



Mobility First! Results (3rd cycle)

31 May 2019
Singapore

At the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#), we believe that cultural mobility is the backbone of international cultural cooperation. Culture is one of ASEF's priority areas and **Mobility First!** – our travel grant for artists and cultural professionals - is one of our flagship projects. As the main project in our Culture portfolio that supports the mutual cultural practice of artists and cultural professionals, eligible practitioners from Asia and Europe are invited to apply to our periodic competitive open calls either through an individual application or an organisation application. International travel support is then granted to selected applications for participation in a wide range of cultural activities including residencies, festivals, workshops, research trips, conferences, networking and partnership meetings.

2019 marks the third year of **Mobility First!** For this 3rd cycle this year, we have received a total of 324 applications from 44 countries in Asia and Europe. This is comprised of 185 individual applications and 41 applications from arts organisations on behalf of 139 arts practitioners. From this pool, we have selected to support a total of 30 artists and cultural professionals who are travelling to 11 countries in Asia and Europe.

The applicants selected for this round more closely fulfil **Mobility First!'s** focus areas of knowledge exchange/skills transfer, local development, innovation (including the intersection of art with other sectors), and the role of art in society.

Based on the applications received for the 3rd cycle of **Mobility First!**, we have highlighted some key observations that might of interest to those working in the cultural sector and for future applicants:

- For this cycle, the most applications we received were for participation in arts residencies, conferences and festivals
- While we have selected to support practitioners taking part in the above top 3 activity types, a significant percentage of selected grantees are for practice-led research trips, partnership meetings, and workshops. Further, the selected practitioners for this cycle are mostly participating in activities of multiple or combined natures e.g. a festival + residency, a research trip + partnership meeting, a workshop + festival



- This is because we believe in supporting applications that demonstrate optimised / maximised mobility. We want to support applications that aim to do more than just a one-off performance, and that clearly show a deeper immersion in the destination country and/or an increased exposure to an international context
- We noted that while there are many applications of good merit, they are purely for self-growth and individual capability development. However, reciprocity is one major element we look out for in applications we support. For **Mobility First!**, we are always looking to support applications that show that the benefits gained from mobility remain not within themselves, but are shared with their communities; this way, a sustained multiplier effect exists: immediately when the artist visits his destination, and in the long-term when he or she brings back the knowledge and experience he has gained from travel back home and shares this with his community.
- In this cycle, we have one case where we selected 2 individual applications participating in the same workshop. We have noted that there are many individuals applying to participate in the same activity/event/project/programme. While unrelated applications of this nature are unavoidable, some of such applications come from artist groups that inevitably compete with each other for an individual place. In the case of the latter (groups), a stronger application would have been an Organisation application (up to 5 practitioners in 1 application).
- In this cycle, we are happy to see and support applications that invoke new, interesting and progressive approaches to discourse on topics that are relevant to our society, that bring together practitioners from varying disciplines, and that embody the belief that contemporary artists and cultural professionals contribute to discussing, creating awareness of, and finding solutions for key issues of our times
- We have also received applications that prioritise the intersection between art and other sectors – which is something that we encourage and are very happy to support. In this cycle, we are supporting an application that demonstrates a good intersection between art and health via dance
- Finally, we are happy to see applications from neighbouring countries that are not the usual combinations for cultural exchange because usually, practitioners invite their counterparts from or would like to travel to farther destinations which results in regional neighbours not being strongly linked when geography dictates otherwise



Selected applications from individuals

	NAME	NATIONALITY	ACTIVITY	MOBILITY ROUTE
1	Stephen Welsh	United Kingdom	Research and partnership building at Karachi Biennale	Manchester, United Kingdom to Karachi, Pakistan
2	Helly Minarti	Indonesia	Partnership meetings and curatorial research for Jejak-Tabi Exchange: Wandering Asian Contemporary Performance	Yogyakarta, Indonesia to Manila, Escalante, Cebu, Philippines
3	Ichi Go	Japan	Dance Therapy Workshop for Vietnamese Children with Special Needs	Berlin, Germany to Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam
4	Vignes Balasingam	Malaysia	Les Rencontres d'Arles Festival, France	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Arles, France
5	Andrew Lee	Australia	Networking meetings with the local arts community and film industry experts in Germany	Sydney, Australia to Frankfurt, Germany
6	Romea Muryn	Poland	'Monuments of Collectivism' Workshop and Archstoyanie 2019 Festival	Szczecin, Poland to Kaluga, Russian Federation
7	Francisco Lobo	Portugal	'Monuments of Collectivism' Workshop and Archstoyanie 2019 Festival	Porto, Portugal to Kaluga, Russian Federation



Remarks from the selection committee:

1) Stephen Welsh (United Kingdom)

Mobility route: Europe to Asia

Stephen will be travelling from Manchester, United Kingdom to Karachi, Pakistan for a research and partnership building trip with the Karachi Biennale. The purpose of this proposed visit to the Karachi Biennale is to gain further knowledge and insights about the South Asian diaspora whilst meeting with the local arts community to explore potential partnerships and collaborative projects.

The applicant's travel to Karachi, Pakistan is extremely relevant, considering his designation as the curator of the Manchester Museum. This trip would provide him with first-hand exposure and immersion in the arts and culture scene of Pakistan and would provide insightful knowledge and perceptions that could potentially enhance the content of the upcoming South Asia gallery at Manchester Museum. Additionally, this visit will continue a partnership with several contacts from the local arts community, expressing a true, fruitful and sustainable project of international collaboration.

2) Helly Minarti (Indonesia)

Mobility route: Intra-Asia

Helly will be travelling from Yogyakarta, Indonesia to Manila to meet a project partner that will introduce her to local partners in Escalante City and Cebu City, Philippines. In addition to partnership meetings, the purpose of the trip is to conduct curatorial research for the 2020 edition of Jejak Tabi Exchange (JTE): Wandering Asian Contemporary Performance. JTE is an exchange platform for Asian artists that takes the form of a travelling festival, in small cities across Asia.

For this project, the applicant attempts to incorporate collaborations with local artistic communities, which presents great potential for sustainable impact. The concept of the project is interesting as it investigates how artists in Asia navigate their way in creating and sustaining their practice away from cities that are usually referred to as cultural centres whilst raising awareness of Asian contemporary performances from an Asian perspective. The project also veers away from a market-driven focus that arguably besets the global arts scene today. The 2020 edition of the Jejak Tabi Exchange (JTE) will gather eclectic artists from various small cities in Asia as well as bring well-curated works to Escalante City and Cebu City that will resonate with the local experience, if not also local histories. *Mobility First!* is proud to support such projects that benefit periphery cities.



3) Ichi Go (Japan)

Mobility route: Europe to Asia

A Japanese national living in Berlin, Germany, Ichi will travel to Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam to lead a dance therapy workshop for Vietnamese children with special needs, together with 1684kilomet organisation, an independent Vietnamese artist group.

The purpose of this project is very simple and extremely essential: to allow anyone, especially impaired youth, access to an arts practice via dance therapy. This is a project worth supporting for this fundamental reason. In addition, added value of the project is that the applicant is cultivating a sense of arts appreciation amongst the same target group of beneficiaries. Moreover, a collaboration with a local artist group would provide the applicant with an opportunity to further develop her practice as an arts therapist, an area of work the applicant appears to be moving towards, given the extensive experience her collaborators (1684kilomet artist group) have in organising dance and artistic activities for children with special needs in Viet Nam.

4) Vignes Balasingam (Malaysia)

Mobility route: Asia to Europe

Vignes will be travelling from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Arles, France to attend the Les Rencontres d'Arles Festival for a capacity building and networking visit. The Rencontres d'Arles is a photography festival established in 1970 and has been a major influence in disseminating the best of world photography and being a platform for photographic and contemporary creative talents since then.

As the director of OBSCURA Festival of Photography, one of the most promising independent photography festivals in Asia, the proposed trip will allow the applicant to benefit from international cultural networking during his participation in Rencontres d'Arles as potential partnerships and collaborations between Asian and European artists, curators and institutions could be formed. The applicant will also gain insights on curating, programming and develop his cultural understanding and knowledge of the photography community and industry in Europe, which could be brought back to further develop the OBSCURA festival, echoing Mobility First!'s focus area of enhancing local development.

5) Andrew Lee (Australia)

Mobility route: Asia to Europe

Andrew will be travelling from Sydney, Australia to Frankfurt, Germany to join his German collaborator in co-creating a short film and research project with the theme of Vietnamese



lesbian identity of the 21st Century. To sustain this collaboration, the duo is looking to participate in networking meetings with the state funding body of Frankfurt, "Hessen Film", post-production crews, LGBT organisations and the LGBT film community.

The applicant is an Australian-born Korean who will travel to Frankfurt to meet his collaborator who is a German-born Vietnamese artist; both of them are members of the LGBT community. The applicant's joint film with his collaborator concerns a global issue on a discriminated community and is looking to break down complex Asian narratives, perceptions and stereotypes about LGBT, which showcases how artists are strongly using the arts as a tool to advocate for social issues.

Aside from supporting the completion of this film, the proposed trip is also an opportunity for both the applicant and his collaborator to work together in the same country, considering how both collaborators are based in different countries, and further establish connections to publicise their film. Through *Mobility First!*'s support, this Asia-European duo will be able to meet in person for the completion of their collaborative project and to sustain their existing partnership.

6) Romea Muryn (Poland)

7) Francisco Lobo (Portugal)

Mobility route: Europe to Asia

Romea and Francisco are both travelling to Kaluga, Russian Federation to partake in the 'Monuments of Collectivism' workshop, investigating the changing role of public spaces, their social significance and programming methods from a historical and contemporary perspective. A series of workshops will then be carried out together with the local community to explore and discuss how they would build a public space of their own and this discussion process will be filmed and premiered at the upcoming Archstoyanie Festival in 2019.

The project itself touches on an important topic of the intersection of art, urban spaces and society. It proposes an alternative approach in considering the evolving role of public spaces, while focusing on preservation and restructuring. The project includes an active involvement from the local community, where students are activated to design and construct one or a series of built structures; thus, inviting responses and discussions. Overall, the application fulfils *Mobility First!*'s objectives to support projects that incorporate artistic creation, community involvement and in-depth cultural exchanges.



Selected applications from organisations

	NAME OF ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	COUNTRY WHERE ACTIVITY IS HELD	SUPPORTED ARTISTS OR CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS
8-9	Space One	Gender Hierarchy: Recycling its Errors (practice-led research project)	Seoul, Korea	Florian Müller (Germany); Lisa Klosterkötter (Germany)
10-12	Maya Dance Theatre	'Movement: Directing/Teaching Lab' Training and Artist Residency with IPTanz	Berlin and Cologne, Germany	Kavitha V. Krishnan (Singapore); Eva Tey Yi Qi (Malaysia); Subastian Tan Bo Hern (Singapore)
13-16	ARTJOG	Artists' Residency and Exhibition at ARTJOG	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	Elisabeth Schimana (Austria); Charles Lim Yong (Singapore); Poklong Anading (Philippines); Ryan Villamael (Philippines)
17-20	Edinburgh International Film Festival	World Perspectives at the 73 rd Edinburgh International Film Festival	Edinburgh, United Kingdom	Amberley Jo Aumua (New Zealand); Becs Arahanga (New Zealand); Miranda Nation (Australia); Rima Das (India)
21-24	The Performance Space	Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art	Sydney, Australia	John Vea (Australia); Matthieu Goeury (Belgium); Jaimie Waititi (New Zealand); Jermaine Dean (New Zealand)



25-27	La Colectiva Cultural Association	BAC Madrid #0 – Biennial of the Arts of the Body, Image and Movement of Madrid	Madrid, Spain	Fiona Winning (Australia); Victoria Hunt (Australia); Tadasu Takamine (Japan)
28-30	KADIST	Superhero Summit	Paris, France	Sabih Ahmed (India); Lantian Xie (China); Taus Makhacheva (Russian Federation)

Remarks from the selection committee:

1) Gender Hierarchy: Recycling its Errors

Gender Hierarchy: Recycling its Errors is part 2 of an ongoing research project organised by Space One, that addresses the lack of awareness and need for more inclusive discourse on how hierarchy affects gender and society. This project then brings together artists, researchers, curators and theorists in the form of exhibitions, performances, lectures, talks and screenings.

The application relates to an important, contemporary global issue, which is gender. The project demonstrates strong conceptual work coming from an independent art space that appears to want to deepen artistic discourse and to continually build on the *Gender Hierarchy* platform. The fact that it is taking on board a platform to address the lack of awareness and the need for broader and more inclusive discourse, especially from the gender perspective in an arguably largely patriarchal society of South Korea, is worthy of support. It is not an easy terrain to be working in.

Additionally, it brings together a large cross-section of people; from artists, researchers, curators to theorists and provides multi-disciplinary platforms in the form of exhibitions, performances, lectures, talks and screenings.

Further, project enables a desire of a real "twinning" between two independent and productive art spaces from different continents and cultures. The whole project is definitely oriented towards long-term and sustained impact. Also, the application is well presented and the budget is very clear.



2) 'Movement: Directing/Teaching Lab' Training and Artist Residency with IPTanz

3 members of Maya Dance Theatre will be participating in Movement: Directing/Teaching Lab organised by IUGTE association in Berlin, Germany which will aid in diversifying the supported artists' professional dance vocabulary. Master classes and workshops for independent dancers in Germany will also be conducted during the artists' residency with IPTanz. In addition, a new collaborative dance production with local German dancers will also be produced.

The application is an international artistic co-production, including art creation, capacity building, and social impact. Through the residency, master classes and workshops, there is a strong element of knowledge exchange and skills transfer. In addition, this cultural exchange project also incorporates an intersection between art and health: to achieve a desired body image, many people spend lots of money on different treatments and beauty products which might have adverse effects on their health. The collaborative dance performance that will be created at the end of the programme will be exploring factors that makes people want to go for such treatments and why it is important for them to keep up with the changing global trend of body image.

This application is also a good example of 'slow travel' where the grantees do not travel across the world for a one-off performance and flying off again, but rather to have a longer and deeper immersion in their destination country, which provides a higher potential for long-term impact. The application is also well presented, the budget is simple but clear including the position of Mobility First!'s support alongside other funders.

3) Artists' Residency and Exhibition at ARTJOG

This is an artist residency where supported cultural professionals will visit art institutions, engage in archives and historical research, collaborate with the local community and present their works during an exhibition at ARTJOG.

ARTJOG has grown in strength from year to year, and has ensured a strong curation that has distinguished itself as a highly anticipated art show in the region. Once again, ARTJOG is evolving to become Yogyakarta's International Contemporary Art Festival, with more emphasis on the international as well as a festival that includes performance and the performing arts. It has also ensured greater engagement of its artists with the city by having invited artists do residencies and making work that responds to the history, its people, its materials and its contexts. This application, which comprises a mix of both European and Southeast Asian artists, is an endeavour worthy of support.



4) “World Perspectives” at the 73rd Edinburgh International Film Festival

The Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) is the world's longest continually running film festival. In its 73rd edition, the festival prides itself in connecting the United Kingdom and the international film industry and exposing the audience to a wider film culture. Films from Asia will play a vital role in this year's programming, in particular from countries such as Australia, India, China, New Zealand and Thailand.

This application will bring an unusual focus on artists who are not often under the spotlight, who are women, and who are young artists from Asian countries barely represented in applications (i.e. New Zealand). Thus, it represents a fantastic opportunity for these individuals.

The Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) is intimate in its scale yet ambitious in its scope as it seeks to bring attention to innovative young talent. EIFF aims for 50/50 and the presence of the supported practitioners will contribute towards the wider discussion on the role and position of women in the film industry and society. Further, attendance at EIFF provides numerous career and skills development opportunities.

5) Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art

Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art presents an extensive selection of inspiring experimental art performances, installations, parties, workshops and conversations by artists from Australia and the Asia Pacific.

Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art is a well-regarded platform to experience performance works of quality and the cutting edge. Performance Space as the organizer and Jeff Khan, the artistic director, ensures strongly curated programmes that have distinguished Liveworks to be an important platform in the Asia Pacific. Jeff Khan is always engaged and his international delegates program is well selected that results in an expanded market for artists.

The group of practitioners selected to attend the festival are a good mix of a performance artist, a curator, a digital multidisciplinary artist, and a photographer – some of young and others, more experienced; some are first-timers at the event, some are alumni of the Liveworks Lab of previous years. All artists have relevant experience and would greatly benefit from the festival in terms of expanding their network and increasing their exposure via exhibitions, performances, and talks.



6) BAC Madrid #0 – Biennial of the Arts of the Body, Image and Movement of Madrid

The BAC Madrid is a new project of exhibition, production, training and meeting in the confluence between the Arts of the Body, the Image and Movement that will be held in Madrid with a programme of interactive installations, performance encounters, meetings, screenings, workshops and seminars

It is worthy to support this grounds-up initiative as it is an inter- and multi-disciplinary platform focused on the intersections of Body, Image and Movement - an area of work which is non-mainstream. The awards acknowledges the practitioners who have many years contributed to this particular area of work, and who may not always be understood.

This application is proposed by one of the most inventive biennales in Europe in the field of dance and image, and both artists and curators will benefit from the mobility. Additionally, Catarina Saraiva (Portugal), Marta Rodríguez (Spain) and Eduardo Bonito (Brazil) – the founders of La Colectiva Asociación Cultural (event organisers) - are known for their learned curatorship in contemporary performance. The application is supported by a true international building-partnership, and demonstrates very high artistic potential.

7) Superhero Summit

The Superhero Summit was conceptualised with the intent to re-examine the world and the definition of super-powers in different landscapes, geographies and desires today. The Summit will bring together artists, academics, architects, and 'superheroes' to offer new readings of power and agency. For instance, what are the sites for contemporary and futuristic folklore, and what are feminist readings of heroes from the past? What are the forms of power and transformation offered by artists?

The project provides an interesting and progressive approach towards discourse and embodies the belief that contemporary artists make an important contribution to a progressive society; their work often addressing key issues of our time.

The Summit is working across practices and disciplines, attempting to broach conversations between practitioners in varying sectors who may share similar concerns around contemporary representation of 'superheroes', superpowers, marginalised narratives and landscapes in a globalised context. The Summit aims to open new ways of thinking about places through the economy of signs, apparitions, aspirations, utopias and dystopias. Very interesting project worthy of support.



The **Mobility First!** Selection Committee is comprised of 2 independent experts from Asia and Europe, and ASEF.

Mobility First! Selection Committee

Independent experts

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Enabler & Cultural Worker

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For more information, please visit: <https://mobilityfirst.asef.org/>
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