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72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road Singapore 239007 // +65 67377213 (T) // +65 67377013 (F) // TWorks@singnet.com.sg
// 72-13.com // TWorksasia.org // T:>Works is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company
Scheme for the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028. // T:>Works is an Institution of Public Character with
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MEDIA ALERT



A Transdisciplinary Response: T:>Works Announces Winners of 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2025

SINGAPORE, 15 January 2026 – Fresh off the biggest and boldest iteration of the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition yet, which was held at and co-presented with National Gallery Singapore from 15–16 November 2025, T:>Works is excited to present the winners from the Open and Youth Categories. In celebration of these playwrights’ accomplishments, T:>Works will hold an afternoon of dramatised readings of select winning scripts on 28 February 2026 at 72-13, Home of T:>Works.

This year’s adjudicators – Dr. Adele Tan, Tan Shou Chen, Myle Yan Tay, and Grace Kalaiselvi – awarded the following writers the top three places in their respective categories:

OPEN CATEGORY:

- First Prize: *Waiting for a Sentence* by Inch Chua
- Second Prize: *Macroscopic Lens* by L.L. Wenyi
- Third Prize: *The Tree of Life* by Goh Ming Siu
- Special Mentions: *Blinds* by Gabrielle Marie Sunderaj & *Lost Edge* by Wong Chen Seong

YOUTH CATEGORY:

- First Prize: *Testimony* by N Chesterman
- Second Prize: *Dead Pigeons Society* by Adlynn Fadila
- Third Prize: *The Rorschach Test* by Sumedha Sanjeev Kumar
- Special Mention: *Kaleidoscope* by Ler Mingzhu

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The winners of both categories will receive cash prizes of \$350 for the first prize, \$250 for the second prize, and \$150 for the third prize.

24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2025: Theatre Meets Visual Art

Last year, the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* was held at the intersection of two milestone anniversaries – T:>Works’ 40th year and National Gallery Singapore’s 10th – with the Gallery joining T:>Works as Venue and Programme Partner.

Bridging demarcative silos in the arts through a transdisciplinary experience, the 2025 edition engaged in 'theatre', a public forum expanding beyond genres of performing arts embracing disciplinary and discursive diversity.¹ The competition invited the participants to respond to two installations, under the Gallery’s *OUTBOUND* series—reimagining transitional spaces and key entrances at the Gallery through a series of unique artwork commissions, developed in collaboration with leading artists from around the world—*Angin Cloud* by Art Labor and *Eidolon* by Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier.

To encourage deep reflection on the themes of these installations, participants were challenged to integrate various stimuli into their scripts, from specific spoken lines, to key moments, and keywords like “glass room”. Guided tours around the Gallery’s Rotunda Library and Archive allowed participants to immerse themselves in the history of the historic building, while artists and curator talks provided exclusive opportunities to uncover deeper stories behind the *OUTBOUND* installations.

Adjudicators’ Analysis of Winning Scripts

This edition’s winning entries mirror the emboldened scale of the competition, tackling big issues across themes of personal and national identity, justice, and spirituality. The creativity and vision of the aspiring playwrights shone through the scripts as each stimulus was seamlessly integrated into an engaging narrative, powerful themes, and complex characters.

Tan Shou Chen, an internationally-recognised theatremaker, said, “The collection of works exceeded expectations in the writers’ experimentation with form and prompt, urging a reflection on what makes theatre in our contemporary world.”

¹T:>Works launches ‘The Season of Thought Leadership: in the Arts, by the Arts, with the Arts’ with a public conversation on “The people cultures of a national theatre”. (2024, February 26). T:>Works. Retrieved from https://tworksasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Media-Alert_Launch-of-The-Season-of-Thought-Leadership.pdf.

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Grace Kalaiselvi, a prolific performer and director commented, “The scripts immediately drew me into distinct worlds and perspectives with a voice of assurance and purpose – an incredible feat to accomplish in a mere 24 hours.”

“The Youth Category held a great deal of work surrounding mental health. While it's tempting to fret over what seems to be an apparent crisis in our midst, in actuality, this highlights the importance of spaces like the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition*, which allows people of all kinds to tackle the ideas weighing them down and the problems they face everyday,” said Myle Yan Tay, a seasoned writer across plays, fiction, and more.

