Singapore
22 Oct - 1 Nov 2023

ASIA-EUROPE CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Singapore
22 Oct - 1 Nov 2023
Esteemed guests and cultural enthusiasts,

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is a not-for-profit intergovernmental organisation established in 1997 by 51 countries of Asia and Europe, ASEAN and EU, to promote exchanges between the 2 regions. ASEF is based in Singapore and develops intellectual, cultural and people to people exchange programmes.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the 5th edition of the Asia-Europe Cultural Festival. The Festival will be held for the first time in Singapore from the 22nd of October to the 1st of November, with the support of the European Union.

Since 2018, the Asia-Europe Cultural Festival has showcased the rich tapestry of cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe, celebrating artistic collaborations, fostering dialogue, and igniting connections between two continents known for their diversity and creativity.

In a world where boundaries continue to exist despite technological advancements, the Festival emerges as a beacon of artistic unity, transcending geographies and language barriers to bring Asia and Europe closer.

Through a diverse programme of dance, film, theatre, photography, and music, we invite you to embark on a journey that explores the immense artistic talents from Cambodia, Estonia, France, Italy, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore, amongst others.

As we present this festival, we are proud to introduce an exciting companion event, ASEF LinkUp | Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab. This three-day gathering will connect curators, arts managers and artists with diplomats and cultural attachés based in Singapore and the ASEAN region. The Lab aims to create a dynamic space where minds and ideas converge, nurturing encounters, fostering capacity building, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge in cultural diplomacy.

As we embark on this extraordinary journey of cultural exploration and exchanges, we invite you to immerse yourself in the diverse programme of the Asia-Europe Cultural Festival 2023. Together, we will celebrate the vibrant tapestry of human creativity, inspire dialogue, and forge connections that transcend borders.

Join us in this remarkable celebration of the arts, as we unite Asia and Europe on a shared stage, right here in the heart of Singapore.

With warmest regards,

Ambassador MORIKAWA Toru
Executive Director
Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
EVENTS CALENDAR

FILM/DANCE

THE PERFECT MOTION AND PREAH THONG DANCE
BY XAVIER DE LAUZANNE AND PRINCESS BUPPHA DEVI DANCE SCHOOL

Sunday, 22 October 2023
(Film screening followed by Preah Thong Dance performance)

Sunday, 29 October 2023
(Film screening)

4 pm

Asian Civilisations Museum, Ngee Ann Auditorium
B1, 1 Empress Pl, Singapore 179555

THE GOLDEN TEMPLE
BY TEET KASK

Sunday, 22 October 2023
8 pm

School of the Arts (SOTA), Studio Theatre
L3, 1 Zubir Said Dr, Singapore 227968

THEATRE/MULTIDISCIPLINARY

DANCE

X
BY OLIMPIA FORTUNI AND KATATONIC SILENTIO

Friday, 27 October 2023
8 pm

Asian Civilisations Museum, River Terrace
L2, 1 Empress Pl, Singapore 179555

ASEF LINKUP: ASIA-EUROPE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY LAB PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, 1 November 2023
5 pm

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), Conference Room
L3, 31 Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Singapore 119595

Live stream on ASEF’s YouTube channel and ASEF Culture360 Facebook page

X FRAMING THE FUTURE
DANCE ROUNDTABLE AND DIGITAL EXHIBITION
BY OLIMPIA FORTUNI
PHOTOGRAPHY’S IMPACT ON CLIMATE AWARENESS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Get tickets

27 October 2023
5 pm (By invitation only)

Asian Civilisations Museum, River Room
L2, 1 Empress Pl, Singapore 179555
Celebrating since 2018, cultural collaborations between arts communities in Asia and Europe.

The Asia-Europe Cultural Festival is a public arts festival that celebrates the artistic diversity of Asia and Europe and promotes the dialogue and exchange amongst artists from the two regions. In 2023, the Festival will be held for the first time in Singapore from 22 October to 1 November. This year’s Festival will allow audiences in Singapore to experience a variety of events spanning dance, film, photography and music by artists from Italy, Malaysia, Cambodia, France, Estonia, Japan and Singapore amongst others.

