The NAFA Neighbourhood

NAFA’s three purpose-built campuses, situated along Bencoolen Street, form part of Singapore’s bustling arts and civic district at the Bras Basah-Bugis area.

Bras Basah-Bugis Civic District

Bras Basah-Bugis today is a unique complementary blend of the new and the old, an area rich in architectural and cultural heritage. The historic district heralds an exciting future with new city campuses alongside existing arts housing. It is the focal point for arts activities, as well as home to art colleges, commercial schools and city campuses such as the Singapore Management University and LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts. With the continuous sprouting of more such institutions, an imminent influx of over 10,000 artists and students is expected, redefining the envisioned future as Singapore’s hub for arts, culture, learning and entertainment.

The new National Library and Singapore Management University city campus, together with a number of housing developments and the proposed Singapore Arts School, are transforming the area into a vibrant arts, culture, entertainment and learning hub. A series of pedestrian malls and plazas provide lively gathering spaces for bazaars and outdoor events and activities. An Urban Entertainment Centre, housing a dynamic and exciting mix of arts and entertainment facilities under one roof, is also set to be developed in Victoria Street.

The National Library

The brand new, state-of-the-art National Library building at Victoria Street, which opened its doors on 25 July 2005, houses a total start-up collection size of over 634,000 items across a floor area of over 58,000 sq m. It is five times larger than the old building at Stamford Road, and comprises the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library with its core focus on Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections; the Central Lending Library which offers a strong fiction collection and award-winning materials in all of the four official languages; the National Arts Council’s 615-seat Drama Centre, as well as underground zones for exhibitions and performances.

The Waterloo Street Arts Belt

Envisioned as a unique locale for the arts, this belt is the heart of the city, the Waterloo Street Arts Belt was restored and developed over five years at an approximate cost of S$77 million. The arts groups housed in the arts belt include ACTION Theatre, the Chinese Calligraphy Society of Singapore, Dance Ensemble Singapore, Young Musicians’ Society and Sculpture Square.

The arts belt also serves as a synergistic link between nightly arts centres and institutions, such as the National Museum, Singapore Art Museum and The Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay. The vibrant area promises to be a conduit for artistic talents and a springboard for Singapore’s eventual transformation into a Renaissance City.

Singapore Art Museum

The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is one of the first art museums with international standard museum facilities and programmes in Southeast Asia. It houses the national art collection of Singapore and has the largest collection in 20th-century Southeast Asian art by a public institution internationally. SAM also partners NAFA in its “Public Art @ SAM” initiative, which features traditional as well as contemporary works by NAFA students in various disciplines, such as Chinese and Western painting, ceramics, sculpture and printmaking.

The Singapore Management University

Singapore’s only university campus in the civic centre, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is home to 3,000 students and comprises four schools specialising in business, accountancy, economics & the social sciences, and information systems. The University’s sprawling urban campus, with its buildings in the midst of lush greenery, brings a youthful vibrancy and vitality to the historic and culturally rich Bras Basah district.

Also in close proximity to NAFA are two specialist institutions for nurturing future artists and creative professionals. Both are currently under construction. Located at Arts terrace and set to open its doors in 2008, The Arts School will be Singapore’s first independent pre-tertiary school to offer a unique integrated arts and academic learning experience for youths aged 13 to 18. The new campus of LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts in the Rochor area will add greater vibrancy to this city neighbourhood designated as the arts, culture, learning & entertainment hub of Singapore.