Dr. Adele Tan, Senior Curator and Assistant Director (Curatorial Programmes) at National Gallery Singapore, remarked, “Brimming with punchy lines and unconventional characters and scenes, this edition’s winning playwrights show how the spaces of National Gallery Singapore and its artists and artworks can spur alternative paths of imagination. The entrants in the Youth Category deserve a special mention as they demonstrated wonderful experimental verve and maturity of ideas that belie their young age. These writers in Singapore possess the rhythms of spoken poetry, maintain a steady gaze on social and personal issues, and more encouragingly, an appetite for traditions, histories, myths and culture.”

Dramatised Reading

Select scripts will go through development by T:>Works alongside established directors, writers, and performers. To round off last year's *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* and to celebrate the playwrights’ achievements, T:>Works will be hosting dramatised readings of these scripts on 28 February 2026 at 72-13.

Details of Dramatised Reading: A *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* Community Showcase

28 February 2026, 4-6pm

72-13, Home of T:>Works

This event is by-invite-only. RSVP at this [online form](#) by 20 Feb.

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For more information, please contact:

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Annex A: About T:>Works and National Gallery Singapore

About T:> Works

Established in 1985, T:>Works is an independent and international arts company based in Singapore at its space, 72-13. It is currently led by Artistic Director, Dr. Ong Keng Sen. T:>Works’ mission and vision are the pioneering of thought leadership in the arts focused on transdisciplinary, transcultural, and inclusive processes. To this end, there is a strong educational perspective with research and discourse contextualising histories, contemporary experiences, and situated art practices of the global south. T:>Works also serves to investigate the current urgencies of being located in Singapore, and larger Asia, through different creative expressions in the public sphere. It is a recipient of the National Arts Council Major Company Grant from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028. T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character with charity status. For more information, visit tworksasia.org.

About National Gallery Singapore

National Gallery Singapore is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year as a leading visual arts institution and the largest modern and contemporary art museum in Southeast Asia. Dedicated to making art accessible to all, the Gallery engages audiences of all ages through its exhibitions, educational programmes, and public festivals.

Home to the world’s largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian art, the Gallery is redefining the region’s art history through pioneering research, strategic acquisitions, and thoughtfully curated exhibitions. By offering new perspectives, it recontextualises the region’s artistic contributions within global narratives.

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Located in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments – the City Hall and former Supreme Court – making it an iconic cultural landmark where architectural grandeur meets deep historical significance.

A vibrant cultural destination, the Gallery has been ranked among Asia’s Top 10 most visited museums by The Art Newspaper since 2019. It has also received accolades at the Singapore Tourism Awards, including “Best Leisure Event” for Light to Night Festival 2020 and “Outstanding Leisure Event” for Gallery Children's Biennale 2021.

As a registered Charity and an Institute of Public Character, the Gallery relies on public support to expand its collection, advance research, and bring art to more people, shaping cultural discourse and inspiring creativity for generations to come.

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Annex B: About the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition

The T:>Works *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* was first held in 1996, this competition is one of the longest-running creative platforms in Singapore. Developed as part of T:>Works Writers’ Lab conceptualised by Artistic Director Dr. Ong Keng Sen, it is designed to connect the arts with the community. Participants write a completely new play in 24 hours, with various stimuli given throughout the competition. It comprises two categories, youth and open, and aims to nurture and develop playwrights from the community. This year, the four judges include - acclaimed playwrights and theatre-makers Tan Shou Chen, Myle Yan Tay, and Grace Kalaiselvi, and Dr. Adele Tan, Senior Curator at National Gallery Singapore.

The only community-centred competition

With its ethos of ‘Everyone has a story to tell’, the competition continues to be the only competition in Singapore that welcomes participants from all walks of life, regardless of experience. It plays an essential part in drawing out raw and otherwise unnoticed talent. Because of the diversity in background and wide age range, the Competition also generates diverse perspectives on the themes proposed each year. The *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* has endeared itself with the public. It attracts 70-80 participants annually, with an average of 65% new participants each year.

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Developing and introducing diverse voices into the arts eco-system

Since the competition began, the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* has unearthed playwrights, and sparked their burgeoning interests in playwriting. Some have continued to play an important part in the Singapore arts ecosystem: Playwright - Jean Tay (Boom; Everything but the Brain); Director and Playwright - Chong Tze Chien (PIE; Spoilt); Educator and Playwright - Ahmad Musta'ain (Serunding); Editor, Writer and Playwright - Nabilah Said (Angkat: A Definitive, Alternative, Reclaimed Narrative of a Native); Lawyer, Poet and Writer - Amanda Chong (#WomenSupportingWomen), to name a few.

