

MEDIA RELEASE

Non-profit organisation ART:DIS debuts capsule lifestyle collection by artists with disabilities for everybody

20 May 2023

2023 marks 30 years of ART:DIS efforts in advancing disability inclusion in Singapore. Since its founding in 1993 by Ambassador-at-large Professor Tommy Koh, ART:DIS continues to champion the learning and livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in and through the arts. Together with UNESCO and the Nippon Foundation, it co-organized the significant Asia Pacific Festival of Artistes with Disabilities in 2018 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

To celebrate this significant milestone, the NPO will debut a new initiative to grow appreciation for the creative talents of PwDs and to generate sustainable livelihoods for them – **ART:DIS Studio** ([@art.dis.studio](https://www.artdisstudio.com)). Under this initiative, paintings by artists with disabilities are applied onto lifestyle products and retailed to the public via online platforms and retail partners. The artists earn royalties from the sale of each product.

This is the NPO first dedicated effort in developing its own lifestyle merchandise from artworks of its students and artists, although it is no stranger to the local design scene. The NPO had in the past worked with local brands like Ying the Label, Hook Coffee and Supermama, who used the artworks by ART:DIS artists and applied onto their products.

“There has been steady interest by brands who recognise the talents of our artists and want to give them the opportunity to be profiled through their own products or platforms. Developing our own in-house merchandise will allow us to do more of these brand collaborations, and raise greater appreciation for the talents of disabled persons in our society. We are a firm believer in supporting the students and artists we work with to reach their fullest potential, both in terms of artistic development and financial independence. More importantly we value the unique strengths and perspectives of persons with disabilities, and see these lifestyle products as creating a multitude of touchpoints for others to see the world through their eyes.” said Angela Tan, Executive Director of ART:DIS.

These were designed in-house in close consultation with artists Noah Tan, Joshua Tang, Hugh Lee, Avlynn Ng and Chong Yao Qing. Following months of research and development, the collection will have its pilot run on 20 May 2023 at ART:DIS’s

inaugural Fundraising Gala.

100% of the sales from ART:DIS's debut capsule collection will go towards supporting the artists financially and running more art programmes for PwDs. These performing and visual arts classes at ART:DIS benefit over 600 individuals, supporting the development of their artistic interests, growth in self-confidence and engagement as active members of a supported community.

Shop the full collection today: bit.ly/ARTDIS-STUDIO-STORE To view the merchandise in person, visit ART:DIS's pop-up stores at their upcoming milestone events:

- 8–18 June 2023 at Objectifs (Chapel Gallery) where 26 young artists with disabilities will be showcasing paintings and ceramics in a group exhibition curated by John Tung.
- 4–5 August 2023 at Victoria Theatre where a cast of over 80 disabled and non-disabled performers are supported by industry veterans (i.e. fashion designer Max Tan, multi-media artist Brian Gothong Tan, Music Director Dr Phillip Tan) to stage Singapore's first full length, inclusive theatre production.

About ARTDIS (Singapore) Ltd

Formerly known as Very Special Arts Singapore, ART:DIS is a non-profit organisation established in 1993, championing learning and livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in and through the arts.

We provide a wide range of programmes to enable PwDs to develop their artistic interests, grow their self-confidence and engage them as active members of a supported community, outside of and beyond formal education.

Our parallel professional development pathways further supports sustainable & meaningful impact for PwDs to gain work experience, empowering them to live independently in the community.

At ART:DIS, we value the unique strengths and perspectives of persons with disabilities and believe the arts offers us a lens to understand who they are, to connect with and to experience the world together