For instance, REFRAME is a salon series that encourages dialogue on issues surrounding cinema and the moving image. Alt Screen, in partnership with the National Library, showcases Asian cinematic stories with critical perspectives and interpretations of global issues; and State of Motion is AFA’s offering at Singapore Art Week that brings together film and visual.
art in a cohesive manner to enable audiences to better enjoy the two art forms.

To date, over 270,000 local and international participants, audience members, educators, and students have benefitted from AFA’s outreach programmes.

**Outreach in 2015**

**Screenings and Talks**

During the year, the AFA partnered the National Library Board’s public libraries in the second season of Fade In / Fade Out, a screening programme to introduce films to audiences through the platforms of the regional and public libraries. Audiences were treated to older films such as *Chuchu Datok Merah* and *The Lion City*, and to contemporary local films like *03-Flats*. In conjunction with Singapore’s jubilee celebrations sG50, community screenings of the restored Singaporean classics were held at venues such as Chinatown Public Library, Radin Mas Community Centre and at the YWCA Meals-on-Wheels Movie Outing. AFA also partnered the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) in presenting screenings of *Flooding in the Time of Drought* by Sherman Ong and *Return to Burma* by Midi Z within the CCA’s thematic curatorial framework of PLACE.LABOUR.CAPITAL.

School assembly talks were held throughout the year, on topics such as Social Issues Through Documentaries, Introduction to Singapore Cinema. AFA also conducted workshops at the 2015 Language Arts Conference for educators and film literacy workshops for teachers, to learn how to incorporate Asian films into their classrooms. Teachers from varied disciplines such as History, English Literature, Philosophy, Geography, and even Chemistry found a relevance for film in their teaching curriculum.

**Exhibitions**

AFA curated and presented a touring exhibition featuring the lost films of Southeast Asia, titled Celluloid Void that was displayed at the library@esplanade, Marine Parade Public Library, Woodlands and Jurong Regional Libraries.

In May, AFA launched a salon series entitled REFRAME – involving panel discussions on film trends and practices in Asian Cinema. Topics covered were #Nostalgia – examining the trend of nostalgia in Singapore film, Screening the Transient – understanding migrant issues through film, and The Fragments of Southeast Asian Cinemas that discussed the definition, identity and significance of the concept of a Southeast Asian Cinema.

Educators’ workshops and student assembly talks are key components of AFA’s film literacy programme.

I am a huge advocate of film literary and education, and I am extremely heartened that AFA is a platform on which I am able to contribute. My experience as an educator with AFA has been nothing less than invigorating. Through the Educators’ Workshops I have conducted, I have met teachers who are more than willing to learn just how they are able to incorporate film in their classrooms. My interactions with teachers also tell me just how much potential there is for film education in Singapore – it is this possibility that keeps me going as a lover of the film medium, and as an educator. It is my hope that Singapore will one day formalise film education in the Secondary and Junior College curriculum, as it already is in some International Baccalaureate schools, and at the University level. AFA can have an important role in the fulfilment of this desired eventualty through the continued training of teachers, and perhaps even providing a consulting role in curriculum planning for film education. The potentialities are vast, and I look forward to working with AFA in instilling in this society a love for film through education.

Chew Yi Wei
Postdoctoral Fellow, Division of Broadcast and Cinema Studies, Nanyang Technological University
Participating in the Singapore Art Week for the first time, AFA developed the State of Motion: Cathay-Keris on Location exhibition and guided bus tours to five filming locations around Singapore that were used in iconic Cathay-Keris films. Focusing on a selection of classic Cathay-Keris films, the sold out tours brought audiences on a trip to locations within the films where a commissioned artwork responding to both the film and its site awaited them. Participants were encouraged to not just remember but to re-imagine the film and an ever-changing Singapore landscape. Held at the National Library Building, the Cathay-Keris On Location exhibition traversed the cinematic stories with settings in traditional villages, newly reclaimed lands, skyscrapers, prisons and other iconic sites. AFA worked with Singaporean artist and filmmaker, Toh Hun Ping, who had researched extensively on 20th century Singapore films and their filming locations.

Conferences and Presentations
In April 2015, the AFA was honoured to host the 19th Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) Conference and General Assembly with the theme Advocate, Connect, Engage. Attended by 188 local and foreign audiovisual professionals from archives, universities, libraries, broadcasters, and cinemathques, delegates from 28 countries (including Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, Europe and North America) attended SEAPAVAA for the first time. This was the second time after 15 years that the annual SEAPAVAA conference was organised in Singapore.
The annual SEAPAVAA conference is an important event in the audiovisual (AV) archiving calendar of the Asia-Pacific region as AV archivists gather to network, share and learn from each other. SEAPAVAA19 differed from previous conferences as concurrently run symposium sessions and, for the first time, poster sessions and adjacent public programmes, were organised. AFA’s Archivist, Tee Pao, delivered a presentation on Archiving the city – Engaging Our Citizens and Government at the conference. Supported by the National Library Board, National Archives of Singapore and the National Museum of Singapore, SEAPAVAA19 became one of the most successful conferences in the history of SEAPAVAA.

AFA supported the Joint Technical Symposium that was organised by the Coordinating Council of Audio Visual Archives Associations (CCAAA) and hosted by SEAPAVAA and the National Archives of Singapore (NAS), in presenting a screening of AFA’s restored film, Sultan Mahmood Mangkat de-Julang.