The Festival programme will be presented alongside the newly launched ASEF LinkUp | Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab, a 3-day event that connects curators, arts managers and artists with diplomats and cultural attachés based in Singapore and the ASEAN region. The Lab aims to create new spaces for encounters and capacity building, where various agents involved in cultural diplomacy can meet and share knowledge.

The Festival will open on 22 October with the Singapore première of the documentary film, The Perfect Motion, by French filmmaker Xavier de Lauzanne. The film tracks the creation of a production by Cambodia’s royal dancers called “Metamorphosis”, under the direction of Princess Buppha Devi, and the history of the Royal Ballet since 1906. The screening will be followed by a live performance by Princess Buppha Devi Dance School and a Q&A session with its Director, HRH Prince Sisowath Tesso and the filmmaker.
On the opening night, with the support of the Embassy of Estonia in Singapore, renowned Estonian director Teet Kask will present the theatre performance *The Golden Temple*. Inspired by Yukio Mishima’s novel “The Temple of the Golden Pavilion”, this piece is an ode to the undefined depth of the human condition. The original music score is performed live by a cello player and a singer who become the protagonists of the tale, together with two movement artists from Estonia and Japan. For the re-staging of the performance in Singapore, the director has collaborated with Singapore-based cello player Robert Choi.

On 27 October, with the support of the Embassy of Italy in Singapore, the Festival will present the dance performance *X* by Italian choreographer Olimpia Fortuni and sound artist Katatonic Silentio, and Malaysian dancer and choreographer January Low. This performance attempts to create a bridge and share a journey, nourished by Asian shamanic traditions and Western archetypal symbols. The dance performance is a collaboration between 3 artists, showcasing the importance of artistic exchange and cultural diversity.

The Festival will culminate on 1 November at 5pm with a roundtable discussion, titled *Framing the Future: Photography’s Impact on Climate Awareness in Southeast Asia*. Bringing together photographers, journalists and scientists, this conversation will delve into the role of photography in shaping the narrative of climate change awareness in Southeast Asia. This event is presented in collaboration with the Embassy of the Netherlands in Viet Nam and the NOOR Foundation.
THE PERFECT MOTION
AND PREEAH THONG DANCE
CAMBODIA FRANCE

The Perfect Motion film follows the creation of a show called “Metamorphosis” and the history of the Royal Ballet since 1906, when French sculptor Rodin tried to capture, through his drawings, the essence of this art he had just discovered.

From 1906 to the present day, from Auguste Rodin’s sketches to the creation of a new show for a French tour, from the glory hours to the darkest days, Cambodia’s Royal Ballet has survived and upheld its unique body language.

The opening screening on 22 October will be followed by Preah Thong Dance, a traditional Cambodian dance performance and a post-show talk with Xavier de Lauzanne (filmmaker) and HRH Prince Sisowath Tesso (Director - Princess Buppha Devi Dance School)

Director: Xavier de Lauzanne
Writers: Xavier de Lauzanne and Pierre Kogan
Producers: François-Hugues de Vaumas and Sophie Parrault
Production Company: Aloest Films and Bonne Pioche Télévision
With support of: HRH Prince Sisowath Tesso and the Princess Buppha Devi Dance School, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The odyssey of a millenary art, the symbol of a restored identity.

Alternating between past and present, we see the ballet’s movements and postures take us to a world of mystery and splendour, gradually becoming the key to reconstructing national identity and a source of fascination for international audiences.

Get tickets

Asia-Europe Cultural Festival 2023
XAVIER DE LAUZANNE


PRINCESS BUPPHA DEVI DANCE SCHOOL

Renowned for its graceful hand gestures and stunning costumes, the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, also known as Khmer Classical Dance, has been closely associated with the Khmer court for over one thousand years. Performances would traditionally accompany royal ceremonies and observances such as coronations, marriages, funerals or Khmer holidays. This art form, which narrowly escaped annihilation in the 1970s, is cherished by many Cambodians.

