



Mobility First! Results (2nd cycle)

15 April 2019
Singapore

Culture is of the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#)'s priority areas and **Mobility First!** – our travel grant for artists and cultural professionals - is one of our flagship projects. As the main project in our Culture portfolio that supports the mutual cultural practice of artists and cultural professionals, eligible arts practitioners from Asia and Europe are invited to apply to our periodic competitive open calls either through an individual application or an organisation application. International travel support is then granted to selected applications for participation in a wide range of cultural activities including residencies, festivals, workshops, research trips, conferences, networking and partnership meetings.

2019 marks the third year of **Mobility First!** For this 2nd cycle, we have received a total of 233 applications from 37 countries in Asia and Europe, comprised of 130 individual applications, and 33 applications from arts organisations on behalf of 103 arts practitioners. From this pool, we have selected to support a total of 24 artists and cultural professionals who are travelling to 8 countries in Asia and Europe.

These applicants were selected as their applications more closely fulfil **Mobility First!**'s focus areas of knowledge exchange/skills transfer, local development, innovation (including the intersection of art with other sectors), and the role of art in society.

Based on the applications received for the 2nd cycle of **Mobility First!**, we have highlighted some key observations and trends that might of interest to those working in the cultural sector and for future applicants:

- For this cycle, most applications received were for participation in conferences and arts festivals. This indicates that there is high interest amongst cultural professionals to engage in a reciprocal exchange of knowledge with their peers from different contexts. Also, there is strong interest to showcase artworks and performances from abroad, and to new audiences.
- However, we also noted a number of applications that did not show a reciprocal multiplier effect, where it was not very clear how the applicant would share the knowledge and



experience he/she will have gained from his/her travel. For **Mobility First!**, we are always looking to support applications that show that the benefits gained from mobility remain not within themselves, but are shared with their communities; this way, a sustained multiplier effect exists: immediately when the artist visits his destination, and in the long-term when he or she brings back the knowledge and experience he has gained from travel back home and shares this with his community.

- We have also noted that in this cycle, there are a handful of applications from non-artists and professionals from outside the cultural sector. While this could be a good sign that **Mobility First!** is gaining awareness outside the field of arts, it remains a grant for artists and cultural professionals in Asia and Europe.
- Several applications have prioritised the intersection between arts and education. 2 organisation applications are selected in which training/workshops are organised, and where travel support would be given to the trainers/educators of the event. **Mobility First!** does not only support participants who would benefit from upskilling opportunities, but also the providers of knowledge. In addition to being a tool for professional development, trainings/workshops are also increasingly a platform used to discuss and delve into complex societal issues.
- Some applications also enable 'unusual' Asia-Europe collaborations that do not spring from past colonial histories e.g. France and Kazakhstan, Germany and Singapore. It is also the goal of **Mobility First!** to foster new alliances between arts communities in different countries.

Selected applications from individuals

	NAME	NATIONALITY	ACTIVITY	MOBILITY ROUTE
1	Simon Zara	France	Artist residency	Strasbourg, France to Almaty, Kazakhstan
2	Ana Wojak	Australia	Batengan Festival Java	Gold Coast, Australia to Batu, East Java, Indonesia
3	Alisa Berger	Germany	Nakanojo arts residency and biennale	Cologne, Germany to Nakanojo, Japan
4	Chung Shih Hoh	Singapore	Short-term exploration/networking trip of new music	Singapore to Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Cologne, Lübeck



			communities in Germany	
5	Fan Chon Hoo	Malaysia	Makassar Biennale 2019	Penang, Malaysia to Makassar, Indonesia
6	Janie Gibson	Australia	IETM Campus Eleusis 2019	Melbourne, Australia to Eleusis, Greece

Remarks from the selection committee:

1) Simon Zara (France)

Mobility route: Europe to Asia

Simon will be travelling from Strasbourg, France to Almaty, Kazakhstan for an artist residency, which would facilitate his collaboration with a local independent curator. The collaborative residency aims to investigate Almaty’s urban space and their role in the city’s historical and cultural context, through photography as a medium.

The application exemplifies an instance of a collaborative residency, where the exploration and the making of an art work is conceptualised through a deep engagement with both the local artistic community and its audiences. With strong community involvement and in-depth cultural exchange, this collaborative residency could potentially be a first step in establishing an informal and independent exchange programme between Europe and Central Asia.