At the 2015 MEMORY! International Film Heritage Festival held in Yangon, Myanmar, Tee Pao presented a paper on Gender in Singapore Film and screened two films from the AFA collection – They Call Her... Cleopatra Wong (1978) and Moon Over Malaya (1957).

In February 2016, Tee Pao attended the British Film Institute’s professional development course, Archive Futures. The training course, targeted at middle/senior-level managers in film, television and digital media, taught attendees to develop an innovative approach and change management in an archival context.

Collaboration with Educational Institutions

AFA’s Executive Director Karen Chan and Archivist Tee Pao mentored seven groups of Singapore Polytechnic Design School students who designed artworks for AFA’s awareness campaign and upcoming DVD publication boxset. This project was part of the students’ final year Brand Communication module. The students’ presentations and artworks displayed the thoughtful and refreshing research and perspectives of the young generation on film heritage. The collaboration allowed AFA to educate the students on the importance and urgency of preserving a country’s cinematic history.

Top: Singapore Polytechnic (SP) Design School students with mentors.
Above: SP students visiting AFA’s office to research and better understand the film archiving profession.
section 3

10 YEARS ON: OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are vital to the realisation of the AFA’s mission. Over the years, we have met volunteers who have inspired us.

They have come from diverse backgrounds and have contributed a vast array of knowledge and skills, in addition to their time, concern and care for our film heritage and the work of the archive.

There are many different reasons that inspire people to volunteer for the AFA. Professionals with relevant interest and skills who can make a valuable contribution to the Archive’s work. Professional internship placements for work experience, mentorship schemes to provide guidance to students. Retirees who are making good use of their years of expertise and experience. Individuals seeking an avenue to be involved in a rewarding yet different area of work.

Some volunteers have stayed with the Archive since we were set up. Others with only a short amount of time to offer, contribute when they can and move on to other things. Some volunteer jobs even resembled full-time positions because of the nature of the job, while others were more part-time in scope or were done off-site.

The AFA was founded and built up by a group of volunteers who contributed their vast knowledge and skills. They helped draft our constitution, provided legal advice, designed our logo, built our website and database, kept our account books and offered advice on an array of matters. The AFA could not have materialised without the help from individuals like Andrea Chee, Amrin Amin, Kirsten Tan (co-founder), Loh Chee Ken, Pan Lexin, amongst many others.

Volunteers continue to form the core of AFA’s manpower strength, supporting the staff with the gamut of work and activities in the archive. These activities range from front
line events like ushering and registration, to photography and videography, design and writing, to archival work like cleaning of film reels, scanning, and cataloguing.

In Profile: Pan Lexin

Always available but never seen. This might describe Pan Lexin, a young affable, patient and resourceful engineer from the National University of Singapore. At the request of his friend and then housemate, Tan Bee Thiam (founder of AFA), Lexin agreed in 2005 to help develop AFA’s website and online data catalogue. Amidst establishing his own company, Lexin devoted many hours to building the backend infrastructure of a website and catalogue that sustained the AFA for over ten years without the staff having to ever worry about it not working. He sourced for cheap and reliable providers and suppliers, negotiated beneficial deals for AFA and established a backend operation that ran seamlessly to the staff and public. As the only IT related volunteer, it seemed like Lexin was always on standby. Every matter that was remotely technology-related was referred to him. He responded to calls and emails at all times of day and night, providing solutions, service and support worthy of a five-star IT consultancy and technical team. With a good measure of foresight and ingenuity, Lexin worked with few resources and no manpower to develop a website and catalogue that the archive staff used to help outreach and manage the collection. In 2007, AFA recognised Lexin’s contribution with the accolade of AFA’s Volunteer of the Year. As he bashfully accepted the humble certificate, he brushed away any praise, merely stating that he was only doing what he knew best and what he could best help with. It is this sacrificial and simple spirit of giving that embodies the true essence of volunteerism, the very core of what helped keep the AFA going.

You make a living by what you get.
You make a life by what you give.

Winston Churchill

I’ve been volunteering for AFA for the past 5 years now, mostly on an ad-hoc basis helping out at their film screenings and workshops/talks. The biggest project I was involved in was the SEAPAVAA conference held in Singapore in 2015 as AFA was the host of the conference. The sheer logistics were mind-boggling and I don’t think me and other fellow volunteers had any clue what it was going to be like! The briefing was short on details and we were told to just go with the flow - and go with the flow we did! The amazing thing was everything worked out well, at least from my perspective. But that’s the thing with volunteering with AFA, you never know quite what to expect. The organisation is small and fluid but can change and adapt to different circumstances very quickly. Large organisations would not be able to respond to the changes as fast as AFA for sure. I am always amazed by the sheer dedication and perseverance of the AFA staff headed by a very capable and hands-on ED, Karen Chan. Their passion for the work they do is incredibly inspiring. I am really happy to be part of AFA’s journey as they expand their scope and plans for the future.

Maggie Yin
AFA Volunteer

I’ve come to appreciate local and Asian films. To me, they offer many valuable lessons that you usually don’t see in commercial, Hollywood films, and I hope more people will come to know of these films and develop an interest for them! I’ve enjoyed my time at the AFA, picked up new skills and had opportunities to do things I’ve never done before.

Viola Ow
Student volunteer from the Ministry of Education’s English Language Elective Programme
HiGhliGhTs of oUr 10th AnniversArY

In observance of the AFA’s 10th anniversary, a variety of events were planned for throughout the year to commemorate the significant milestone of having arrived at the decade mark, albeit still a young age by any standards for an archive.

