



**OPENING REMARKS BY MRS JOSEPHINE TEO, MINISTER FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION, AT LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE
ARTS' 37TH CONVOCATION ON 4 AUGUST 2023, 2.45PM**

Mr Peter Seah, Chairman of LASALLE,

Professor Steve Dixon, President of LASALLE,

Graduands,

Parents,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

1. Good afternoon. My heartiest congratulations to the class of 2023 on your very special day.

2. Completing a diploma or degree education is a significant milestone for anyone. But for your cohort, this journey had an unexpected and exceptional twist – the Covid-19 Pandemic. Without exceptional resilience, resourcefulness, and determination, you would not be here.

3. It was not the education you bargained for, but you have done well, and your families are rightly proud. Speaking as a parent myself, as much as I wish you were spared the many trials and tribulations, I believe you have also emerged stronger in some way, more able to deal with any unexpected challenge that may come your way again.

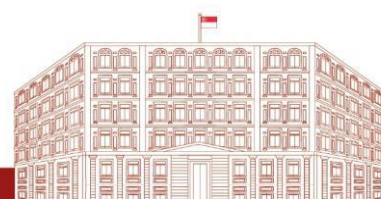
How Technologies like AI will Impact Us

4. One of the uncertainties we should expect has to do with technology, and how it will continue to change the way we live, work and play. In the creative arts, artificial intelligence may well change much of what you had been expecting to do in your careers.

5. For example, there has been much concern that AI could displace jobs in the creative industry, leaving artists, designers, and writers with fewer opportunities.

6. There are concerns about how to protect one's intellectual property and compete against cheap AI output at scale. You may also feel anxious about having to keep up with these new technologies.

7. These concerns remind me of the bus captains I engaged about 10 years ago, when I was in the Ministry of Transport. Then, the bus captains worried about their





livelihoods in a future where autonomous vehicles or self-driving buses dotted our landscape.

8. Now, 10 years later, no one is sure when AVs will be widely deployed, the very bus captains who feared such a future are still here, and Singapore is still slightly short of bus captains.

9. You are of course, very different from bus captains and the technologies impacting your jobs are not the same.

10. Still, this story is relevant because it is not uncommon to over-estimate the impact of technology in the short term, particularly on jobs. However, in the longer term, we must take technology seriously, and never under-estimate its' impact.

11. For this reason, I'm reassured that technology is increasingly a part of the education at LASALLE. In fact, some of you have already worked on projects incorporating generative AI, while others have experimented with computational design and data visualisation.

12. Fashion graduates are taking to the metaverse with digital collections, while those of you in film, animation and the performing arts will be familiar with the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology to create immersive experiences.

13. These efforts will help you stay relevant, but keep in mind that no one can be 100% future-proof, because technology will keep changing.

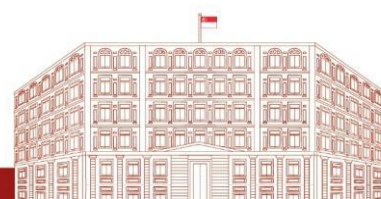
14. Fortunately, we can help ourselves if we don't stop learning. Instead of fearing technology, we should embrace it, through understanding its impact and seeking to benefit from it.

15. It is almost always the case that technology will help us to automate some tasks, especially tedious ones. For example, some of you here have used automated speech-to-text transcription software in your media projects. In this process, you were displaced from a task, but were not unhappy. In fact, you have added convenience and productivity.

16. History has proven, that technology can bring about improvements in productivity, and tends to create new jobs.

17. Recent graduands like yourselves may be seeking careers as AR and VR Artist, UI/UX Designers, Drone Videographers. These jobs were unheard of when I graduated, and perhaps even 10 years ago. One study in the US says that 60% of the jobs in America today did not exist in 1940.

18. To be perfectly honest, many parents like me may never fully understand what you do for a living. Such is the nature of many new jobs.





19. But we will be happy, so long as you continue to learn and thrive. And you will never run out of opportunities if you remain open and adaptive to new technologies.

The Importance of the Arts

20. I am also confident that if you apply yourself, you can make your mark in the arts, media, and design sectors in Singapore. These industries are not solely about entertainment and aesthetics; they are integral to our cultural identity, economic growth, and social well-being.

21. Singaporeans, too, increasingly recognise the importance of the arts. Last December, the National Arts Council released its latest biennial survey of the arts. The survey found that eight in ten Singaporeans were proud of the local arts scene. Among the respondents who engaged with local content, a good number did so specifically to support local artists.

22. Coincidentally, LASALLE is located within my constituency, Jalan Besar GRC. The ingenuity of LASALLE's Arts Management students never fails to impress. They organise the ARTWALK festival every year in Little India, bringing to life the stories of the culture and heritage of the district.

Strong Support from MCI and IMDA

23. MCI and IMDA value our artists and creative professionals and are committed to providing them with the relevant support. For instance, IMDA has partnered with LASALLE on several successful collaborations.

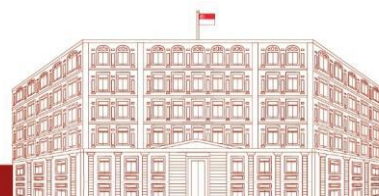
24. These include WritersLab, an intensive scriptwriting programme that ran from 2017 to 2021, and nurtured Singaporean film and television writers. One of the successful projects that came out of it was *Last Madame* by Adeline Foo, which won Best Asian Drama at the 2020 Asia Contents Awards. You can still catch *Last Madame* on Netflix today.

25. For those of you keen on furthering tech or media-related studies at the Master's or PhD Level, MCI and IMDA offers the SG Digital Scholarship to help you excel on a global stage with overseas exposure. If you are already producing media content, you can consider the Media Talent Progression Programme (MTPP), which supports media professionals to further develop their content creation skills and overseas experience.

Good Work of Graduands

26. Many of you have also proven yourselves worthy of our support, by distinguishing yourselves even before graduation. On this special day, let us take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate some of your achievements.

- Jimin Won, Raja Nurul Huda Binte Raja Ahmad and Ying Jia Ang, who are from the Design Communication programme, won a Commendation at the RSA





Student Design Awards 2022, the world's longest-running student competition for emerging designers.

- Jocelyn Tay and Natasha Koo, from the Diploma in Dance programme, performed at the Yokohama Dance Collection competition last November and won the MASDANZA prize for choreography. Both will represent Asia at the MASDANZA festival in Spain this October.
- 13 graduating students from the Product Design programme showcased their work at the Milan Design Week in April this year. They created lamps inspired by Deepavali, combining innovative and sustainable lighting technology with the cultural significance of the Festival of Lights. Thanks to them, one of our local festivals was featured at a world-class event in Italy to global audiences.
- And, students from the Animation Art programme created an animated short film, *Loose Threads*, which was recently shortlisted in the 2023 Yugo BAFTA Student Awards.

Closing remarks

27. We are thrilled by the students' achievements and equally proud that the efforts of LASALLE and your teachers have been outstanding.

28. As we will also be celebrating National Day soon, let me once again congratulate LASALLE and the class of 2023 for making Singapore a more vibrant and lovely home for all of us! Well done!

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