

MEDIA RELEASE

LASALLE College of the Arts partners with Ong Shunmugam to support next generation of fashion creatives through bursary and mentorship programme

The partnership is launched in conjunction with Ong Shunmugam's 10th anniversary

Singapore, 29 September 2021

LASALLE College of the Arts and Ong Shunmugam have announced the launch of the Fashion Forward Bursary and LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Mentorship Programme, a first-of-its-kind initiative to support the next generation of fashion creatives in Singapore.

The Fashion Forward Bursary has been kickstarted by Priscilla Shunmugam, founder of Ong Shunmugam, in aid of talented and financially challenged students who otherwise may not be able to pursue their passion in fashion. The bursary will be awarded annually to two Diploma students or one BA(Hons) student from LASALLE's School of Fashion.

It is complemented by the LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Mentorship Programme, which is envisioned as a comprehensive programme to provide sustained, holistic support towards the personal and professional development of LASALLE's School of Fashion students. The LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Mentorship Programme comprises an industry-led project and a dedicated mentorship for final year students.

In the industry-led project, students from BA(Hons) Fashion Design & Textiles and BA(Hons) Fashion Media and Industries collaborate with Ong Shunmugam to design a capsule collection *LASALLE x OM Ed*, while the mentorship includes critique sessions and project consultations with Ong Shunmugam to share best practices, intellectual property rights, business knowledge and entrepreneurial guidance as students prepare to graduate and enter the workforce.

For Priscilla Shunmugam, the launch of the mentorship programme and bursary is her chosen way to commemorate the brand's ten years in the fashion industry. Priscilla first reached out to LASALLE in October 2020 to discuss the idea, after the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a temporary relocation back to Singapore as well as the cancellation of travel for the foreseeable future.

“My tertiary education was only made possible because I was the recipient of various forms of financial aid that weren’t necessarily tied to academic excellence—a tuition grant from the Ministry of Education, an interest-free tuition loan from DBS Bank, a loan to purchase a laptop in my first year of university and even a cheque from a family friend, for the purpose of purchasing textbooks. My years in law school changed my life and I always knew that one day, when the business was in a good place, we would do the same thing for young adults on the cusp of carving out a future for themselves,” said Priscilla.

“Over the past decade, LASALLE is an institution I’ve maintained a strong connection with, whether through engagements with the students or members of the faculty. We keep coming back to each other for reasons that always put the interest of students first. So it was a natural fit for me to initiate this bursary and mentorship programme with LASALLE’s School of Fashion, and I hope to give back in a targeted, multifaceted way that will really match my available resources and experience to this next generation of fashion graduates,” she elaborated.

Circe Henestrosa, Head of LASALLE’s School of Fashion, said: “We have always enjoyed great rapport and collaboration with industry in the School of Fashion, so for us, this comprehensive bursary and mentorship programme really takes it to the next level in terms of capacity building. Ong Shunmugam’s vision to foreground contemporary Asian aesthetics in dialogue with traditions and craftsmanship fits perfectly with what we do, and Priscilla’s experience will be invaluable in guiding students as they prepare to embark on their own careers.”

“With the launch of this first-of-its-kind partnership for us, it is our hope that other potential mentors will eventually come on board as well. We would love to expand the programme to include more local designers who are inspired to give back to the next generation,” Circe added.

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Annexes

Annex A: Details of the LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Fashion Forward Bursary and Mentorship Programme

About LASALLE College of the Arts

Asia's leading contemporary arts and design institution.

LASALLE College of the Arts offers 30 diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in fine arts, design communication, interior design, product design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, arts pedagogy and practice, art therapy, Asian art histories and creative writing.

LASALLE provides a nurturing, interdisciplinary learning environment to inspire the next generation of forward-looking, globally engaged artists, designers and leaders of creative industries.

Its faculty is led by a community of award-winning artists, designers, educators and researchers, and their practice-led research sets LASALLE apart as an international centre of excellence. LASALLE is ranked within the top 151-200 institutions globally for art and design (QS World University Rankings 2021).

Founded in 1984 by the late De La Salle Brother Joseph McNally – a visionary artist and educator – LASALLE is a non-profit private educational institution, with degree programmes validated by Goldsmiths, University of London. The College receives tuition grant support from Singapore's Ministry of Education. It is set to become part of Singapore's new university of the arts, which is currently under development.

About Ong Shunmugam

Ong Shunmugam is a contemporary fashion brand headquartered in Singapore.

Layers of Asian aesthetic, iconography and symbolism inform the label's new take on old ways and its mission to engage the modern mind in dialogue about origin and identity.

Designed and made across Arita, Guangzhou, London, Yogyakarta and Singapore, our studios rework familiar influences; weaving traditional techniques, materials and silhouettes into the postmodern world.

The Ong Shunmugam design vocabulary is scaffolded by inclusivity over diversity, clarity to sift through the cliches and authorship as a fundamental operating principle.

Annex A: Details of the Fashion Forward Bursary and LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Mentorship Programme

Fashion Forward Bursary

The Fashion Forward Bursary has been kickstarted by Priscilla Shunmugam of Ong Shunmugam, to inspire other donors to come forward to support financially needy students to complete their studies in fashion at LASALLE.

Ong Shunmugam has pledged a total donation of \$30,000, disbursed as \$10,000 per academic year from 2022 to 2024 toward the establishment of this Bursary.

The bursary is specially designed for talented and financially challenged students who otherwise may not be able to pursue their passion in fashion. Applicants must have been offered a place in a full-time programme in LASALLE's Diploma or BA(Hons) Fashion programme, be of good conduct and have satisfactory academic performance.

A total of two Diploma or one BA(Hons) bursary will be given to eligible student(s) for each academic year from AY2021/22 to AY2023/24. The value of each bursary is \$5,000 for one Diploma student or \$10,000 for a BA(Hons) student.

LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Mentorship Programme

The purpose of the Mentorship Programme is to develop students holistically through a support network of esteemed professionals and partners from within the industries.

The programme provides a platform for mentees to realise their potential by enabling personal and professional relationships with mentors. It offers opportunities to develop business contacts, access industry information, and gain valuable insights from experienced and successful professionals. Through the programme, students will gain exposure to the realities of professional life, while building a greater understanding of the creative sectors.

The LASALLE x Ong Shunmugam Mentorship Programme comprises an industry-led project and a dedicated mentorship with Ong Shunmugam, open to final year BA(Hons) Fashion Design and Textiles and BA(Hons) Fashion Media and Industries students in LASALLE's School of Fashion.

Industry-led project

The industry-led project offers students the opportunity to collaborate with Ong Shunmugam on a capsule collection as part of OM Ed. OM Ed is a series of capsule collections that explore the relationship between fashion and art. What runs through all collections is the guest starring of a Southeast Asian artist—with the goal to profile their talent and celebrate their particular style, eye and handwork.

LASALLE x OM Ed is the third edition of OM Ed, and is embedded into the curriculum of final year BA(Hons) Fashion Design and Textiles and BA(Hons) Fashion Media and Industries students. Students came up with a proposal including five prints and accompanying silhouettes to show these off, as well as the marketing campaign, comprising a concept and narrative for a fashion film of 59 seconds.

The project is currently underway, with several designs shortlisted by a panel comprising Priscilla Shunmugam and faculty from LASALLE's School of Fashion. The capsule collection is slated for launch in early 2022.

Mentorship

The dedicated mentorship component will run from September 2021 to March 2022. It includes critique sessions and student project consultations with Ong Shumugam to share best practices, intellectual property rights, business knowledge and entrepreneurial guidance to prepare students for their summative assessments, as well as entering the workforce and the fashion industry upon graduation.