Helming the celebrations was a special screening of the restored Cathay-Keris Malay Classic, Sultan Mahmood Mangkat di-Julang, held at the National Museum of Singapore to an enthusiastic audience. The AFA commissioned its first omnibus film entitled Fragment. Featuring 10 Southeast Asian directors including Lav Diaz, Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit, Tan Chui Mui and Sherman Ong, the 10 commissioned short films that distinctively embraced the other’s subjectivities through the collective sentiments of vulnerability and fortitude. The screenings played to full houses of over 500 audience members.

Still images from each of the 10 short films featured in specially-commissioned work, Fragment.

Restoring and commissioning a film appear to be on opposite sides of a spectrum – one working with old films and the other creating a new work. However, for an archive, the purpose and value of restoring and commissioning films converge to perform several significant purposes.

During the restoration process, efforts are made to ensure the old film resembles as close as possible to when it was originally made. However, some elements of modern day interpretation may be channelled thus presenting any new version of the film for current and future audiences is akin to creating a new film. Restoration preserves the longevity of a film by providing access that was previously unavailable whether due to deterioration or format inaccessibility.
A commissioned film allows the commissioning party to dictate the theme(s) and parameters for the new work with creative interpretative space by the creator(s). In AFAs commissioned omnibus film, *Fragment*, the recurrent motif running through the films is the various notions of what fragment can mean. To prevent any fragments of independently made films being lost forever, preservation is needed to ensure that these films do not vanish. The commissioning allowed AF to introduce more audiences to the filmmakers while facilitating the works of the filmmakers for greater opportunities. The outcomes of restoring and commissioning films therefore resonate with AFAs goal to save, explore and share the art of Asian cinema.
The Archive’s development over 10 years owes much to the input and effort of many friends, supporters, staff and stakeholders. Here are some of their reflections of our first decade.

The Spirit of the Archive

Tan Bee Thiam
Founder of Asian Film Archive
Filmmaker and educator

Starting an archive is a strange affair. There is an implicit realisation that for the archive to succeed, any thought of oneself has to be surrendered. The archive must belong to the people. It must last beyond our lifetime. Whatever decisions we make, it is to ensure this organisation with its commitment to a mission to preserve and share the art of Asian cinema, can last.

When curator Philip Cheah knew I was setting up an Asian Film Archive, he told me excitedly that I needed to watch Henri Langlois: Phantom of the Cinémathèque, a documentary he had just selected for the Singapore International Film Festival. A legendary figure in film history, Langlois co-founded the world’s first Cinémathèque and the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF). He was also a fiercely independent visionary who would do anything he could to save and share the films he loved.

It was this independent spirit and faith in cinema that guided the Asian Film Archive’s founding years when resources were scarce but goodwill was in abundance. We knocked on many doors for funding, for films, for space and for expertise. After having knocked on enough doors, one has to muster enough will and purpose to move things forward. It’s not just having a never-say-die attitude, it’s having a massive and sufficiently worthy purpose to convince oneself and others that this cause is worth doing and fighting for. Incorporating the ideal of ‘share’ in the mission of the Archive lays the
Love is a strange affair. To love is to give unconditionally. I often think of films as love letters. The unique thing with a love letter is that its purpose is not complete until it’s given to someone. You do not ask for it back. You do not expect to profit from it. Instead you hope it will communicate an affection and intent that can be understood by the receiver. How fortunate it would be then to think of the Archive, not only as a capsule of time but also a collector of these love letters, which together, tell the stories of our time. More than that, the Archive is also a collector of love and goodwill, and that over time, it embodies the spirit of the films it collects – an imagination of what cinema can be. How wonderful that would be!

In the last five years under the helm of Karen and her team, the Archive has inscribed Singapore’s first collection of films (the Asian Film Archive Cathay-Keris Malay Classics) into the UNESCO Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Register. AFA has done much to reimagine and repurpose the work of an Archive through the variety of programmes – tours of film locations of old films featuring on-site art installations, a festival of Asian restored classics, a salon programme to engage audience critically on ideas of cinema, a screening and workshop on silent film by some of Singapore’s best musicians and sound artists, amongst others. These are bold experiments that are exciting, pioneering and forward-looking. I am really proud of Karen and her team for bringing the Archive to such new heights.

As a filmmaker and educator today, I trust the Archive with all my love letters and I find its programmes a source of inspiration for me to create even better works. Above all, I find in the Archive’s work, an ideal, a dream, a purpose of why I make films and teach young people about cinema.

On this tenth anniversary, I wish the spirit of the Asian Film Archive will continue to burn brightly for many years to come. May it live beyond us, growing in strength and purpose, much like how a commitment to the love of cinema would mean a lifetime of work. A work that is about forever.

What's in a Name? Naming the "Asian" in the Asian Film Archive
Prof Kenneth Chan
Chair, International Advisory Board
Asian Film Archive

It was an afternoon in 2004 when a bespectacled young man dropped by my office, which was tucked away in a corner of the old administrative building at the National University of Singapore. Then a fresh engineering graduate and a budding filmmaker, Tan Bee Thiam exuded a youthful idealism and a vibrant enthusiasm (which was masked only by his mild-mannered disposition) for a very ambitious project: he believed that Singapore was in need of a film archive and he would like me to join a group of cinema enthusiasts he had gathered to help him build this archive from scratch. Admittedly cautious at first, though deeply curious, I was intrigued from the start by Tan’s vision of this enterprise for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the rise of a contemporary Singapore film scene in the mid-1990s, with many more aspiring directors joining the ranks and with governmental backing incrementally growing in the 2000s, required a parallel archival system to function as a structural and institutional foundation for
filmic and cultural preservation. A film archive would also provide the material infrastructure for research into not just film history but also the visual history of Singapore. Secondly, the generally “invisible” cultural and historical work an archive does usually goes unnoticed and underappreciated by the general public and by politicians; such important work deserves encouragement and promotion. And, finally, as an academic whose scholarship is grounded in cinema and cultural studies, I found the prospect of being intimately involved in building a Singapore-based film archive an intellectually stimulating and culturally significant one.

