

T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works Co. Reg. No. 199001149D T:>Works T:>Works  
72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road Singapore 239007 // +65 67377213 (T) // +65 67377013 (F) // TWorks@singnet.com.sg  
// 72-13.com // TWorkssg.wordpress.com // T:>Works is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major  
Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 // T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character  
with Charity Status // T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Dr. Ong Keng Sen awarded Honorary Doctorate from University of Arts London**

**Singapore, 26 July 2022** – T:>Works is proud to congratulate our Artistic Director, Dr. Ong Keng Sen, on being awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of the Arts London (UAL), in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the field of Theatre Direction. The Honorary Doctorate is the highest honour conferred by the University and was presented in person on 13 July 2022 at the Royal Festival Hall in London. This marks his second doctorate, after obtaining a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University Tisch School of the Arts in 2019.

Dr. Ong is a Singaporean theatre director known internationally for his innovative and original approach to performance and theatre making, and for combining Eastern and Western performance traditions. His works are truly transcultural, crossing boundaries and borders to distil the essence of what performance means today. Dr. Ong has received numerous awards including the Cultural Medallion in 2003 and Fukuoka Asia Arts and Culture Prize in 2010. He has directed critically acclaimed works such as *Lear* (1997), *Desdemona* (2000), *The Continuum: Beyond The Killing Fields* (2001), *Search: Hamlet* (2002), *The Global Soul* (2003), *Geisha* (2006), *Awaking* (2008), *Lear Dreaming* (2015), *Sandaime Richard (Richard III)* (2016), *Trojan Women* (2016), and most recently, project *Salome*, which premiered at the Singapore International Festival of the Arts (SIFA) in May 2022. *Trojan Women* (2016) will have its US debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music from 18 -19 November 2022.

Contributing greatly to Singapore’s art scene, Dr. Ong was the first artist to direct the Singapore International Arts Festival from 2013-2017, reviving the festival with a global vision and raising awareness of contemporary Asian art through international collaborations. Embracing transdisciplinary and transcultural processes, Dr. Ong is fascinated by how theatre-making can be combined with film, music, dance, and visual arts to “combust together,” and how artists can further the agendas of human rights and justice. Alongside renowned performances, he has developed incubatory platforms through T:>Works such as nomadic artist residency, Flying Circus Project (Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam), The Curator’s Academy (Singapore, Berlin), and PerForm fellowship. At their core, these platforms focus on sharing knowledge across disciplines and locales, and bridging artistic communities across cultures and geographies.

T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works  
T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works T:>Works

To the graduating class of UAL, Dr. Ong addressed the divided state of the world and the need for artists and art professionals to re-examine narratives and positionalities, and re-encounter differences. Acknowledging the coming generation of artists in the crowd, he concluded, “Yes, we may have to bridge the divide...The world is in a desperately fragile moment right now. Perhaps, just perhaps, we have to become vulnerable again... It’s clear that we have to co-make this future amidst power and with humility.”

As a visionary and leading voice in the Asian art world, Dr. Ong continues to push the agenda and thought leadership on how the arts can catalyse and reimagine the collective futures of coming generations.

University of the Arts London, ranked in the top two universities in the world for Art and Design, is among the most renowned international institutions in art, design, fashion, communication and performance. It consists of six colleges with origins that date back to 1842: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion, and Wimbledon College of Arts.

The Honorary Doctorate, together with the Honorary Fellowship, is the highest honour conferred by the University. New honourees are selected by a distinguished committee of academics, Governors and practitioners. Dr. Ong joins distinguished British fashion designer Kim Jones OBE, CEO of the Royal Foundation (ex-CEO, BAFTA) Amanda Berry OBE, visionary Director of Wellcome Collection Melanie Keen, as one of the 15 world-leading creative figures to be given honorary awards by University of the Arts London this year.

Past honourees include: socially-engaged installation artist Theaster Gates Junior; multi-award-winning British choreographer and director Wayne McGregor CBE; iconic avant-garde fashion artists Viktor & Rolf; oscar-nominated actor Ralph Fiennes; Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing; pre-eminent architect and urbanist Denise Scott Brown; Director of the Tate Modern Frances Morris; founder of Wikipedia Jimmy Wales; acclaimed sculptor Sir Anish Kapoor; journalist, author and broadcaster Gary Younge; as well as digital innovator and creative director Resham Kaur Sidhu.

For press materials, including photographs, and biography of Dr. Ong Keng Sen, please visit this [link](#). For more information on UAL and the honorary awards, please visit this [link](#).

**For media queries, please contact:**

**Ms. Deirdre Chang**

Communications & Engagement Associate

T:>Works

T: +65 6737 7213, M: +65 8418 7246

E: [deirdre.tworks@gmail.com](mailto:deirdre.tworks@gmail.com)

## **Annex A: Citation of Ong Keng Sen**

Ong Keng Sen, is a Singaporean theatre director who is known around the world for his innovative approach to performance and theatre making. Often utilising his unique approach of combining both Eastern and Western performance traditions, Keng Sen creates theatre that is truly trans-cultural, crossing boundaries and borders to reach the essence of what performance means today.

Keng Sen's approach focuses on embracing difference whether that be artforms, people or cultures, and he remains fascinated by how theatre making can be combined with film, music, dance and visual arts to (in his words) "combust together" and create a live work of art.

He says that the skill of a theatre director is not only being a problem solver but also an expert in human communications and he uses these skills to encourage artists of different cultures to create hybrid perspectives and experiences.

On example of this is his long-running Flying Circus Project, which brings together established artists from around the world for a residency programme to collaborate with the emerging, local artists in countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. The project offers an opportunity for artists to think, share and challenge ideas, creating a unique and powerful environment for learning.

This expansive and welcoming approach, guided by the principles of human rights and justice, has placed him as one of the leading voices in the Asian art world. As the Artistic Director of TheatreWorks, Keng Sen was charged with developing Singaporean writing and theatre, and he guided the artists he was working with to confront the injustices of the past to create a new and independent vision of their own representation.

He then furthered this agenda by becoming the first artist to direct the Singapore International Festival of Arts, increasing audience numbers and participation in the festival, as well as raising awareness of contemporary Asian art through international collaborations.

Keng Sen says that his greatest contribution is when the work goes beyond simply making good theatre but also has a cultural, social or political impact. He says, "Of course the imperative if you are a theatre director or a fashion designer or a scientist, (is that) you want to make good work...but to do something more than that is a great privilege and an opportunity."