



We can hardly believe it ourselves - a record breaking attendance of more than 93,000 thought-leaders, media and creative professionals, film and television enthusiasts, and pop culture lovers from all over the world gathered at the sixth edition of the Singapore Media Festival (SMF)!

This year's expansive line-up included the Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF), Asian Academy Creative Awards (AAA), ScreenSingapore, Singapore Comic Con (SGCC) and the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF), with the first-ever VidCon Asia Summit also held in conjunction with SMF.

Through numerous initiatives that reflect a "Made-with-Singapore" ethos, the festival once again emphasised Singapore's role as a gateway between the world and the region – in facilitating exchanges, creating partnerships, and enabling regional talent to fulfil their media ambitions. Here's how it all went down!

## **STRENGTHENING THE MEDIA ECOSYSTEM**



Chairman of Media IAC and Minister for Communications and Information Mr S Iswaran; Tan Kiat How, Chief Executive of IMDA; Robert Gilby, Chairman of the SMF Advisory Board; Joachim Ng, Director of Media & Ecosystem Development, IMDA, and delegates at the Singapore Pavilion  
Photo credits: Ministry of Communications and Information

Kicking things off on a high note, Minister for Communications and Information Mr S Iswaran [announced the establishment of the Media International Advisory Council \(IAC\)](#), which brings together top international industry leaders from the media sector. This new initiative would tap on Singapore's potential as a media hub to support the regional ecosystem, and aid in developing creative and tech talent within the industry to contribute to the Asian story.

Besides that, more collaborations with Singapore are already well underway, with further emphasis placed on made-with-Singapore areas - including content, financing and talent. Doubling down on efforts to elevate Singapore's digital content across regional audiences, the Info-communications Media Development Authority (IMDA) has partnered up with large-scale companies such as Facebook, HOOQ, mm2 Entertainment and HBO Asia for even bigger and better projects.

"Local media companies and talent will, through these partnerships, have the opportunity to create content for these digital services and platforms," said Minister S Iswaran.

And this was most prominent at ATF and ScreenSingapore, which were attended by over 5,700 content players from 60 countries across the world with a record-breaking performance from attendance to sales transactions on the market floor. [This year's Singapore Pavilion at ATF](#) featured its widest presentation yet - with 80 companies and over 750 hours of regional content, including over 150 film, television and VR titles across a diverse range of genres.



Mediacorp and ViuTV co-production signing  
Photo credits: ATF and ScreenSingapore

## CELEBRATING ASIAN STORYTELLING

From heart-wrenching debuts to sold-out masterclasses, the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) celebrated its 30th anniversary with a dynamic line-up that took the pulse of Asian and international cinema.



Award-winning Singapore filmmaker Anthony Chen's *Wet Season* kicked off the event as the opening film  
Photo credits: SGIFF & Bonnie Yap

The annual festival stepped up its game, with over 90 films by auteurs from 40 countries, 35 sold-out screenings and a record attendance of more than 110,000 festival-goers engaging with filmmakers from Singapore and the region in film screenings, talks, panels, exhibitions and masterclasses.

At [SGIFF's Silver Screen Awards](#), veteran Japanese filmmaker Takashi Miike was conferred the Honorary Award, in recognition of his exceptional and enduring contributions to Asian cinema. Meanwhile, Chinese actress, Yao Chen, was honoured with the Cinema Icon Award for her inspiring achievements as a creative force in film.



Takashi Miike, Recipient of SGIFF 2019 Honorary Award  
Photo credits: SGIFF & Bonnie Yap



Yao Chen, Recipient of SGIFF 2019 Cinema Icon Award  
Photo credits: Yao Chen

And speaking of awards, [India emerged as the big winner](#) in this year's AAA, capping off the two award nights with six national wins to their credit – including Netflix series *Delhi Crime* claiming the Best Drama Series, Best Actress In A Leading Role for Shefali Shah, Best Original Programme By A Streamer/OTT and Best Direction (fiction) for Richie Mehta.



India's *Delhi Crime* took home four Golden Goddesses at the AAAs  
Photo credits: AAA

## THE GROWING SCENE

With all that in the bag, what happens next in the ever-shifting landscape of media is anybody's guess... but the future looks fondly on new formats and technologies.

Dr Gong Yu, Founder and CEO of iQIYI, gave a keynote speech at the ATF Leaders' Summit on [China's OTT platforms' development and its impact on the greater APAC region](#) - especially about the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in pioneering video entertainment.



Dr Gong Yu, Founder and CEO of iQIYI at the ATF Leaders' Summit

Sharing the same sentiments of the [importance of AI at the VidCon Summit Asia](#) was CEO of Branded Entertainment Network (BEN), Ricky Ray Butler. His advice for a successful video

platform also included leveraging on AI systems and big data for engagement, and prioritising brand loyalty and social media health above follower and view counts.



Ricky Ray Butler, CEO of Branded Entertainment Network at VidCon Asia Summit

Among industry leaders at the festival were also [promising ideas pitched by budding content creators](#) at Asia TV Forum and ScreenSingapore, with *Weatherville* by Riki Group as the ATF Animation Pitch's winner; *The Lost Phone* by Ang Yee Sien as the ATF Chinese Pitch's pick for Online Drama Series and double winners Low Hui Hui's *Ciao, Old Hero!* and Link Sng's 《赤诚》 for Theatrical/Online Movie Category; *Don't Block the Numbers* by Gamaliel Paulus S. as top choice for the ATF Formats Pitch. At the Southeast Asian Film Financing (SAFF) Project Market, [six projects were awarded top prizes](#) from a pool of 85 entries.



Winner of ATF Formats Pitch 2019



Finalists of ATF Animation Pitch 2019

Building onto the festival's goal of fostering an ecosystem of support and opportunities, [the Work In Progress programme with SGCC](#) partnered Asiapac Books, Shogakukan Asia and Vividthree Productions + Darkbox Studio to help connect storytellers to publishers, and springboard local works to a global audience. There's simply never been a better time to be a creator.

## MEDIA EXPERIENCES FOR ALL



SMF Festival Village at Armenian Street

If you've yet to attend a single iteration of the SMF Festival Village, you've sorely missed out - especially this year. [Close to 6,000 members of the public flocked to the SMF Festival Village](#) where a comprehensive series of masterclasses taught festival-goers the basics in fields such as character design, scriptwriting and media entrepreneurship.



Festival-goers at the SMF Festival Village Character Design Workshop



Cosplayers from the Star Wars franchise mingling with festival-goers at SMF Festival Village

With 23 film screenings, 34 workshops, talks and masterclasses, as well as immersive VR showcases, live entertainment, cosplay parades and food, the SMF Festival Village truly provided an unparalleled media experience for all.

With the global spotlight on Asia and its limitless possibilities, there's no saying just how much more we can achieve together. Thank you 2019, next!