At the archive’s inaugural meeting, the first order of business for the founding board of directors—which consisted of Straits Times film and cultural critic Ong Sor Fern, polytechnic film instructor Jacqueline Tan Siew Gek, NUS academic Kenneth Paul Tan (board chair), and me, all working closely with executive Director Tan Bee Thiam—was to address the rather mundane and apparently simple issue of naming the archive. But, as Shakespeare’s Juliet, in rhetorically asking “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet” (2.2.46-47, Romeo and Juliet from Folger Digital Texts), soon discovered, the name with which one is saddled at birth, be it Capulet or Montague, will define one’s life trajectory in ways unexpected. My allusion to the tragic consequences of Shakespearean onomastic determinism may be a shade too playfully melodramatic, but the implications are clear for this fledgling organisation, especially to the board of directors. Should we include “Singapore” in the name of the first film archive based in the nation as an obvious identification marker? Or is it more strategically inclusive to call it “Southeast Asian” or “Asian,” considering Singapore’s regionalist and globalist position in the capitalist and cultural network of the Asia-Pacific region? By naming it the “Asian Film Archive,” who are the filmmakers and the archive’s other research and institutional clientele that it is supposed to appeal to? What is the cultural and historical significance of archiving a film within the cultural rubric of an Asian? What categorical spaces does it open up, or close off? What kinds of material and financial support can such a moniker garner? What sort of future does an Asian institution as such have?

The debate over these questions were extended and it went on into the night. We finally settled on the “Asian Film Archive” because we believed that it reflected the geographically and culturally expansive possibilities that the name signifies in this digital era of cinematic production, distribution, consumption, and preservation. It links the institution and the Singapore cultural scene to the larger networks of Southeast Asian, East Asian, diasporic Asian, and transnational Asian cinemas. It celebrates Singapore as the potential nexus of Asian cinematic culture. But beyond articulating, rather academically, these lofty goals that we as the founding board of directors had for the archive, I am also choosing to fixate on this singular moment of naming—as we now look back on and celebrate a decade of the organisation’s success—for a less tangible and more emotive reason. That first meeting where we named the archive was the beginning of numerous other late-night meetings where we debated other issues, struggled with various crises, and rejoiced at our small victories. In the midst of it all, as we found common cause in our love of cinema, we also found friendship and connection through the trials and tribulations of building an archive. As clichéd and saccharine as all this sounds, I unabashedly cherish this historical moment of naming, the calling into existence of an institution and an institutional family, so to speak. For, it is through the ties that bind all of us who are and were part of the AFA that I can now reflect upon how far we have truly come and how much further we can now go. It is this human connectivity that drives and sustains our belief that the AFA will continue to succeed in its important cultural mission for many more years to come.

Where do Southeast Asian films go once they have completed their festival runs?

Kirsten Tan
Co-founder, Asian Film Archive Filmmaker

This was the humble question from whence the Asian Film Archive sprung from, at a coffee-shop in Holland Village fifteen years ago. (Tan) Bee Thiam and I were in our early 20s, short film collaborators and ardent cinema lovers. We were enrolled at NUS and founding members of nu(STUDIOS) – a filmmaking body under the auspices of the Centre for the Arts, NUS. The local film industry was so nascent then. If
Over coffee at Holland Village that night, we came to the dismal realisation that Southeast Asian films (in clunky VCR/Beta/DV tape form then) had nowhere to go and would likely be boxed up and shelved away by their creators, never to see daylight again. That was a time of physical hardware, before the advent of online ‘self-distributable’ platforms such as Vimeo or YouTube. The issue felt dire – how disheartening to think of the sheer number of regional works made with love but doomed to be forgotten.

The idea for the creation of the Archive was seeded – we wanted to find a home for orphan films – a place where these films could band together, remain germane, publicly accessible, and stand collectively as a record of our time.

Two years after forming the Archive and after it was up and running, I left the organisation as a co-founder – life took me down a separate yet tangential path of filmmaking. When I look at the Asian Film Archive whenever I’m at the national library now, I marvel at the vision and tenacity of those currently working at the Archive who have taken it much further than I ever did. A warm feeling comes over me and I marvel at how the Archive has withstood – and documented – time. Miraculously, after a decade, I’ve found my way back again since the Archive now houses all of my short narrative films – it pleases me to think that my films have found a home, and that the archive has been a home to so many.

Here’s to many more films, and many more years to come.

Reflections on the AFA
Dr Ray Edmondson
Member, International Advisory Board
Asian Film Archive

I remember the founding of the Asian Film Archive in 2005, and recall thinking at the time what a good idea it was. Not only because it filled an obvious need in Singapore, but because in so many ways it broke the established global mould. Let me explain.

Audiovisual archives (be they for film, audio, broadcast or mixed media) are most typically the creations of national governments or of cultural or educational institutions, like universities. Or, if they operate in the commercial realm, of broadcasters or production studios. Their purpose, their brief and their policies arise out of the circumstances of their creation.