Has strong community and collegiate spirit

There is strong community support with repeated participation by past participants. It has also developed 'a collegiate spirit' when past participants, now professionals in the creative industry, return to take on artistic leadership. Adjudicators of past competitions almost always include an alumnus from the competition such as Nabilah Said, Chong Tze Chien, Jean Tay as well as Director, Cheryl Woo. The organiser of the competition from 2019 – 2022 was Actor, Educator and Creative Producer Noorlinah Mohamed, who acted in some of the past winning plays.

Locality: Adapting to the times with original sensibility

During the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the competition transformed into a digital format due to restrictions on social gatherings. Despite this change, interest and participation remained consistent.

In 2022, T:>Works introduced a hybrid programme that included tours to Green Circle Eco-Farm and Magorium, a deep-tech start-up addressing plastic waste. These tours aimed to generate creative ideas, with both sites offering compelling stories of struggle, vision, and hope.

In 2023, the competition returned to an entirely on-site format at the Figment Club House. This venue provided a unique and inspiring environment for the participants. To kick off the event, participants were taken on a heritage tour of Geylang, a neighbourhood rich with cultural and historical significance. This immersive experience allowed them to explore the vibrant streets, learn about the area's history, and absorb the local atmosphere. The tour served as a catalyst for creativity, providing participants with diverse stimuli and insights before they began their 24-hour writing journey. After the tour, they received their writing prompts, and the competition

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commenced. The on-site format fostered a sense of community and camaraderie among participants, who could interact, share ideas, and draw inspiration from their surroundings and each other.

In 2025, our goal is to remain with the on-site stay-over concept that began in 1996. This approach immerses participants in a specific location rich with artistic relevance, encounters, and significance in Singapore, fostering a deeper connection and inspiration for their creative work.

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Annex C: About *OUTBOUND*, *Angin Cloud* by Art Labor, and *Eidolon* by Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier

OUTBOUND

Inaugurated in 2018, *OUTBOUND* is an initiative that reimagines transitional spaces and key entrances at the Gallery through a series of unique artwork commissions, developed in collaboration with leading artists from around the world, to provoke critical reflection, curiosity, and playfulness in our visitors as they traverse the building beyond exhibition galleries while shifting perceptions of what might be considered art.

***Angin Cloud* by Art Labor**

Angin Cloud by Art Labor was previously presented at National Gallery Singapore. The installation comprises pillars – like trellises for peppercorn vines in the plantations in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, an assemblage of Jrai wood sculptures and hammocks to recline in. *Angin Cloud* imagines the rural industrialisation of a hillside from Vietnam’s Central Highlands. “Angin,” a Jrai concept, refers to the dynamic potential for change found in the natural elements of water and air. In Vietnamese, “bốc hơi” refers to evaporation and implies a quick disappearance. Art Labor has described the transformation of the Central Highlands as the “bốc hơi” (evaporation) of ancient jungles. *Angin Cloud*, through a metaphoric and native Jrai lens, alludes to the complex dynamics of modernisation that have brought capital and development to a region but also reshaped its land and people.

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Eidolon by Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier

Set against the skylight, *Eidolon* is composed of two parallel rows of beaded link-chains connecting opposite corners across the space. The metallic chains belie their industrial character and instead form a delicate asymmetrical screen that divides the interior space. With a nickel gunpowder finish, the chains reflect ambient light and mirror the architectural features around them, creating a constantly shifting surface. Phaophanit and Oboussier draw on the cultural ubiquity of beads, which have been worn for adornment, used in prayer, or exchanged in trade. In *Eidolon*, these beads suggest forms of connection and meaning intended beyond language or specific cultures.

Its title, from the Greek word for “phantom,” gestures to the intangible, while its root eidos, “that which is seen”, suggests presence. The work can be seen as a kind of veil or mirage, something that sits between what is suggested and what is seen. As the vertical lines overlap visually, they produce a moiré effect—a kind of optical interference—resulting in a dynamic visual effect that keeps shifting between transparency and opacity, lightness and density. The work resists easy definition, neither a hanging mobile nor a suspended sculpture. Its monumental scale elicits the viewer to look closely only to see through its physical presence. Through the work, the symmetries of the building’s neoclassical lines are still visible, but gently diffused. As a counterpoise to the cultivated histories of the space—a museum, a municipal building, a private residence—*Eidolon* brings attention to what is visible, but also what lies beneath, inviting the viewer to experience the space anew.

<i>Eidolon</i> by Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier	
Date & Time	26 April – 1 March 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily, 10am – 7pm
Venue	National Gallery Singapore, Level 1, City Hall Courtyard
Admission	Free

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Annex D: Synopsis of Winning Scripts

OPEN CATEGORY

First Prize: Waiting for a Sentence by Inch Chua

Two old friends. One old sin. Chester and Hyder haven't spoken in years, but some silences only get louder. When they finally meet again, what surfaces isn't resolution but everything they buried together. A play about transience and transgression, guilt, and the ghosts we make of each other. Some friendships don't survive despite the damage, they survive because of it.

