

The Sunday Times says

Worth thinking about an arts university

Singapore has come a long way from the time when parents would insist their children earn degrees only in law, business or the sciences. Arty alternatives such as the Lasalle College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Nafa) have seen increasing student intakes as the arts scene grows. The founding of the School of the Arts, as well as Lasalle and Nafa offering degree courses in collaboration with institutions such as Goldsmiths, University of London and the Royal Col-

lege of Music, helped fill the arts gaps in the education system. The time may be ripe for Singapore to have its own fully fledged university for the arts, as Nominated MP Terence Ho suggested in Parliament last week. The suggestion has merits beyond the usual Singaporean instinct for the paper chase.

While there are about 30 undergraduate courses available here, they could be brought together in one university instead of spread across various institutions. This could alleviate resource con-

cerns – consolidating student intake and investment in infrastructure and human resources. Having arts studies in one university could also encourage multi-disciplinary cooperation across more sectors. Lasalle's students already do so across the schools of film, acting, and art on their projects. Such possibilities could expand with an arts university, enriching students' learning experiences. Universities are also centres of research.

Singapore, with its history as a cultural melting

pot, could become a thought leader in the arts if there is an institution to integrate research efforts. Lasalle was the first in the world to offer an MA in Asian Art Histories. Such Asian-centric scholarship could be a unique selling point for an arts university. Research into Singapore's own youthful art history is also a gap that needs to be plugged if the scene is to grow. The value in having such a university is that it would be a recognition of, and an investment in, the power of the arts.

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