In my own country, Australia, its national film and sound Archive is a typical example of this approach. Created by government, its enabling Act sets out its mandate: to collect, preserve and provide access to the national production (of films, television programs, radio, recorded sound) and other productions which have been judged to have a significant influence on the Australian community. Turning that general mandate into a detailed selection and preservation policy becomes a complex task in a multi-cultural country like Australia. Yet some general observations are possible. At this stage, for example, most of the collection is in the English language. And the further back in time one goes, the less there is: too much of Australia’s audiovisual heritage from the first half of the 20th century has been lost because there were no institutions actively trying to save it at the time.

The concept of the AFA is different. It is not constrained by a national focus but by the word “Asian” – a term that is clear but not precise, and which can therefore mean different things to different people. It has both cultural

own country or region, and imported material that has had a significant influence on the public memory of that country.
and geographic connotations without being obviously prescriptive. But it is prescriptive enough to mean something other than the European or American films which have traditionally dominated the global study of cinema. Hence, it claims its own cultural space. It invites enquiry and study into the distinctive character, complexity, and history of Asian films, which are the direct cultural heritage of something like half the world’s population. There is no European film archive. There is no American film archive. But there is an Asian Film Archive. Just ponder on the potential of that concept.

Preserving the Asian cinema heritage is a vast undertaking shared by many national and specialist archives, each operating from its own perspective and with its own available resources. The AFA will only ever be able to shoulder a small part of that task, and it will need to do so with discernment and selectivity. But it approaches its task from an Asian rather than a national mind set, and that in turn bears on the way it researches, contextualizes and presents films from its own, and other, collections. It also allows it to take a specific interest in neglected areas of preservation and accessibility. No matter where you look in the world, the archiving task is never evenly distributed or resourced, and the AFA has the potential to take a wide view and to go where it is needed.

Assuming, that is, that it has the resources! And here we confront the reality of a small, non-profit organisation addressing a gargantuan task. Filmmakers, sponsors and donors put their trust in archives for a number of reasons: these include their permanence, their competence and their integrity. There were certainly times over the last decade when financial resources were so slim that the survival of the AFA was in doubt: indeed, I was at times myself involved in the discussions about safeguarding the collection if the work of the institution had had to go into recess. And yet, that moment never arrived. Somehow, the resilience of the staff and the board found a way through.

And here we come to what I think is the fundamental reason for the AFA’s success. Its conceptual basis is valid; it fills a need; and those who work in it and guide it believe in it. While these fundamentals hold true it will grow and prosper and the world will be a better place for its presence. Film archiving is hard, unglamorous work, and the users who benefit from the fruits of that work tend to take it for granted. It is never, ever, over-resourced: every large archive began in a small way with one or two people and a miniscule budget, and nobody ever got rich being a film archivist! Today the AFA has a lean and efficient executive team of six, and that number will continue to grow. Yet the work will always be its own reward, and that is the best reward of all.

Would I Do It Again?

Ong Soe Fern
Former Board of Director, Asian Film Archive Journalist

I had no idea what I was getting into when I agreed to sit on the board of the Asian Film Archive. But if I had to do it all over again, I would.

It started with an invite to dinner at the now defunct Empire Cafe at Raffles Hotel with the chairman of the AFA, Professor Kenneth Paul Tan, and executive director Tan Bee Thiam.

When they laid out their plans for an archive for Singapore and Asian films, I said yes readily for the simple reason that in 2006, no one was archiving made-in-Singapore films. Having covered the film beat as a film correspondent for The Straits Times, I was acutely aware that time was running out for the few surviving prints of cult classics such as They Call Her...Cleopatra Wong and Ring Of Fury. The latter film, as star Peter Chong had told me in an interview, had survived being stored in a fridge for years.

No one in the Government seemed interested in collecting film. Having sat on the National Library Board for a term,
I tried to interest the library in collecting Singapore's film history, but only succeeded in getting a paper put together to consider the possibility of doing so. The National Archives of Singapore too seemed disinterested as their focus was in documentary footage, not commercial films made with an eye on the box office. Exasperated by the lack of governmental interest, I leapt at this private sector initiative and was happy to contribute my time and what little expertise I had to the cause of ensuring that the next generation of film-makers and film-goers had access to the little fragments of Singapore's celluloid history.

Willing as I was to volunteer my time, I had no idea what setting up a non-governmental organisation entailed. But I was lucky to have equally dedicated board members who all believed in the same cause.

Professor Kenneth Chan and Jacqueline Tan-Pereira all committed to giving up time for late night board meetings which often ended at midnight. The saving grace of these late-night meetings was the fabulous cooking of Prof Tan’s mum, who kept us going with delicious homemade curries as we hammered out the nuts and bolts of sorting out everything from funding woes to human resources policies.

One of the biggest headaches the board confronted from the outset was the lack of funding. This was a major issue as film is an expensive material - to handle, maintain and store. I like to characterise the early years of the AFA as akin to *A Streetcar Named Desire*'s Blanche DuBois’ survival tactic: depending on the kindness of strangers. We got around the lack of funding by collaborating with partners who generously proffered office space and storage space.

Given that the original board comprised three academics and a journalist, we were also fairly focused on the philosophy and purpose of the Archive. I remember a lively debate on the name Asian Film Archive and what that name implied for the Archive’s work and aims.

