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DE FRANCE
À SINGAPOUR**

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MISS TRAVELLING? DISCOVER FRANCE IN SINGAPORE WITH A SPECIAL EDITION OF THE VOILAH! FRANCE SINGAPORE FESTIVAL 2020

The festival will underpin the resilience of France-Singapore partnerships with a mix of close to 50 on-site and online programmes to increase the access of Singaporeans to quality French experiences

Singapore, 12 October 2020 - Singapore's favourite French festival, **vOilah! France Singapore Festival**, will return for a special edition from 22 October to 22 November 2020. Presented by the Embassy of France in Singapore, this year's line-up carries a diverse range of on-site, and for the first time, virtual experiences to showcase the best of French and Singaporean innovation and creativity.

As the first foreign cultural festival to be held in Singapore since the start of the pandemic, vOilah! 2020 takes on a greater significance this year as it bears testament to the resilience of both nations, and the strength of our partnerships. With a total of 110 Singaporean and French participating partners, a record number since the founding of vOilah!, the festival provides a line-up of close to 50 exciting and authentic French experiences through a unique Singaporean lens to help locals discover a slice of France close to home.

The Ambassador of France to Singapore, Marc Abensour, says "Despite these unprecedented times, vOilah! 2020 again brings together French and Singaporean communities, corporates and organisations to create the space for conversation, facilitate partnerships and deepen existing collaborations in the long term. Opened in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the visits to Singapore by Georges Clemenceau, the former French premier, the festival is placed under the symbolism of resilience throughout history. Due to its hybrid format, it will also be an experimentation field for new event formats and will promote, more than ever, innovative collaborations between our countries".

An opening that pays tribute to our countries' resilience and partnerships

The festival will open with activities that commemorate the 100th anniversary of the visits by former French premier Georges Clemenceau to Singapore.



The opening programmes commemorating the 100th anniversary of Georges Clemenceau (from left to right): Clemenceau in Singapore exhibition and conference at National Museum of Singapore, and *The Veil of Happiness*

A symbol of resilience in France, Clemenceau successfully led the country through the end of the First World War. Admirer of Asian arts and civilisations, he was recognised for his effort during his visits to Singapore in 1920, which saw the official naming of Clemenceau Avenue after him. His visit and his legacy is documented in an exhibition ***Clemenceau in Singapore*** at the National Museum of Singapore in partnership with Paris's Musée Clemenceau that will retrace his journey here, and provide a rare glimpse into the social life of Singapore 100 years ago. This will also be complemented by an online conference which will explore the intertwined destinies between him and Southeast Asian political activist, Lim Boon Keng, with the participation of former French National Library president and minister **Jean-Noël Jeanneney**.

In addition, the festival presents the performance of ***The Veil of Happiness***, which revives a century-old classic play written by Clemenceau through a dramatised reading at Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre of Wild Rice@Funan. Set within a backdrop of Clemenceau's imagination of China, it is brought to life through oriental-inspired music by renowned composer Gabriel Fauré, local actors like Janice Koh and Hossan Leong and musicians from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. The performance will be streamed on the festival's Facebook Page to immerse audiences in a witty, fun and entertaining tale about truth and happiness.

Exclusive and diverse offerings for every Singaporean taste

Beyond the opening programmes, there is a smorgasbord of experiences and activities made possible by the multitude of French-Singapore exchanges.

One such exchange is ***Gardens, Plants and Spices***, an exhibition curated through a collaboration between one of France's most renowned garden and plant experts, Pascal Garbe and the Singapore Botanic Gardens. The exhibition will reveal Singapore's lesser-known footprints on French art de vivre by exploring how plants in the region intertwine with French perfumery, gastronomy, decorative arts and the art of gardens. French experts including the Michelin three-star chef Anne-Sophie Pic and representatives from the Singapore Botanic Gardens will engage in a thought-provoking dialogue to shed further light on how emblematic Southeast Asian plants have made their mark in French art of living.

Festival participants keen to have their taste buds tantalised can also look forward to a **selection of food workshops and bespoke menus** designed by partner restaurants for the festival. Participants can embark on a garden food tour before learning to prepare classic French cuisine at *Open Farm*

Community, or even learn from experts like Singaporean Sommelier Gerald Lu, celebrated chef Justin Quek, and chefs at the *Ti Yan Academy* who will induct participants into the many varying flavours of French cuisine.

Feast on unique creations by restaurants just for the festival, which include a pastry named *Le Paris-Brest-Singapour*, created by Odette's three-star Michelin chef Julien Royer that merges flavours of gula melaka, coconut and a rich kaya cream into the classic French dessert. Tiong Bahru Bakery also will retail the *Kaya Croissant* for a limited period as a spin on our favourite breakfast food, the humble Kaya Toast. Both chefs will also conduct online classes to teach you how to whip up those dishes at home.



