HAT'S it like to attend the school whose alumni list includes Martin Scorsese, Spike Lee, Oliver Stone, Lee Ang, Tony Kushner and Billy Crystal?

"It's so intense," says National University of Singapore philosophy graduate Lai Wee-lee, who started classes at the Tisch Asia campus at Kay Siang Road last September for a Master of Fine Arts degree in film and television.

Mr Lai and Singapore Management University marketing graduate Amalia Yunus are the only two Singaporeans in a class of 33 that includes students from the United States, Europe, South Korea and India.

"We are pushed out into the field to learn through shooting assignments almost every day," says Mr Lai.

Their teachers, so far, have included veteran industry players like Jennifer Ruff, the assistant editor for the critically acclaimed 2001 Alfonso Cuaron movie Y Tu Mama Tambien; and Malcolm Creme, who worked as the sound recordist for Peter Jackson's Lord Of The Rings movies.

"It's great that there is just a small group of us," says Ms Amalia. "We have access to all the equipment and all the attention from the instructors, instead of having to fight with thousands of film undergraduates at the New York campus."

She plans to venture into film producing after graduating, and Mr Lai is thinking of becoming a cinematographer.

"Anything to do with the arts is difficult," he says. "Hopefully, we will find a way somehow."