But I like to think we got the basics right: our focus begins with the films, starting in our own backyard - made in Singapore by Singaporeans for Singaporeans. But given the international roots of Singapore’s film industry in the 1950s and 1960s, which drew on talents in the region and looked to neighbours for markets, the Board also felt that the Archive had a role to play in helping preserve the film heritage of our neighbours too.

It took us a long time to convince a sponsor to restore our first film, *Moon Over Malaya*, a rare Cantonese language film shot in Singapore and Malaysia starring Patrick Tse. But it was a good first step in hopefully restoring more of Singapore’s film heritage and making sure that future generations can see what Singapore looked like in the 1950s.

In the 10 short years of the Archive’s existence, I like to think it has made a discernable difference.

The best aspect of the Archive’s work has been its concerted drive to make its collection accessible to the public. Its partnership with the library@esplanade means that more than 500 films by Asian film-makers can be seen by members of the public.

I firmly believe that any institution involved in preservation and restoration must also actively engage in outreach because there is no point in squirrelling away stuff in dusty warehouses. Making films accessible ensures that new generations can learn about, and hopefully appreciate, the history of film-making in Singapore.

Now 10 years later, it seems like the Archive has come full circle. It has found a new nest in the National Library Board. Hopefully, the resources of a statutory board can help the Archive do more to restore old gems of Singapore and Asian cinema, and to promote the region’s rich celluloid heritage.

Happy 10th birthday Asian Film Archive. May you live long and prosper.
On behalf of the Southeast Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA), I would like to congratulate the Asian Film Archive on its 10th year anniversary. Our film heritage is an important expression of the creative culture of the region. Through their innovative programmes, the AFA is helping to, not only sustain, but develop a wider interest in film and film heritage and its role in contemporary society; which can only be of benefit to everyone. Well done to everyone at the AFA and the best of wishes for the future.

Mick Newnham
President,
Southeast Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association

SG50 celebratory event, Spotlight on Singapore Cinema was a wonderful collaboration with AFA. Five iconic films from the 1950s to 1970s were screened in digital high definition formats, of which four were restored from the original film prints. I’m looking forward to seeing the Singapore Film Commission (SFC) and AFA working closely together to restore more classics and significant films from Singapore. With AFA’s dedication towards preservation of Singapore’s cinematic heritage, I believe that our future generations will continue to enjoy Singapore’s rich cultural stories through films.

Joachim Ng
Director, Singapore Film Commission

Ten years is short for film history, but not so for the history of a film archive that was inaugurated particularly in the midst of great technological transition. The Asian Film Archive has survived this difficult decade and acquired a significant film heritage collection to care for and present. The AFA is as much a treasure of Singapore as it is of Asia.

Hisashi Okajima
Chief Curator, Museum of Modern Art Japan, National Film Center

My warmest happy birthday wishes to AFA! I feel honoured to witness the blooming of this important organisation.

Reseed, Encounter, Cherish, Forward, Love.

Cinema / 10++

Apichatpong Weerasethakul
Filmmaker / AFA International Advisory Board

I am very happy and glad that AFA has found a place to grow and develop, and become stronger in the years to come. Karen and team, I wish you all the best and may you continue to maintain and keep the fire going for our film heritage!

Jacqueline Tan
Deputy Director (Academic), Ngee Ann Polytechnic
Pioneer AFA board member

Congratulations to the Asian Film Archive (AFA) for 10-years of service to the preservation of Asian film. It’s not been an easy 10 years, with budgets being tight and huge staff sacrifices. I’m very glad to see that the AFA is now on a more solid footing under the umbrella of the National Library Board and forging ahead with its founding vision of collecting, preserving, showcasing and educating people about Asian film. It was a great pleasure to work with the AFA for five years and I wish them all the best for the future.

Susan Beard
Former AFA board member

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Susan Beard
Former AFA board member
10 YEARS ON: OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The AFA would not have been able to flourish without our partners and supporters over the last 10 years. We would like to thank these key individuals and organisations for their generosity, continuing support and belief in our work.

- Cathay-Keris Films
- Hansfort Investment
- Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple
- Lee Foundation
- Media Development Authority
- National Archives of Singapore
- National Library Board
- National University of Singapore
- Samuel Seow Law Corporation
- Singapore Film Commission

Chew Keng Chuan
Filmmakers featured on Singapore Shorts Vol. 1 and Vol. 2
Han Minli
Perry Ho
Pitt Kuan Wah
Rajendra Gour
Ray Edmondson (Dr)
Wong Han Min

[Local and international partners and supporters that have contributed to the development of AFA.]
The first board of directors consisted of Dr. Kenneth Paul Tan (Chair), Dr. Kenneth Chan, Jacqueline Tan and Ong Sor Fern.

The AfA worked with minimal resources and a skeletal staff strength to preserve and promote the many Asian cinematic gems. Even during the challenging years of financial scarcity, the staff persevered, maintaining its core activities and a range of events that supported its mission. Everything that AfA is today could only have been possible with the staff who had and continue to work with AfA through thick and thin.

We would like to thank our passionate past and present staff, board of directors and interns.

The AfA started with one staff member – Tan Bee Thiam, its founding Executive Director.

The AfA team in 2015.

