

Five awarded Cultural Medallion

By **CORRIE TAN**

THEATRE practitioner Thirunalan Sasitharan, 55, still has no idea who nominated him for Singapore's highest arts honour, the Cultural Medallion.

After receiving the award from President Tony Tan Keng Yam at a presentation ceremony held at the Istana yesterday, Sasitharan told The Straits Times: "I feel honoured. I don't think I've done so much that I deserve such an award. But I think what convinced me was that it was remarkable to know that this was recognition also from the arts community. This award really is about them."

Drawing from an iconic monologue in William Shakespeare's Macbeth, he said during his thank-you speech: "What can I possibly say? I am but a poor player who has strutted and fretted this hour upon the stage, and will one day be heard no more."

It was the arts educator's first time at the Istana, with his wife and two daughters. The theatre practitioner and former Straits Times journalist is one of the co-founders of the Theatre Training and Research Programme in Singapore, now named the Intercultural Theatre Institute.

Four other key individuals in the arts received the Cultural Medallion yesterday. They are artist and critic Ho Ho Ying, 77; writer Jamaludeen Mohamed Sali, 73; artist Milenko Prvacki, 61; and choral conductor Jennifer Tham, 50.

This year, the National Arts



Cultural Medallion recipients Jennifer Tham and Milenko Prvacki speaking with President Tony Tan before the presentation ceremony at the Istana yesterday. ST PHOTO: NURIA LING

Council, which administers the awards, will introduce the Cultural Medallion Speaker Series, where the public can meet the Cultural Medallion recipients, hear their stories and discuss issues about Singapore art. This will be held at the National Library on

Oct 28 and Nov 4. Admission is free, but registration is required.

To date, including the five this year, the Cultural Medallion has been presented to 109 artists since it was instituted in 1979. It is given to those who have achieved artistic excellence in

their fields. Former recipients include musician Iskandar Ismail, writer Ho Minfong and the late theatre practitioner Kuo Pao Kun.

Cultural Medallion recipients are eligible for an \$80,000 grant, which can be used to fund a new arts project or multiple projects

over the recipient's lifetime.

At the ceremony last night, nine Young Artist Awards were handed out by Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts. This is the most number of Young Artist Award recipients in a single year since the award's inception.

These are for those aged 35 or below who have shown promise in artistic excellence. Recipients can apply for study or project grants of up to \$20,000, up from the \$10,000 in previous years.

This year's recipients are: visual artist Genevieve Chua, 28; film-maker Liao Jiekai, 28; film-maker Looi Wan Ping, 35; sound artist and composer Darren Ng, 33; writer O Thiam Chin, 35; film-maker and multimedia artist Brian Gothong Tan, 32; visual artist Tan Wee Lit, 34; dancer Zhuo Zihao, 31; and playwright and director Zizi Azah Abdul Majid, 32.

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■ SEE LIFE! PAGES C6-7

■ To register for the Cultural Medallion Speaker Series, go to <http://bit.ly/Ot3WXy>

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LASALLE
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS



MILENKO PRVACKI
Cultural Medallion Award (Visual Arts)
Senior Fellow / Former Dean of Fine Arts



GENEVIEVE CHUA
Young Artist Award (Visual Arts)
Alumna, Fine Arts, Class of 2004



TAN WEE LIT
Young Artist Award (Visual Arts)
Alumnus, Fine Arts, Class of 2003

OUR LATEST AWARD WINNERS ARE ANOTHER REFLECTION OF OUR EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

Our winning streak continues with Milenko Prvacki, Senior Fellow and former Dean of Fine Arts, being awarded Singapore's most prestigious arts honour – the Cultural Medallion Award for Visual Arts. Tan Wee Lit and Genevieve Chua, two of our illustrious alumni, clinched the Young Artist Award for Visual Arts. Zizi Azah Abdul Majid, our part-time lecturer, received the Young Artist Award for Theatre. This unprecedented series of achievements, from faculty to alumni, is a clear testament of how excellence is truly the defining factor for LASALLE College of the Arts.

These wins bolster our track record of distinction that includes the internationally-acclaimed Design & Art Direction (D&AD) Awards, regionally-celebrated Crowbar Awards where LASALLE was the top institution two years in a row, Singapore International Film Festival's Silver Screen Awards, and more.

To Milenko, Wee Lit, Genevieve, and Zizi, our warmest congratulations.

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THE STRAITS TIMES
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Life!



CHAMPIONNING THE arts

Five arts practitioners were feted for their contributions to Singapore's art scene last night at the Istana. **ADELINE CHIA** talks to the Cultural Medallion recipients.

C6&7

Defending the arts are (from left) Ho Ho Ying, T. Sasitharan, Jennifer Tham, Jamaludeen Mohamed Sali and Milenko Prvacki.

