

15 stories about Singaporeans from the 1970s to the 1990s

A film project featuring 15 local filmmakers aims to tell the untold stories of ordinary people during Singapore's nation-building years.



15 Singaporean filmmakers will be creating short films about the lives of ordinary Singaporeans during the 1970s to the 1990s.

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28 Apr 2017 06:22PM

(Updated: 28 Apr 2017 10:51PM)

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SINGAPORE: An Indian lady who stood tall in the all-male world of barbers in Little India. A Chinese gangster who became a caretaker for old people who lived by themselves. A blind Malay man who went against all odds to follow his dreams of becoming a musician.

These were among countless inspiring stories that veteran film producer Daniel Yun uncovered while researching his latest project - a series of short films that looks at ordinary Singaporeans who lived from the early 1970s to the late 1990s.

Tentatively titled *15 Short Films - From The Ground Up*, the project is a collaboration between Yun's Blue3Asia film outfit and the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC).

It will feature films directed by 15 Singaporean filmmakers. They range from notable names like Eric Khoo, Kelvin Tong, K Rajagopal, Boo Junfeng, Kirsten Tan and Chai Yee Wei, as well as up-and-coming directors and online figures, such as Jianhao Tan and Butterworks' Chong Yu Lun.

The short films, which run from between five and 10 minutes, will be individually released online over the next 18 months beginning in June 2017.

Yun said they are in talks with cinema operators, Singapore Airlines, StarHub and Mediacorp for possible release on their respective platforms. “These can be shown in-between programmes, before a movie, or on KrisWorld, for example.”

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The short film project will also be a privately funded endeavour. The NVPC is seeking donations from foundations and corporations, and kickstarting a crowdfunding campaign through the [Giving.sg platform \(https://www.giving.sg/campaigns/15shortfilms\)](https://www.giving.sg/campaigns/15shortfilms).

STORIES THAT GO BEYOND NATION-BUILDING

Yun, who serves as the project's curator and producer, came up with the idea as a reaction to the big themes of SG50, including his own film, 1965.

“Collectively, the 15 stories will be able to show a side of Singaporeans during this particular period that we feel is really largely untold because everything was about the survival issues of nation-building,” he said.

“Invariably, these will show the way of life in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s that some of us know, some only hear about, and some really don't know about.”

Added NVPC CEO Melissa Kwee: “We know a lot of the stories from the 1950s and 1960s because they're part of our common histories. And then from 2000 onwards, everything's on YouTube. But there was this period of time that's actually obscure.”

While the specific real-life subjects for the films have yet to be finalised, Yun and his collaborating directors have been busy unearthing stories while visiting the archives at the National Library, Mediacorp and Singapore Press Holdings.

Yun said there are now around 55 of these unusual stories to choose from, and some filmmakers are also independently looking at their own story options.

With the line-up of directors varying in terms of age, one can expect different approaches to the stories, he added.

For 51-year-old Rajagopal, working on a short film about those times was appropriate.

“My formative years were in the 1970s, and as a young adult, I became interested in the arts during the 1980s and 1990s. Those are very important years in my life,” he said.

In contrast, 25-year-old Chong belongs to a new generation of YouTube-savvy filmmakers for whom the past decades are simply a part of history.

“For me, there's no emotional connection yet. And I believe that's the same case with a whole bunch of people (from my generation). But I hope to tell a story that can bring us closer to history in a more emotive way.”

Source: CNA/mm

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