Board of Directors
Dr. Kenneth Paul Tan (Chair, 2014 - present)
Angela Wong (2014 - present)
Eric Chin (2014 - present)
Glen Goei (2014 - present)
Stanley Tan (31 March 2015 – present)

Consultants
Karen Chai (till September 2015)
Accountant
Tricor Business Outsourcing (Oct 2015 – present)
(A division of Tricor Singapore Pte Ltd)
Samuel Seow Law Corporation
Legal Consultant and Corporate Secretary

International Advisory Board
Apichatpong Weerasethakul
Filmmaker
Dr. Aruna Vasudev
President of NETPAC
(Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema)
Professor Chris Berry (PhD, UCLA)
Professor of Film Studies, King’s College London
Professor Chua Beng Huat (PhD, York)
Professor of Sociology, National University of Singapore
Professor Chua Tat Seng (PhD, Leeds)
Professor, School of Computing, National University of Singapore
Professor David Bordwell (PhD, Iowa)
Jacques Ledoux Professor of Film Studies, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Staff
Karen Chan
Executive Director
Chew Tee Pao
Archivist
Christina Mak
Operations Executive
Joshua Ng
IT & Technical Executive
Thong Kay Wee
Outreach Officer

section 7

10 YEARS ON: OUR STAFF

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Professor Howard Besser (PhD, UC Berkeley)
Director of New York University's Moving Image Archiving & Preservation Program

Hou Hsiao Hsien
Filmmaker

Professor Jan Uhde (PhD, Waterloo)
Professor of Film Studies, University of Waterloo

Dr. Kenneth Chan (PhD, Florida)
Associate Professor of Film Studies, School of English Language and Literature, University of Northern Colorado

Dr. Kenneth Paul Tan (PhD, Cambridge)
Associate Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore

Dr. Lim Song Hwee (PhD, Cambridge)
Professor of Cultural and Religious Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor Rey Chow (PhD, Stanford)
Anne Firor Scott Professor of Literature, Duke University

Dr. Ray Edmondson (PhD, Canberra)
Director, Archive Associates

Professor Trinh T. Minh-ha (PhD, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign)
Professor of Women's Studies and Rhetoric, University of California, Berkeley

Past staff and interns
Anuradha Kanwar Budhraja
Cheng Jia Yun
Daniel Koh
Davina Tham
Debra Tennent
Ethan Yeo
Gene Tan
Goh Zhi Ling
Han Minli
Jacqueline Tan
Janice Chen
Jean Hair
Jeanine Tan
Juliana Montgomery
Junaini Johari
Kevin Goh
Lim Yann Ling
Low Koon Yen
Mike Wiluan
Ong Sor Fern
Pauline Soh
Premila Joy Elangovan
Susan Beard
Tan Bee Thiam
Toh Meng Kit

Some of the staff and interns over the years.
I had the pleasure of working with the Asian Film Archive during my year as a Henry Luce Scholar in Singapore (2010-2011). I have worked in the media industry for many years and I am deeply passionate about the medium of film. Something about film archives has always fascinated me. I love that film physically cradles pieces of history. From it, the stories and images offer new dimension and broader insight with time. I attempt, in earnest, to either visit or stay abreast of the happenings of several film archives around the globe. This curiosity is truly what led me to AFA. I left a fast-paced position in the advertising industry to spend a fellowship year in a film archive because I did not think an opportunity to do so would present itself again. I am so pleased that I did.

During my time with AFA, I tremendously valued the community outreach initiatives and screenings that the Archive hosted. The AFA staff is incredibly committed to a holistic approach to film preservation. They acquire films with the intention of preserving and sharing them. The community sharing is key because the films are intended for the community to experience. The breadth of programs and resources AFA offers in addition to growing and maintaining their catalogue is remarkable. Truly remarkable! I now have a better understanding of the tremendous commitment involved with managing an archive. It requires exacting patience and a deliberate, unwavering vision. The AFA is fortunate to possess all of these ingredients.

High among the goals of the Henry Luce Scholars Program is to whet the appetite of recipients about the Asian Region. In the years that followed my time in Singapore, my interest in Asian films has grown from an inchoate appreciation to a far more intimate respect. Much of this is thanks to the access I had to view, clean (for preservation!), research, and reflect on films in AFA’s collection. The Asian Film Archive is an immensely valuable organisation within the network of film Archives around the world. I wish them many prosperous years ahead.

Juliana Montgomery  
Henry Luce Scholar (2010-2011)

I will always remember the Asian Film Archive fondly as the place where I first learnt about and developed a passion for Southeast Asian cinema. A memorable experience was when I was given the opportunity to travel to Korea and represent AFA at the 10th Seoul International Youth Film Festival, to share with the local audience about its Educators’ Workshops and screen literacy camps for students. As a result of that, I had the chance to visit another archive, the Korean Film Archive, and understand how they function in their part of the world. But what is most important to me, was really the generosity and friendship shown by its staff. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Tan Bee Thiam and Karen Chan who were the Executive Director and Head Archivist at that time. I really do not think I could have made it in film programming today without your coaching and belief in me.

Pauline Soh  
Former AFA staff and intern
10 YEARS ON: A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW CHAPTER

To mark a new era for the AFA for its 11th year and beyond, a new logo was introduced on 7 July 2016.

The new Asian Film Archive logo carries with it three circles, symbolising the three facets of its mission to “Save, Share and Explore the art of Asian Cinema”.

At the core of the logo is the triangle, emblematic of the ‘A’ embodying the “Asian” focus of the Archive. The green colour like that used in green screens, is the representation of digital filmmaking and the characterisation of a cinematic projection towards endless stories, prospects and possibilities. This projection epitomises the Archive’s aspiration towards the boundless potential of its future.

