

# New scheme to recognise master artists and craftsmen

NHB will recognise four master practitioners every year in bid to keep island's heritage alive

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Like the cultural hubs of France, Japan and South Korea, Singapore now has an award and recognition scheme for master craftsmen and artists to keep the island's heritage alive.

The National Heritage Board (NHB) will be recognising four such master practitioners every year, starting next year, it was announced yesterday.

For instance, a *dikir barat* master, Nonya beadwork and embroidery craftsman or practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine can apply for the \$5,000 cash award as long as he or she has been in the field for at least a decade and fulfils some other criteria, the most important being efforts to pass on one's skills and knowledge.

It is part of the board's efforts to safeguard, promote and elevate Singapore's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) locally and internationally, under its Our SG Heritage Plan.

It follows NHB's submission in March to nominate Singapore's hawker heritage, a form of ICH, to Unesco, as well as the development of Singapore's first ICH inventory which so far features about 70 listings for rituals, skills, crafts, expressions, knowledge and traditions.

The list includes pilgrimages to Kusu Island, and Malay weddings.

## MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE

**As a multiracial country, it's very important to know about each other's culture. Awarding ICH masters also encourages us to do more in our respective fields.**



**RANGOLI ARTIST VIJAYA MOHAN**, 60, on the effort to recognise masters of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

## BOOST FOR PRACTITIONERS

**Having NHB on board elevates the representation and awareness of such activities.**



Rangoli artist Vijaya Mohan, 60, plans to apply for The Stewards of Singapore's Intangible Cultural Heritage Award. She has been teaching and creating traditional rangoli designs by hand using powdered rice, coloured sand and innovative materials, such as broken bangles, for decades. ST PHOTO: KHALID BABA

symposium at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

Called The Stewards of Singapore's ICH Award, it is open to individuals and groups in the categories of the performing arts; traditional craftsmanship; food heritage; knowledge and practices surrounding nature and the universe; social practices, rituals and festive events; as well as oral traditions, expressions and language.

Their practice must also already

goli is a multi-coloured floor decoration that, among other things, is a form of thanksgiving to deities.

She has been teaching and creating traditional rangoli designs by hand using powdered rice, coloured sand and innovative materials, such as broken bangles, for decades.

Said Ms Vijaya: "As a multiracial country, it's very important to know about each other's culture. Awarding ICH masters also encour-

and the people who have been investing time and resources to preserve Singapore's cultural practices.

He added: "Having NHB on board elevates the representation and awareness of such activities."

The winners can also tap an NHB project grant of up to \$20,000 to transmit and promote their ICH-related skills and knowledge.

The grant can cover apprentice-training programmes, as well as

yearly Singapore Heritage Festival.

The award will be evaluated by a 12-member panel which includes Eurasian Association chairman Alexius Pereira, Malay Heritage Foundation chairman Norshahril Saat, and Mrs Santha Bhaskar, artistic director of Bhaskar's Arts Academy.

NHB added that the award was conceptualised in consultation with a diverse range of people across focus group discussions