2) Ana Wojak (Australia)

Mobility route: Intra-Asia

Ana will be travelling from Gold Coast, Australia to Batu, East Java, Indonesia to attend the Bantengan Festival Java. Held annually, the festival focuses on Javanese spiritual traditions and the ancient practice of Bentangen, Bull Trance, with the bull being a symbol of the lower-class people.

The applicant is transitioning from a senior award-winning visual artist to an emerging performance/dance maker and the commitment to delve into another art form, despite her age, is commendable. The applicant would benefit from her participation in the festival as it would further develop her artistic growth and practice as a performance/dance maker. It is an application demonstrating skills and capability development.



Furthermore, Bantengan has traditionally been a male dominated field, with the applicant's participation, it complements **Mobility First!'s** priorities to empower women and achieve gender equality.

3) **Alisa Berger (Germany)**

Mobility route: Europe to Asia

Alisa will be travelling from Cologne, Germany to Nakanajo, Japan for the Nakanajo Biennale/Residency. 2019 will mark the 7th edition of the Nakanajo Biennale and every year, more than 130 innovative international artists from multiple artistic disciplines will work alongside local residents to create an international art festival in Nakanajo, Gunma prefecture.

This applicant is being invited to create a multimedia performance project and experimental film/video-piece dedicated to Japanese Butoh dance at the Biennale. The work will be a collaboration between the applicant, who is German, and several Japanese and Russian dancers and choreographers. This is a commendable application as the applicant would not only be engaging with the local community and the city and but also responding to the geography, politics, people and social context of the city.

4) **Chung Shih Hoh (Singapore)**

Mobility route: Asia to Europe

Shih Hoh will be travelling from Singapore to several major cities in Germany (Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Cologne, Lübeck) for a short-term exploration/networking trip to study and understand the ecology of new music communities in Germany, in terms of their audiences, funding system and development over the years.

As the President of the Composers Society of Singapore, the applicant's visit to Germany would enable him to deepen the development of Singapore contemporary new music ecology in terms of technology, skills and in new music production. The project could potentially be valuable as the findings obtained during the trip would be transferred to others beyond Singapore upon his return and could even form the basis for building ties between Germany and Singapore's new music scenes.

5) **Fan Chon Hoo (Malaysia)**

Mobility route: Intra-Asia

Chon Hoo will be travelling from George Town, Penang, Malaysia to Makassar, Indonesia to participate in the Makassar Biennale 2019. In its 3rd edition, the Makassar Biennale explores the theme of maritime culture and migration and will feature an artist residency



on site during the Biennale.

Being the applicant’s first participation in a large-scale biennale, it provides him with the much-needed international exposure required for his artistic practice. In addition, the onsite artist residency would enable the applicant to get first-hand exposure and immersion in the Makassar art community. The effort of the biennale to have artists respond to not only the geography of the city but that of its politics, people and social, is a worthy mention as well as it signals a progressive way for biennales to think and have resonance.

6) Janie Gibson (Australia)

Mobility route: Asia to Europe

Janie will be travelling from Melbourne, Australia to Eleusis, Greece to attend the IETM Campus Eleusis 2019. IETM Campus is a training and platform for a group of 20 to 25 international performing arts professionals, to start internationalising their careers on the global stage whilst being guided by the key players in the international performing arts field.

The application is appropriate at this juncture of the applicant’s practice as a theatre-maker, as she is in the initial stages of pursuing international opportunities to develop and present her work. Attending the IETM Campus thus be beneficial as it will expand her networks and foster new connections that would benefit her practice for future international cooperation opportunities.

Selected applications from organisations

	NAME OF ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	COUNTRY WHERE ACTIVITY IS HELD	SUPPORTED ARTISTS OR CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS
7-11	New Theatre Institute of Latvia	"Japan Focus" at the International Festival of Contemporary	Riga, Latvia	Saki Tanaka (Japan); Akira Takayama (Japan); Tetsuya Umeda (Japan); Keigo Mikajiri (Japan); Takuya Matsumi (Japan)