Second Prize: Macroscopic Lens by L.L. Wenyi

Atop an untouchable tower overlooking the Republic, four ministers gather - three veteran, one fresh - to contain a political time bomb promising to ruin one of their own. But with the rookie minister's past friendship with the culprit, can they sustain civil dialogue, maintain parliamentary optics, and reach a pragmatic solution?

Third Prize: The Tree of Life by Goh Ming Siu

Michael is a veteran military police investigator on the most baffling case of his career. Three soldiers have been inexplicably, horrifically maimed—while lying in their beds at night. The only person with any answers seems to be Jantan, a quiet, unassuming young man with a deep, mystical connection to the land. As they plunge into an ancient and terrifying nightmare, Michael is forced to confront the fallout of violence inflicted in the name of progress. Can he find his way back? Can we?

Special Mention: Blinds by Gabrielle Marie Sunderaj

Blinds is a contemporary play centred on Charisse, a social worker within a modern child welfare system who is stuck on a particular case that she struggles to come to terms with. Structured through a disjunctive form, the play moves between comedic, satirical moments and striking visual sequences to examine the, at times, impersonal nature of bureaucracy. *Blinds* attends to the unresolved space between frameworks oriented toward efficiency and optimisation, and the human impulse and capacity to care for another.

Special Mention: Lost Edge by Wong Chen Seong

Lost Edge is about a veterinarian who paints to move through memory, addiction, grief, and recovery. In his studio, colour becomes language: pigments bloom, bleed, and muddy even as his own days do. He speaks of animals he cannot save, a father who only exists as a thumbnail

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and a voice, forbidden comforts and a teenage moment that fractures time. Past and present overlap, edges dissolve, and meaning blurs. Through art and careful attention, Simon searches for what was lost — and for whether an edge, once blended and so lost, can ever be found again.

YOUTH CATEGORY

First Prize: Testimony by N Chesterman

Testimony explores the experiences of a group of students in the wake of a friend's death. Their anonymous voices weave in and out of a shared identity as they narrate their experiences with him, even as they grapple with the implications of his passing for the people they believe themselves to be.

Second Prize: Dead Pigeons Society by Adlynn Fadila

When three teen boys/wannabe black magicians decide to sacrifice a bird in a makeshift ritual, everything goes horribly wrong. Peter, Hazwan and Arvind are forced to come face-to-face with their futures, however bittersweet they may be. Through local mythology and humour, *Dead Pigeons Society* explores themes of change, friendship, and what it means to live as a Singaporean without being pigeonholed by its expectations.

Third Prize: The Rorschach Test by Sumedha Sanjeev Kumar

The Rorschach Test follows a young artist who is progressively losing his sight. As his vision continues to deteriorate, his identity as a talented artist is at stake, and he gives up art for a long time. However, after a particular visit to the optometrist, the artist's perception of art is subverted. This piece ultimately explores how to see with the heart through a love for art and support from those close to us.

Special Mention: Kaleidoscope by Ler Mingzhu

Kaleidoscope follows Harvey, a naive fourteen-year-old boy. His home is crumbling around him, and he holds tightly to his pet hamster, Stum, throughout that process. In his search for comfort, Harvey's relationship develops with his much older neighbor, Audeline, whose initially warm personality gradually becomes manipulative as their relationship becomes increasingly intertwined. At the same time, Harvey is being tormented by Audeline's sister, Lux, while also having a troubled relationship with his brother, Henry, who is trying to improve himself despite falling deeper and deeper into despair.

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Annex E: Photos from the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2025



Participants exploring the Gallery



Participants working on their scripts around the Gallery, late into the night



Participant working on her script, surrounded by archives



Participants perusing archival materials at the Rotunda Library and Archive



Game Master Jo Tan facilitating an artist talk with Art Labor and Jrai artist R Cham Tih



Vong Phaophanit and Claire Oboussier greeting participants through a Zoom call

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Curators Conversation with Goh Sze Ying and Kathleen Ditzig



Participants bouncing ideas with Game Master Jo Tan



Participants having insightful consultations with adjudicator Myle Yan Tay



Participants getting inspiration from the *OUTBOUND* installations

Photo credits: Photos by Tawfiq Ismail. Courtesy of T:>Works.

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For high-resolution pictures, please contact:

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