

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF TOP THREE WINNING DESIGN TEAMS FOR THE  
NATIONAL ART GALLERY OF SINGAPORE**

Singapore, 29 August 2007 – The international jury panel for the National Art Gallery (*working title*) of Singapore (新加坡国家艺术馆) architectural design competition has named the top three winning designs. They are in the following order:

- (1) Studio Milou Architecture from France, in collaboration with CPG Consultants from Singapore
- (2) Ho + Hou Studio Architects, a Taiwan-based architectural firm, in collaboration with AEDAS Pte Ltd from Singapore
- (3) Chan Sau Yan Associates, a Singapore-based architectural firm, in collaboration with Lekker Design Pte Ltd

The competition, organised by Singapore's Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) in association with the Singapore Institute of Architects, was launched in February this year. It drew 111 entries from 29 countries worldwide.

Earlier this week, five shortlisted teams of architecture and design firms made presentations on their submissions and scale models of their designs to a 7-member international jury, chaired by Professor Tommy Koh, Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large and Chairman of the National Heritage Board. The teams were selected anonymously in Stage I of the competition, based on design concept and philosophy. They included firms from Australia, France, Taiwan and Singapore.

On the overall standard of submissions, Prof Koh said: “The five designs were of very high quality and provided many creative and excellent design ideas for the National Art Gallery. After careful deliberation and having given due consideration to the imaginative and creative responses to the Art Gallery’s vision, as well as their functionality and feasibility, the Jury have decided on the top three designs that best met the brief.”

### **Winning Design 1: Studio Milou Architecture**

The design scheme by Studio Milou Architecture elegantly integrates the two buildings at the roof level, with the use of a linear draped canopy, supported by tree like columns, while respecting the fabric of the existing monuments. The scheme respects the existing entrances and introduces new ones to make the building porous at street level.

A strong street concept runs through the buildings at basement level two, bringing visitors down to this level via large staircases and lifts. The visitors orientate themselves here before making their way up into the higher levels of the art gallery. Internal, dramatic new spaces are created via extension of existing staircases and introduction of new ones. Organisation of spaces takes into detailed consideration how museums and galleries work.

Of Studio Milou Architecture’s design, the Jury’s comments were that the scheme had the most delightful design and appeal. The extension of a staircase which leads from the basement to the rotunda acts as a strong architectural solution that at once links the basement and upper levels, which guides the visitor to the very heart of the former Supreme Court. The internal circulation route overall is well-planned in relation to public spaces. The designer has provided a good analysis of the curatorial function and requirement within the building.

### **Winning Design 2: Ho + Hou Studio Architects**

The design by Ho + Hou Studio Architects is inspired by *The Kelong*, a fragile and delicate structure that was commonly found off the coast of Singapore back in the 1970s. The scheme keeps the identities of the two buildings separate but creates a strong internal axis at the basement level to link the buildings. The visitors enter at B1 level

before making their way through a range of terraced galleries, shops and retail spaces. The scheme continues the Kelong theme in terms of architectural forms and the choice of materials and colours. The scheme inserts a new, prominent framework of grids in the courtyards, the language of which is carried through to the roof treatment where lattices and louvers control light admitted through a glazed roof.

Of Ho + Hou Studio Architects' design, the Jury's comments were that it was a very well thought through scheme on the size and arrangement of gallery and related spaces, with interesting and imaginative use of spaces that are to be retained. It comes across as being respectful of the distinct and separate identities of the buildings.

### **Winning Design 3: Chan Sau Yan Associates**

The design by Chan Sau Yan Associates is an understated scheme with minimal intervention. A main entry portal located between the two monuments is a brightly lit rectilinear enclosure with translucent walls that allow a view to the adjacent historic walls of the City Hall and the former Supreme Court.

The connection between various levels of the buildings weaves in and out of the portal in the form of bridges. Visitors enter the gallery through this portal and access the galleries and public spaces at level 2 of City Hall and at ground floor of the Former Supreme Court building.

Of Chan Sau Yan Associates' design, the Jury's comments were that it is a pragmatic approach with minimal intervention, with a very good distribution of functional spaces, where circulation is straightforward and well addressed.

### **Other Shortlisted Schemes**

The other two shortlisted schemes were by DP Architects from Singapore and Smart Design Studio from Australia.

DP Architects' design seeks to retain the original character of the buildings through the insertion of new flexible gallery spaces. This scheme is respectful of the local codes and

guidelines by the Preservation of Monuments Board. A glazed facade at the rear of the City Hall building retains the layer of existing fabric (columns and slabs) behind it. Moving images on screens create a sense of movement and interest on the facade. The interior planning is simple and logical. A large voluminous space has been set aside to provide space for international exhibition as well as a food terrace located at the top floor.

Smart Design Studio's design scheme sports orchid-inspired structures, symbolic of Singapore's national flower and integrates the two monuments with a strong linear axis or internal street at ground level. The internal street is porous, inviting visitors from all sides of the building. This axis is also reflected in a high level canopy connecting high, slender, orchid-shaped columns along the internal 'street'. The scheme is respectful of the history of the buildings and uses the conserved spaces well. Clear internal planning with spaces sharply defined by the internal street.

The Jury's decision will be presented to MICA, which will then decide on the appropriate party to commission to design and build the Art Gallery, after working through some of the key implementation details. This will include further testing of the technical and financial viability of the schemes.

A public exhibition of the winning designs and scale models will be held in October 2007. The designs will also be made available on the National Art Gallery website then. These are masterplans by the winning teams, and represent the conceptual stage and not the final designs. Public feedback will also be considered for the realisation of the project. The National Art Gallery is scheduled for completion in 2012.

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### **Notes to the Editor**

#### **About the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA)**

The Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) is a multi-faceted ministry. It is both an economic and social ministry with the vision to nurture and develop a Creative Economy, Gracious Community and Connected Singapore.

The Ministry's mission is to develop Singapore as a Global City for information, communications and the arts, so as to build a creative economy and a connected society with a Singaporean identity rooted in a multicultural heritage. It aims to propel the creative economy through the development and promotion of the creative industries (arts, design and media) and infocomm technology sector to create new economic value and jobs. It also aims to forge a strong sense of community, national identity, rootedness and inclusion among Singaporeans, and to foster better understanding between the Government and its various stakeholders through effective public communications. More information on MICA is available at: <http://www.mica.gov.sg>.

#### **About the National Art Gallery of Singapore**

The National Art Gallery of Singapore (*working title*) is a new visual arts institution which will contribute to building Singapore as a regional and international hub for visual arts. It will focus on the display, promotion, research and study of Southeast Asian and Singaporean art, as well as play host to international art exhibitions.

Situated in the heart of Singapore's Civic District, the City Hall and adjacent former Supreme Court building – two important heritage buildings symbolic of Singapore's nationhood – will be converted to house this exciting new visual arts venue, and is anticipated to be completed by 2012. The National Art Gallery will be a civic and creative space, established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world.

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