		Theatre Homo Novus 2019		
12-13	Southeast Asia Fiction Film Lab (SEAFIC)	SEAFIC Lab: Session #2	Chiang Mai, Thailand	Franz Rodenkirchen (Germany); Youngjeong Oh (Korea)
14-17	Blind Signal	Blind Signal VTNM - GRMN	Berlin, Germany	Hue Trinh Luong (Viet Nam); Nguyen Thi Thu Huong Nghe danh (Viet Nam); Linh Ha Bui (Viet Nam), Nguyen Le Thuy Linh (Viet Nam)
18-20	Bellas Artes Projects Foundation	ESKWELA: Art Educational Programme	Makati, Philippines	Monica Narula (India); Jeebesh Bagchi (India); Shuddhabrata Sengupta (India)
21-24	Society "Party"/Time to Dance	Time to Dance/"Laiks Dejot 2019", International Contemporary Dance Festival	Riga, Latvia	Xiao Ke (China); Zi Han Zhou (China); Stéphane Noël (Switzerland); Eko Supriyanto (Indonesia)

Remarks from the selection committee:

- 1) **"Japan Focus" at the International Festival of Contemporary Theatre Homo Novus 2019**
The International Festival of Contemporary Theatre Homo Novus is known for promoting contemporary performing arts, humanist values and critical thinking among Latvian artists and audiences alike. "Japan Focus" is one of the central programmes of the festival in 2019, where Japanese artists/collectives are invited to collaborate with Latvian artists to co-develop new works based on Riga's historical, social and cultural contexts.

This application consists of multiple layers of collaboration and knowledge exchange. The first layer of collaboration is between the Japanese artists, the Latvian artists, choreographers, writers and researchers during the creative process. Secondly, the Japanese artists would also experience being immersed in Latvian environment, being exposed to Riga's history, culture, social and physical geography. Thirdly, there is an additional layer of cultural and knowledge exchange between the artists and the festival audiences.



2) SEAFIC Lab: Session #2

The Southeast Asia Fiction Film Lab (SEAFIC) Lab: Session #2 is a script development lab created for Southeast Asian filmmakers, with the purpose of strengthening the quality of feature-length fiction films in the region.

As a pioneering non-profit script development lab created for Southeast Asian filmmakers, this project involves elements of mentorship and transfer of skills between veteran and amateur script writers. Such guidance is important as a form of support for young film-makers, who would otherwise not have access to such training opportunities. This application strongly echoes **Mobility First!'s** focus area of skills transfer/knowledge exchange.

3) Blind Signal VTNM – GRMN

Blind Signal VTNM – GRMN aims to investigate the diversity of sonic practice through an artist exchange and collaboration between sound artists from Viet Nam and Germany.

This application is worthy of support because it creates an artistic exchange between and in two different cities, allowing the respective collaborators from both cities to experience the other. As such, this application includes aspects of two-way skills transfer; sharing of new knowledge; and could potentially help form long-term collaborations between Germany and Viet Nam. In addition, the project is also a good opportunity for under 35-year-old female sonic artists, since such opportunities are rare in Viet Nam.

4) ESKWELA: Art Educational Programme

This is a conference/workshop launched by Bellas Artes Projects in May 2019, where cultural professionals from various fields lead an alternative approach to arts education, incorporating different subjects with contemporary art such as history and politics.

With ESKWELA, an alternative format of learning and teaching is proposed, where participants navigate, debate and share their knowledge and content, presenting an innovative yet high quality approach to art education and transmission. The organisation is rethinking how 'education' is delivered; whilst focusing on empowering attendees to utilise knowledge shared within ESKWELA and to further share these learnings within their own unique communities.

5) Time to Dance/ “Laiks Dejot 2019”, International Contemporary Dance Festival

The festival “Laiks Dejot 2019” (Time to Dance) is an annual contemporary dance festival in Riga, Latvia. The theme of this year’s festival is “New Asian Dance” and will gather artists



from countries such as Indonesia, China, Singapore, South Korea etc. to collaborate with the Latvian contemporary dance community.

The project is recommended firstly because of its unique collaboration between the Latvian contemporary dance community and two major dancers from China. Secondly, this project is a continuation of a previous partnership and collaboration between the organisation and the artists in and this festival would further reinforce the fruitful collaboration which started in 2015.

The **Mobility First!** Selection Committee is comprised of 2 independent experts from Asia and Europe and ASEF.

Mobility First! Selection Committee

Independent experts

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For more information, please visit: www.ASEF.live/mobilityfirst2019
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