HRH Prince Sisowath Tesso is the great-great-grandson of King Sisowath. Although he grew up in Paris, his family placed great emphasis on the passing on of traditional culture. Hence, all family members were thought traditional dance and music. He cultivated a love for the royal court dance and he is the current Director of the Princess Buppha Devi Dance School.
The Golden Temple is a performance about Beauty. Beauty as a mutual intrusion between the desiring subject and the object of desire. Beauty as a mean to further the greater spiritual drives of life.

The Golden Temple is a multidisciplinary theatre show that premiered in 2020 in Tallinn (Estonia), inspired by a novel of Yukio Mishima titled “The Temple of the Golden Pavilion”. The tale by the world-renowned Japanese novelist is based on the incident of the fire at the Kinkaku-ji Tempel in Kyoto and follows the curious relationship between a young monk and the Golden Temple. The temple with all its beauty conquers the young boy’s mind, changes it, manipulates with it. In a state of confusion, the young monk is left with no choice but to destroy the source of the beauty in order to be set free.

The tale is transported and transfigured on stage thanks to an exemplary use of several art forms, from movement to video art, from electronic music to classical music and singing. To follow the emotional narrative and delve into the charm of both beauty and repulsiveness of the ugly, the Estonian director Teet Kask has created an astonishing group of artists including classically trained dancers Anita Kurõljova and Kyoshiro Oshima (Japan), video artist Taavi Miisu Varm, and singer Anna Pärnoja. Estonian composers Timo Steiner and Sander Molder also teamed up to create the original music that oscillates between serene meditative cello melodies, lush harmonies and oversaturated noise.

The performance in Singapore is also enriched by the collaboration with international concert cellist Robert Choi, who will play live on stage throughout the show.

Teet Kask’s production will transport the audience into a philosophical journey at the intersection of beauty, destruction and erotic drive.

Get tickets

Read more about THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

**THE GOLDEN TEMPLE**
**ESTONIA JAPAN SINGAPORE**

Multidisciplinary theatre performance (duration: 60m)

Sunday, 22 October 2023, 8 pm

School of The Arts, (SOTA) Studio Theatre

**Director and choreographer:** Teet Kask  
**Music composers:** Timo Steiner, Sander Mölder  
**Performers:** Kyoshiro Oshima, Anita Kurõljova  
**Singer:** Anna Pärnoja  
**Cellist:** Robert Choi  
**Set designer:** Úlar Mark  
**Light designer:** Margus Vaigur  
**Video artist:** Taavi Misu Varm  
**Production:** *birdname  
**Producer:** Tiiu Tamm

**With the support of:** Embassy of Estonia in Singapore and Ministry of Culture of Estonia

There will be a post-show talk with the artists.
THE GOLDEN TEMPLE ARTISTS

ESTONIA
TEET KASK
whose most recent productions include Louis XIV – The Sun King at Estonian National Ballet, Anna Karenina and Swan Lake at Balletto di Milano, is a choreographer and theatre director of international recognition. He has worked at Estonian National Opera, Royal Swedish Ballet, Norwegian National Opera and Ballet and Tbilisi State Opera and Ballet. Kask’s oeuvre consists of more than fifty performances.

ESTONIA
SANDER MÖLDER
is a multifaceted composer, music producer and a DJ. Having started as a classically trained cellist, his compositions are a mix of contemporary electronic soundscapes and classical music. As a musician and a DJ he has toured and played on several stages around the world including the Royal Albert Hall in London, Primavera Festival in Spain and Open’er festival in Poland.

ESTONIA
TIMO STEINER
is a composer with an open mind whose music is characterised by playful stylistic contrasts, variant development and a mosaic-like or block-based structure. His pieces have been played in the United States, Germany and Russia.