Tantalise your taste buds with workshops by experts, and bespoke menus especially for the festival, including the creation of Le Paris-Brest-Singapour by Chef Julien Royer (extreme right)

The festival will also engage other senses through innovative new formats, among which is a Virtual Reality (VR) experience at Gardens by the Bay titled **A Virtual Voyage through Masterpieces**. Offering an intimate rendezvous with famous French painters, it allows audiences to literally walk into renowned masterpieces including Monet's iconic water lilies and Gauguin and Manet's masterpieces. Audiences can also put on their creative caps and learn how to create immersive art installations through a series of workshops, and hear from the creators themselves through live-stream sessions with French VR film producers and directors.

In partnership with the 7th edition of the Singapore International Photography Festival (SIPF), vOilah! will also bring to Singapore the acclaimed **Inside Out** project by acclaimed French artist JR, a recipient of the 2011 TED Prize. A mobile photo booth will make several pit stops around different parts of Singapore to capture the portraits of everyday people that form the country's diverse cultural make-up. These portraits will subsequently be printed and exhibited at various locations island-wide.

From still images to moving ones - fans of French cinema can also look out for the long-running **French Film Festival**, which will return from 6 to 22 November. The festival will present its biggest line-up yet of 28 of the feature films, including those which have not yet debuted in France. Part of the French Film Festival will also go online for the first time to give opportunities for more Singaporean to catch the films in their living rooms. More details on French Film Festival will be announced soon.

New patrons and new virtual programmes encourage more to take part in the festival

Sixty per cent of the programmes are virtual, allowing Singaporeans and people from other countries to participate from the comfort of their homes.

A key highlight would be the festival's finale, **Orchestre National d'Île-de-France (National Orchestra of Paris Region) conducted by Kahchun Wong**. An astounding artistic collaboration that traverses geographical boundaries, the performance features innovative technology by French Classical music startup, NomadPlay, and will see Singaporean instrumentalists playing alongside the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France to present French classics such as Claude Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune* and César Franck's *Symphony in D minor*.

Other virtual musical collaborations with local performers include a night of French baroque music titled **Les Goûts réunis** performed by Red Dot Baroque, as well as a presentation of the film **William Christie, the Art of Giving**, a film to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Les Arts Florissants, a world renowned ensemble. It's founder William Christie will also join in the screening to share more about its history and future plans for the ensemble.



Kahchun Wong conducting the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France in Paris on 3 October

As part of the exhibition by artist Marie-Hélène Le Ny **Infinités Plurielles**, which shines a spotlight on the important female figures in the scientific field, audiences will have the opportunity to hear testimonies first-hand through an online conference with women scientists, including former astronaut and minister **Claudie Haigneré**, allowing audiences to gain critical insight into the topic of gender equality. Students considering to further their education in France's top-notch universities and higher education institutions as well as corporates can also take part in the virtual **Choose France! Education & Career Fair** to learn about the experience through a series of webinars.

The newly opened **French Football Academy Singapore**, the second academy to be opened worldwide after New York last year, will offer free training sessions, a single 2 vs 2 elimination tournament and Fit Foot practice for the ones accompanying young players with the World Champions training methods, in presence of UEFA Coaching Licence holder Patrick Vallée.

These are only but a few highlights of this year's festival. The full festival line up can be found in **Annex A**.

In addition to virtual programmes, the festival also features not one, but two familiar faces as patrons who will share their love for French culture, and introduce it to local audiences. A familiar face on local television, **Sharon Au** has been a vocal supporter of all things French and she has been living and working in France since 2018.

“We are fortunate to live in a world where global communities can come together on creative platforms to hold dialogues on important issues, and innovate to bring new ideas to life. Culture should travel, even when we can’t and I’m excited to be part of the festival and to bear witness to this unique blend of Singaporean and French experiences. I hope it will spell bigger things for more cultural collaborations on the horizon.” - Sharon Au

Also coming on board is internationally acclaimed and award-winning theatre practitioner, **Ivan Heng**. The founder of leading professional theatre company Wild Rice, Ivan actively seeks to promote local theatrical talent and bring Singaporean theatre to the world through their productions. Ivan was also a recipient of the Cultural Medallion in 2013, an award that honoured his artistic excellence and contributions to the cultural scene in Singapore.

“I’m glad that through Wild Rice and my role as Festival Patron that I can play a part in helping people fall in love with the boldness and vibrancy of French ideas. Culture and the arts can bring people together across the borders of time and language. It is an excellent way to maintain relationships between people and vOilah! serves as one such platform to bring different communities together - providing an opportunity to celebrate the beauty of diversity even in the midst of a crisis.” - Ivan Heng

For more information on the festival, please visit www.voilah.sg.

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About vOilah! France Singapore Festival

vOilah! France Singapore Festival 2020 returns from 22 October to 22 November 2020. Presented by the Embassy of France in Singapore, the festival, opened in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the visits to Singapore by Georges Clemenceau, the former French premier, is placed under the symbolism of resilience throughout history.

This year, there are about 50 programmes covering culture, education, science and lifestyle, expressing France’s true friendship with Singapore in good times as well as hard times. Due to its

hybrid format, vOilah! 2020 is an experimentation field for new event formats and will promote, more than ever, innovative collaborations between our countries, thanks to the support of 110 partners from France and Singapore.

For more information, visit www.voilah.sg.