



European Union Film Festival 2018

May 10-20

The 28th edition of Singapore's longest running foreign film festival runs at National Gallery Singapore from May 10-20, 2018



European Union
Delegation to Singapore

28th EUROPEAN UNION FILM FESTIVAL

MEDIA CONFERENCE

Speech by H.E. Barbara Plinkert

European Union Ambassador to Singapore
Monday April 9 at National Gallery Singapore

Excellencies,

Members of the media, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning and a very warm welcome to all of you.

2018 marks the first European Year of Cultural Heritage which puts the spotlight on Europe's wealth of cultural heritage. It is, as European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, said "not only made up of literature, art and objects but also by the crafts we learn, the stories we tell, the food we eat and the films we watch." It is indeed a fitting moment to reflect not just on the past but to work towards deepening and strengthening our cultural connections as we look towards the future.

Today, I am delighted to announce that:

I. In its 28th edition, Singapore's longest running foreign film festival – The European Union Film Festival continues its partnership with National Gallery Singapore for a second year.

As an iconic visual arts institution, National Gallery Singapore provides us the important cultural context for the EUFF to grow as the European Union's flagship cultural event in Singapore.

From **May 10 to May 20**, all films will be screened here. Through this festival, we celebrate the diversity and pluralism of Europe. It is an exciting time for all of us. This partnership

allows us to come together and deepen our cross-cultural dialogue and reinforces the excellent cultural cooperation and collaboration between Singapore and Europe. Art and film are a perfect and some would say a natural fit.

I wish to offer my thanks to our colleagues at National Gallery Singapore, in particular to Chief Executive Chong Siak Ching, who has been personally invested in this project and her team.

I would also like to stress that our move to this inspiring space would not have been possible without the generous support of the German European School Singapore (GESS), who are the Title Sponsors of the Festival, for a second year in a row. We are deeply grateful to have them supporting EUFF and to have with us here today GESS Principal Mr Christoph Zänglein and students from the school.

II. As to the films that make this year's festival, European member states and partner countries have once again provided an excellently curated selection. We have 24 submissions from 24 countries.

Europe's contemporary creativity, its diversity of cultural expressions and multifaceted artistic vision are reflected in this selection that ranges from dramas to thrillers; comedies to animation.

Austria is the Featured Country of EUFF 2018 and our festival will open with the Austrian Film, *Fly Away Home*. Directed by Mirjam Unger, this is based on influential children's book author Christine Nostlinger's autobiography "Maikafer, flieg!" which portrays her experience as a child of war.

The full list of movies has been made available to you for you to block the dates on your busy calendars.

III. Content, vision and constant re-invention are key to keeping a festival going

Over the years, the festival's audience has grown. For its film programming, the festival has received much critical acclaim in Singapore and beyond.

The EUFF not only celebrates Europe's diversity, it also celebrates the passion for film-making and creativity in Singapore.

Therefore, and to celebrate EU-ASEAN cultural cooperation, a new addition in the year of Singapore's chairmanship of ASEAN and its assumption of the role of EU coordinator for ASEAN is the inclusion of the South-east Asian omnibus 'Fragment'. This features the work of ten exciting South-East Asian filmmakers and it is our first collaboration with the Asian Film Archive.

Another first is an effort to deepen our audience engagement. We take our festival to Singapore's heartland by presenting two European films at Our Tampines Hub. This partnership has been made possible with the continued support extended to us by the longest standing champion of EUFF – Singapore Film Society Chairman Kenneth Tan. It is Kenneth who established the connection with Suhaimi Rafdi, Director of Our Tampines Hub. Two selected films will be screened at the Hub on 25 and 26 May.

We continue our tradition of collaborating with a local film school and offering budding filmmakers an established platform to showcase their first works. Partnering for the fourth time with Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Film and Media Studies, the EUFF will present short films by students and alumni of the school alongside the official selection.

We collaborate also with the EU Delegation in Laos to bring to Singapore the winner of the European Award. This award is a joint initiative between our Delegation together with the support of the embassies of Germany, France and Luxembourg to broaden the reach of the Vientiane International Film Festival.

CONCLUSION

I wish to express my sincere thanks to our Member States and partner countries for selecting excellent films from their home countries that make this festival possible.

It will be an exciting new edition of EUFF, and all thanks go to our partners and long-time supporters, including you, our friends in the media.

I very much look forward to seeing you at the movies.