Surrounding the triangle within their protective embrace, the three circles signify the intersecting of stakeholders and communities where everyone has a stake in contributing towards and gaining from the Archive’s work. The common histories, stories, memories and a communal experience with cinema serve to bind all that come through the Asian Film Archive.

The AFA team looking forward to the future.
CorporatE Gouvernance

The Archive is governed by a board of directors who ensures that the Archive is effective in pursuing its mission and is accountable to the public.

• All board members are volunteers and are not remunerated for their Board services. They are wholly independent from the paid executive management of the Archive. Board members hold various responsibilities to review and oversee areas in audit and finance, programmes and services, fundraising and partnership, and human resource.

• The Executive Director leads the management team to execute strategies, policies and business practices. The Executive Director reports regularly to the Board about the Archive’s management, operations and finances.

• Board members or paid staff are required to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Board immediately. Board members with conflicts of interest do not vote or participate in decision making in the matter. Paid staff with conflicts of interest are required to obtain approval from the Board. All staff and Board make an annual declaration of having understood all policies, procedures, and potential conflicts of interest between staff and the Archive.

• Board meetings are held quarterly to review the Archive’s performance and approve strategic work plans. The Chair convenes optional meetings when necessary, to discuss matters that require the Board’s deliberation.

• To promote transparency and to be publicly accountable, the Archive makes available an annual report in print and on its website, with disclosure on its financial accounts.

• The Archive adopts a set of internal guidelines that layout financial authorisation and approval limits for financial commitment. The Board ensures that the internal reviews on controls, procedures and key programmes are adhered to.
Providing access to the collection, generating well curated screenings and education programmes that meet the needs and demands of its users and researchers, remain a top priority.

Purposeful partnerships with national and international organisations will be established and maintained to promote Asian cinema and to advance the archiving profession. Acquisitions will be explored and negotiated to increase the collection for public use and research. Following the restoration of Singaporean classics like The Lion City and Mee Pok Man, the AFA will continue to implement film restoration projects from its collection.

To meet the growing collection and expanding range of programmes, the AFA has plans to develop its executive team, while providing training to cultivate the expertise required to run the Archive effectively.

The AFA is keenly aware of the important roles that the different stakeholders play in building the strength of this institution. We will therefore continue to actively engage our board members, staff, volunteers, partners and donors.

The Archive regards its role as custodian to Asia’s rich film heritage seriously and will strive towards managing its collection responsibly.
In keeping with standard practices amongst archives, the Asian Film Archive does not capitalise its collections. It does not have an endowment fund and the only investment income is from interest.

The summaries presented herein are the Archive’s financial position and performance as of 31 March 2016. The financial statements were audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Public Accountants and Certified Public Accountant Singapore.

### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Assets</th>
<th>Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash &amp; cash equivalents $374,468</td>
<td>Net assets $269,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories $13,674</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade &amp; other receivables $32,309</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Non-current Assets

| Plant & equipment $218,502 |

### Total Assets $638,953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Liabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade and other payables $344,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan from holding entity $25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Funds and Liabilities $638,953

---

**March 31 2016**
### Financial Information

**Incoming Receipts 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2014 (S$'000)</th>
<th>2015 (S$'000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants / Sponsorships</td>
<td>671.1</td>
<td>1,139.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment gains</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>1,201.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>690.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,341</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Donations 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2014 (S$'000)</th>
<th>2015 (S$'000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax exempt</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non tax exempt</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Receipts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 (S$'000)</th>
<th>2015 (S$'000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>691.8</td>
<td>2,344.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2014 (S$'000)</th>
<th>2015 (S$'000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct charitable expenses</td>
<td>331.0</td>
<td>1,569.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating / Administration expenses</td>
<td>326.1</td>
<td>548.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital expenses</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>657.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,117.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Balance Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2014 (S$'000)</th>
<th>2015 (S$'000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Building</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Equipment</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories / Stocks</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and Other Receivables</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Deposits</td>
<td>278.7</td>
<td>374.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>314.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>639.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>269.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Fund</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Fund</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Funds</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funds</strong></td>
<td><strong>44.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>269.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Funds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>269.9</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2014 (S$'000)</th>
<th>2015 (S$'000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations/Grants and sponsorship given to other charities (S$'000)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Employees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Employees in remuneration bands above S$100,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each acquisition, preservation, restoration, film programme, presentation, exhibition, workshop and talk would not have been possible without our donors and supporters for the financial year ended 31 Mar 2016. We thank them sincerely for their generosity.

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Perry Ho

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Greenlight Pictures
Hong Kong Film Archive
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Koufu
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Micrographics Data Pte Ltd
National Archives of Singapore
National Arts Council
National Heritage Board
National Library Board
National Museum of Singapore
National Parks Board
NEC Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
Public Utilities Board
Samuel Seow Law Corporation
Shaw Organisation
Sheng Siong Supermarket
Sinematek Indonesia
Singapore Airlines Limited
Singapore Film Commission
Singapore Film Locations Archive
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Woo Ming Jin

Saravenan Tanapal
Shan
Shan

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Every acquisition, preservation, restoration, film programme and presentation requires financial support. Without the generous support of donors and sponsors, our work would not have been possible.

As the Archive is a charity and an Institution of Public Character (IPC), cash donations in Singapore entitle donors to receive tax deductions.

If you would like to make a gift to the Archive in support of its work, you can do so by:

- cheque made payable to Asian Film Archive
- online donation via the giving.sg/asianfilmarchive portal managed by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre