

2021 Cycle 1 – Results

15 March 2021

Singapore

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In the area of culture, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes cultural relations by connecting artists, cultural professionals, arts organisations, public institutions, networks and museums in Asia and Europe. We respond to current gaps in cultural cooperation between Asia and Europe by providing access to information, facilitating cultural mobility and promoting artistic diversity.

Mobility First! – ASEF Cultural Mobility Initiative is a mobility grants programme that supports the mutual cultural practice of those working in the arts. Since it was launched four years ago, the programme has supported the cross-border mobility of over 300 cultural professionals between 48 ASEM countries. This year, in response to the continuing restrictions on travel and physical gatherings due to Covid-19, Mobility First! offers virtual collaboration grants to artists and arts managers from Asia and Europe to jointly create new works or texts. This initiative reaffirms the importance of creating opportunities for professional networking among cultural professionals especially during this pandemic.

For the 1st cycle of Mobility First's new collaboration grants, 323 artists & cultural professionals from 44 ASEM countries submitted a total of 105 joint proposals, of which, 30 are from arts organisations and 75 from individual pairs or threes. From this pool, **15 collaboration proposals have been selected**, 7 from arts organisations and 8 from individuals. In total, **56 artists & cultural professionals (31 Asians and 25 Europeans)** will receive support from this cycle of Mobility First.

Some highlights and trends from this cycle that might be of interest to those working in the cultural sector and for future applicants:

- **Type of activity:** The most proposals received were for virtual or hybrid events (webinars, virtual conferences and forums), followed by research and trainings/workshops.
- **Format:** 60% of the projects proposed are hybrid while 40% are purely virtual

- **Output:** Written text and videos were the most common proposed outputs of collaborations.
- **Field of arts:** Collaborations in visual and performing arts were the most proposed activities, followed by music, film, digital/AI, and interdisciplinary arts.
- **Themes:** Some common themes were art & mental health, solidarity and resilience during Covid-19 and transformations in business models and engagement formats in the new normal.
- Applications with participants from underrepresented countries and uncommon collaboration pairings were also received

Overview of selected proposals

1. *Forging Resilience and Mutual Independence: Public Practices in the Everyday*

By international Forum for InterMedia Art (iFIMA)

Collaborators: Susanne Helmes (Germany), Dominique Jacqueline Lämmlli d'Aujourd'hui (Switzerland), Chen Kang Lee (Malaysia), May Ling Hui (China), Tsetsebadam Batbayar (Mongolia), Khin Thehtar Latt (Myanmar)

A webinar series featuring 3 episodes that offers opportunities for participants and online audiences to generate knowledge and strategies for real world scenarios and to re-examine the issues and conditions in relation to their art practices and activities in the everyday. The shared and mutually generated experience and knowledge from the online discussions and exchanges will act as research materials to initiate and form platforms for further artistic and textual productions. Through this project, new connections can be initiated for networking and future collaborative projects across the region

2. *WE ARE OCEAN_Venice-Jakarta-Stockholm The Walk*

By ARTPORT_making waves

Collaborators: Anne-Marie Melster (Germany), Pietro Consolandi (Italy), Fabio Cavallari (Italy), Tita Salina (Indonesia), Irwan Ahmett (Indonesia), Åsa Andersson (Sweden)

A collective project where the collaborators undertake three walks in different cities in Asia & Europe highlighting the importance of ocean health and impact of our anthropocentric activities. They will collect images, videos, impressions of the walk which they can transform into contributions to the project also by poems, short stories, drawings etc. The project connects three cities and links the activities of 5 artists from these regions without the need to be physically in one place. The project creates an area of global exchange of experiences in which the participants of the walks will have the impression that they feel their entanglement with all three places. The artistic walking activities can be performed in each city individually and independently but will in its gathering create a place of common thinking. The outcomes will be summarised in a short film and a virtual conference connecting all three cities

3. **Curating on the Web - Subverting the mechanisms and traditional models of producing and distributing contemporary art and culture**

By Walkin Studios

Collaborators: Vivek Chockalingam (India), Marialaura Ghidini (Italy), Gaia Tedone (Italy), Vidya Shivadas (India), Padmini Ray Murray (United Kingdom)

A 2-day webinar and virtual conference “Curating on the Web” focusing on curatorial interventions that challenge mechanisms and traditional models of producing and displaying contemporary art; offering new ways of imagining the system of contemporary art and 'being online'. The webinar includes presentation of the results of an international research collaboration between 5 arts and design professionals and 6 guest practitioners, guided discussions, and a series of interactive activities to build critical and practical skills in digital curation.

4. **Time & Realities**

By Undecided Productions

Collaborators: Marie David (France), Long Hoang Nguyen (Viet Nam), Elise Luong (France), Thao Linh Dinh (Viet Nam)

An international collaboration between artists and curators that proposes to journey together, both physically and virtually, on the Reunification Express train in Vietnam with the aim of producing new works that would be presented offline and further distributed virtually. The project is also an artist residency and mentorship programme. The framework allows curator-artist pairs to develop their co-productions before and after the journey, and notably allows the opportunity to do intensive field research together.

5. *Between You and Me*

By Directors Cut Theatre Company Ltd

Collaborators: Heather Ward (United Kingdom), Lazaros Pasdekis (Greece), Eliza Williams (United Kingdom), Varun Gupta (India), Himali Kothari (India), Nikhil Katara (India)

6 artists from Asia & Europe, a painter, a writer, an actor, a sound engineer, a producer-director and a musician, will come together to construct a new performance with the aim of exploring the intersection between theatre, fine art, music, movement and text, bringing research and stories from their own cultures and communities. The project also seeks to highlight the concept of distance and barriers (physical, cultural and ideological). The breaking of these barriers will create possibilities for the artists to develop a pedagogy to create new works in this new normal.

6. *Taking the Harkat Virtual Interactive Stage Global*

By Harkat Studios

Collaborators: Karan Talwar (India), Michaela Talwar (Germany), Aditi Kashyap (India), Sheba Alexander (India)

A virtual gathering and workshop of new media artists from Asia and Europe to explore and exchange ideas on the possibilities of the internet, including existing digital tools, innovation and ideation, in facilitating continuing cultural exchange between the two regions. The outcomes of the workshop will be channeled to develop collaborative performances harness the strength of the internet and explore

the triangular relationship between the audience, the performer and the stage in the post-internet context.

7. *Library in the Forest*

By ODD

Collaborators: Cristina Bogdan (Romania), Mriganka Madhukaillya (India), Aman Chandra (India), Ani Dalal (India), Deepshikha Pegu (India)

An experimental educational session in the Kazaringa forest in Assam, India to function as a lab where thinkers, artists, designers and scientists come together to exchange knowledge leading to a more integrated educational and cultural experience. The session brings together educators in the field of creative media, film, psychology, design, journalism, philosophy, biology, environment & sustainability, and architecture. For the long-term, the collaborators aim to establish a permanent space in Kaziranga and offer a larger selection of transdisciplinary education that blends indigenous knowledge to the understanding of the contemporary world to the community.

8. *(Virtual) case clinics for arts and culture organisations*

Collaborators: Matina Magkour (Greece) and Aishwarya Tipnis (India)

An international cultural exchange initiative based on peer-to-peer mentorship model. Two virtual case clinics will focus on generating new ideas and ways to approach the transformation of business models in arts organisations and the how to work with communities in this new normal. The outcomes will be published in a short guide or text.

9. *Lithuanian - Indian Folktales Exchange Program for Schools*

Collaborators: Veronika Guzelyte (Lithuania) and Babita Das (India)

A series of workshops that would allow students to maintain their connection to their heritage as well as provide a window into another culture through folktales and stories. The collaborators, both art educators, designed this intercultural project to promote intercultural respect, creativity and ethnic identity by strengthening

intercultural understanding in schools. The outcomes of the workshop will be published as an artbook.

10. Finding Your Voice

Collaborators: Corinne Enquist (Croatia) and Sugato Bhaduri (India)

A knowledge exchange project focusing on music & well-being- how music & spirituality can be used to unlock artistic expression and creativity. A written text that highlights the effects of music and directed artistic activity on self-expression, creation and health will be published.

11. Let It Be

Collaborators: Sukla Bar (India), Jean-Frédéric Chevallier (France) and Jaba Hansda (India)

A videodance that weaves together contemporary performing arts outdoor and cinematographic experimentation for online viewers. 'Let It Be' would be a kind of "film-theatre" – a combination of different present elements, enhancing the strength and beauty of each as well as the surprising aesthetic effects that their multiple combinations unexpectedly bring up.

12. Healing With Sound

Collaborators: Pranta Shatabdi Majumder (Germany) and Proggna Paromita Majumder (Bangladesh)

A short film featuring sound & narration that will be used as material for sound healing workshops. Vocal tones of Indian classical music will be used to evoke emotions within the music and transmit the experience to the audience. A collaboration between a singer-composer and a writer, 'Healing With Sound' aims to connect art with well-being using sound, narration and meditation.

13. Frozen Jungle

Collaborators: Pekka Pylkkanen (Finland), Visa Mertanen (Finland) and B.C. Manjunath (India)

An online musical concert featuring an original arrangement by 3 composers from Asia and Europe. The core of the project is about sharing the different experiences and artistic practices among this highly capable group of musicians, coming from different stylistic backgrounds and cultures. Tackling physical distance using video, multi-camera shooting and video screen sharing combined with high-quality audio recording, the collaborators aim to create an intimate atmosphere and feeling of a real live concert.

14. reflections / refractions

Collaborators: Hai Dang Ho Nguyen (Viet Nam), Nhung Nguyen (Viet Nam) and Andrew Health (United Kingdom)

An artbook that explores how memories are formed and reformed. Artworks are also presented with accompanying poetry and soundscape using found material. Drawing inspiration from Kimberly A. Wade and Maryanne Garry's hot air balloon experiment in 2002, the project raises the question of whether we are but reflections of our experience and tries to answer what constitutes a unique individuality. Using old material to create a new experience, the project is an experiment of how one person can relive certain memories time and time again, each time different from the last.

15. Portraits

Collaborators: Jana Bednářová (Slovakia) and Alakesh Dutta (India)

Paintings on canvas featuring wild forest and local communities around them and documented on short film. The wild nature is a place for contemplation which dissolves the geographical and physical boundaries. The project will work with the idea to portray the fragments of wild nature and convey the story and importance of understanding the relationship between human and nature. hand. The collaboration on painting and music will result in a short video, which will be an opportunity for the artists to see their medium in a new perspective and find the conclusion in the same theme by working in visual art and music.

Follow their progress on mobilityfirst.ASEF.org and on Instagram [@culture_asef!](https://www.instagram.com/culture_asef/)

List of selected proposals from organisations

	NAME OF ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY TITLE	SUPPORTED ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS
1-6	international Forum for InterMedia Art (iFIMA)	<i>Forging Resilience and Mutual Independence: Public Practices in the Everyday</i>	Susanne Helmes (Germany) Dominique Jacqueline Lämmli d'Aujourd'hui (Switzerland) Chen Kang Lee (Malaysia) May Ling Hui (China) Tsetsegbadam Batbayar (Mongolia) Khin Thehtar Latt (Myanmar)
7-12	ARTPORT_making waves	<i>WE ARE OCEAN_Venice -Jakarta- Stockholm The Walk</i>	Anne-Marie Melster (Germany) Pietro Consolandi (Italy) Fabio Cavallari (Italy) Tita Salina (Indonesia) Irwan Ahmett (Indonesia) Åsa Andersson (Sweden)
13-17	Walkin Studios	<i>Curating on the Web - Subverting the mechanisms and traditional models of producing and distributing contemporary art and culture</i>	Vivek Chockalingam (India) Marialaura Ghidini (Italy) Gaia Tedone (Italy) Vidya Shivadas (India) Padmini Ray Murray (United Kingdom)
18-21	Undecided Productions	<i>Time & Realities</i>	Marie David (France) Long Hoang Nguyen (Viet Nam) Elise Luong (France) Thao Linh Dinh (Viet Nam)
22-27	Directors Cut Theatre Company Ltd	<i>Between You And Me</i>	Heather Ward (United Kingdom) Lazaros Pasdekis (Greece) Eliza Williams (United Kingdom) Varun Gupta (India)

			Himali Kothari (India) Nikhil Katara (India)
28-31	Harkat Studios	Taking the Harkat Virtual Interactive Stage GLOBAL	Karan Talwar (India) Michaela Talwar (Germany) Aditi Kashyap (India) Sheba Alexander (India)
32-37	ODD	Library in the forest	Cristina Bogdan (Romania) Mriganka Madhukaillya (India) Aman Chandra (India) Ani Dalal (India) Deepshikha Pegu (India)

List of selected proposals from individual groups

ACTIVITY TITLE		SUPPORTED ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS
38-39	(Virtual) case clinics for arts and culture organisations	MATINA MAGKOU (Greece) Aishwarya Tipnis (India)
40-41	Lithuanian - Indian Folktales Exchange Program for Schools	Veronika Guzelyte (Lithuania) Babita Das (India)
42-43	Finding your voice	Corinne Enquist (Croatia) Sugato Bhaduri (India)
44-46	LET IT BE	Sukla Bar (India) Jean-Frédéric Chevallier (France) Jaba Hansda (India)
47-48	Healing with sound	Pranta Shatabdi Majumder (Germany) Progna Paromita Majumder (Bangladesh)
49-51	Frozen Jungle	Pekka Pylkkanen (Finland) Visa Mertanen (Finland)

		B.C. Manjunath (India)
52-54	<i>reflections / refractions</i>	Hai Dang Ho Nguyen (Viet Nam) Andrew Health (United Kingdom) Nhung Nguyen (Viet Nam)
55-56	<i>Portraits</i>	Jana Bednárová (Slovakia) Alakesh Dutta (India)