JAPAN
KYOSHIRO OSHIMA
was born in Fukuoka, Japan. He studied classical ballet with Kinue Ishii and Rafael Abnikyani. He studied at the Kirov Ballet Academy in the United States and graduated from the Basel Ballet School in Switzerland. After returning to Japan, he launched a planning organization SnC to spread the appeal of contemporary dance. Currently, he works as a choreographer as well as a dancer and lecturer.

ESTONIA
ANITA KURÕLJOVA
graduated from Tallinn Ballet School. She continued her studies at the Academy of Contemporary Dance in Budapest, where she studied more deeply the physical side of contemporary dance. She is looking to achieve an original movement language, to search for a performative side, and to bring out the human (sometimes also animal) sides. Nowadays, Anita is a respected dancer and teacher at MUBA (Tallinn Collage of Music and Ballet).

ESTONIA
ANNA PÄRNOJA
Tallinn based singer-songwriter Anna Kaneelina reveals her thoughts and tales from her self titled debut album. Her fragile power mixed with honest and shy I’m-ready-to-shine energy makes her and her music both raw and ripe at the same time. Anna Kaneelina is not afraid of sharing her inner world – charming with her vulnerability and deep unworldly wildness. Ethereal pop with toxic Effects.

USA • KOREA • SINGAPORE
ROBERT CHOI
was born in Chicago to a music-loving family of Korean origin. He began studying music at the age of three. Through his studies at the Eastman School of Music and the Mozarteum Salzburg, he developed an ease of expression and a pureness and depth of tone that has brought him numerous performances in Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, North America, South Africa and throughout Europe.

Continued from the previous page.
Robert has been based in Singapore since 2005, when he was hired by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. He was also a member of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra in Kuala Lumpur and have performed with many individuals and groups locally, most recently as lead and principal cello with The Straits Baroque Soloists and Singapore Lyric Opera.

Continued on the next page.
Contemporary dance (duration: 50m)
Friday, 27 October 2023, 8 pm
Asian Civilisations Museum, River Terrace

Concept: Olimpia Fortuni
Music: Katatonic Silentio
Performers: Olimpia Fortuni (Italy), January Low (Malaysia), Katatonic Silentio (Italy)
Study of shamanic practices: Corinna Ciulli
Co-production: Sosta Palmizi and Fondazione Fabbrica Europa
Residency support: Olinda/TeatroLaCucina and Dance Nucleus
Supported by: Embassy of Italy in Singapore

There will be a post show dialogue with the artists.

Olimpia Fortuni, dancer and choreographer, and Katatonic Silentio (Mariachiara Troianiello), artist, performer and sound researcher, are the two creators of this journey between music and dance.

The show is inspired by the shamanic tradition, the form of spirituality with the most ancient origins, a practice that does not end with a cult or a religion but is rather a tool for greater awareness and a deeper connection with oneself, nature and others. The central figure is Artemis who embodies the archetype of the independent, tenacious and at the same time reflective, intuitive, and passionate woman.

Sound, body, movement, natural and artificial architectures are tools for this compositional performance. The title "X" represents the symbol whose crossed lines are the bridge to communicate with each other. It is a journey in which the performers, in the role of researchers/explorers, accompany the audience to another place for a sensory experience towards their inner world.

The project is in continuous transformation thanks to the margin of non-definition that allows constant research. For the Asia-Europe Cultural Festival 2023, the Malaysian choreographer and dancer January Low who has over 30 years of experience in Indian classical dance, will join the performance. This new version of the piece will highlight the cultural exchange between Asian and Western culture.

The encounter of the female characters – priestesses/warriors, marks the moment in which music and dance, complementary since mankind has existed, become the key to accessing a universe in which one awakens from spiritual slumber: the gaze returns within us.
ARTISTS

ITALY
OLIMPIA FORTUNI
is an Italian dancer and choreographer. She has presented her work as a choreographer since 2014 in numerous dance festivals in Italy and abroad. She is associate artist of Sosta Palmizzi and collaborates as an artist on many international projects. Starting from the body, her research has been based for years on the study of time as a quality of movement and on the observation of the relationship between human beings, nature and animal that are the central themes of her creations.

ITALY
KATATONIC SILENTIO
Italian sound artist, live performer and independent researcher in sonic and performing arts and media studies, Katatonic Silentio explores the fields of electronic and experimental music with a unique approach to sound design, releasing music on numerous national and international labels and performing at venues and festivals across Europe. She is also active as an independent researcher: her practice converges halfway between sound and performing arts. Her sharp curiosity for cultural studies, combined with a strong passion for music, has led her to approach the world of sound with a sociological and anthropological methodology.

MALAYSIA
JANUARY LOW
born, raised, educated and currently based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia specialises in an Eastern classical Indian dance form known as Odissi and has been practicing for close to 30 years. Her practice observes how Odissi exists in her daily, Southeast Asian female body and investigates various entry points to create different encounters with Odissi that enables agency for both audience and performer. She is currently under the mentorship of Odissi exponent, Bijayini Satpathy.
Experience the power of visual storytelling at ASEF roundtable, “Framing the Future: Photography’s Influence on Climate Awareness in Southeast Asia”.

This compelling conversation includes a diverse panel of photographers, journalists, and scientists that will delve into the pivotal role photography has in shaping the narrative of climate crisis in Southeast Asia.

Complementing the roundtable is a digital exhibition featuring photographs that capture the profound impact of climate crisis in Southeast Asia. These striking visuals have been created by the artists during a 6-month residency programme organised by the NOOR Foundation in Hanoi, making this event a unique opportunity to witness the intersection of art & environment. Join us in exploring the power of photography in raising climate crisis awareness.

In partnership with Embassy of the Netherlands in Viet Nam, the NOOR Foundation.
MODERATOR

VALENTINA RICCARDI
Director, Culture Department
Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

SPEAKERS

ITALY
STEFANO CARINI
Creative Director
NOOR Foundation

THAILAND
JITTRAPON KAICOME
Photographer and participant
of NOOR Visualising Climate
Crisis programme

CAMBODIA
PONITA KEO
Photographer and participant
of NOOR Visualising Climate
Crisis programme

VIET NAM
LINH PHAM
Photographer and mentor
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Photographer and mentor
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Crisis programme

DIPGITAL EXHIBITION ARTISTS

• The photographers who were part of the NOOR Visualising Climate Crisis programme:

• Sirachai Arunrugstichai — THAILAND
• Wan Chantavilasvong — THAILAND
• Duy Dao — VIET NAM
• Jittrapon Kaicome — THAILAND
• Ponita Keo — CAMBODIA
• Southida Manixay — LAO PDR
• Saobora Narin — CAMBODIA
• Thanh Hue Nguyen — VIET NAM
• Nhi Nguyen — VIET NAM
• Savroun Ry — CAMBODIA
• Satita Taratis — THAILAND
• Trần Thái-Khương — VIET NAM

More speakers to be announced soon.
ASEF LINKUP:
ASIA-EUROPE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY LAB PRESENTATIONS

Through this project, ASEF wants to create new spaces for encounters and capacity building where various agents involved in cultural cooperation can meet and share knowledge and approaches from different regions. For the first edition of ASEF LinkUp, ASEF invited curators, arts managers and artists to “link-up” with the diplomats and cultural attachés based in Singapore and the ASEAN region.

The project responds to the recommendations that have emerged from the Roundtable Series Recalibrating the Compass: What Future for Asia-Europe Cultural Relations developed by ASEF Culture in 2022. Among other challenges, the consultation process revealed the presence of inequalities or imbalances around cultural relations, further exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 24 invited participants will discuss their journey together with the mentors of the programme Kamini Ramachandran (Singapore), Director of MoonShadow Stories and The Storytelling Centre Ltd; Gaëlle Patin-Laloy (Spain), Project Manager - Diversity and Interculturality Programme at Casa Asia; and Dr. Aleksandar Brkić (UK), Senior Lecturer and Co-Director MA Arts Administration and Cultural Policy at Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship in Goldsmiths, University of London.

In partnership with Casa Asia, Embassy of Italy in Singapore, Dance Nucleus, Arts and Theatre Institute (Czech Republic).
TICKETS

All events are Free, by registration
Email: culture@asef.org • Call: (+65) 6874 9754

Sunday, 22 October 2023
4 pm
The Perfect Motion and Preah Thong Dance

Sunday, 22 October 2023
8 pm
The Golden Temple

Friday, 27 October 2023
8 pm
X

Sunday, 29 October 2023
4 pm
The Perfect Motion

Wednesday 1 November 2023
5 pm
Framing the Future

FESTIVAL VENUES

Asian Civilisations Museum
River Room, River Terrace and Ngee Ann Auditorium
1 Empress Pl,
Singapore 179555

School of the Arts (SOTA),
Studio Theatre
L3, 1 Zubir Said Dr,
Singapore 227968

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF),
Conference Room
31 Heng Mui Keng Terrace,
Singapore 119595
The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, sustainable development, economy and public health. ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

Together with over 150 partner organisations, ASEF has conducted more than 250 projects, mainly conferences, seminars and workshops. Over 40,000 Asians and Europeans have participated in its activities, and a much wider audience is reached through its networks, web-portals, publications, exhibitions and lectures.

www.ASEF.org

ASEF's contribution is with the financial support of the European Union.

**PARTNERS**

Casa Asia is a public consortium consisting of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, the Generalitat of Catalonia, and the Barcelona and Madrid city councils with its headquarters in Barcelona, and a centre in Madrid. Casa Asia aims at contributing to a better understanding between Spain and Asian countries and to promote institutional, economic, cultural and educational relations as well as encouraging exchanges in the domains of culture, ideas and projects of shared interest. Casa Asia is a reference and meeting point in Spain with regard to relations with Asia-Pacific.

https://www.casasia.eu/

Embassy of Italy in Singapore
https://amb大使館.sg/esteri.it

Embassy of Estonia in Singapore
https://singapore.mfa.ee/

**VENUE PARTNER**

Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) is Singapore’s national museum of Asian antiquities and decorative art. As the only museum in Asia with a pan-Asian scope, ACM is devoted to exploring the rich artistic heritage of Asia through our outstanding collection of masterpieces, and through ground-breaking special exhibitions. ACM focuses on the many historical connections between cultures and civilisations in Asia, and between Asia and the world.

https://www.nhb.gov.sg/acm/

**THANKS TO**

Dance Nucleus is a centre for practice-based research, creative development and knowledge production for independent / contemporary performance. Dance Nucleus fosters a culture of critical discourse, self-education, artistic exchange and practical support. Our programmes are designed to respond to the needs of our members in a comprehensive way: We build partnerships in Singapore, Southeast Asia, Asia & Australia, and internationally.

https://www.dancenucleus.com/

Embassy of the Netherlands in Viet Nam
https://www.netherlandsandyou.nl/your-country-and-the-netherlands/vietnam

NOOR Images is an Amsterdam-based, international agency for documentary photography and visual storytelling. Alongside the agency, the NOOR Foundation focuses on creating opportunities for visual education and capacity building in ethical visual journalism and documentary practices. The NOOR foundation and agency work with multiple international clients, collaborators and partners. As industry leaders, we produce work for large media companies and small startups, institutional clients and non-profits.

https://www.noorimages.com
The Asia-Europe Cultural Festival is organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), funded by the European Union, with the support of the Embassy of Italy in Singapore, The Embassy of Estonia in Singapore and Casa Asia.
EUROPE MEETS ASIA

ASIA-EUROPE CULTURAL FESTIVAL

ASIA MEETS EUROPE

ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION

Fund by the European Union