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SINGAPORE

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Screen icons command the spotlight at ArtScience Museum

Goddess celebrates pioneering and contemporary superstars whose legacies transcend the world of cinema

L to R: Michelle Yeoh. © Russel Wong. Laverne Cox, © Joshua Kissi, Courtesy Atrbute. © 2007 SAKURAN Film Committee © Moyoco Anno/Kodansha. Maggie Cheung. © Russel Wong.

SINGAPORE (12 March 2024) – *Goddess: Brave. Bold. Beautiful.* is set to make its dazzling Asian premiere at ArtScience Museum on 6 April, casting a powerful spotlight on screen legends who have challenged narratives, defied expectations, and broken boundaries across 120 years of cinematic history from the silent era to modern day film and television.

Originally hailing from ACMI, Australia's national museum of screen culture in Melbourne, this new iteration of the exhibition showcases a cross-section of cultures including America, Australia, and Europe, with a strong focus on Asian film stars from Hong Kong, Japan, India and even Singapore. From the iconic Marilyn Monroe and groundbreaking equal rights activist Laverne Cox, to pioneering Chinese American Hollywood star Anna May Wong and Asian superstar Michelle Yeoh, the film goddesses featured in the exhibition have been revered for their glamour, talent, and power both on and off screen.

Over the decades, these icons have demonstrated inspiring qualities and championed causes that have shaped society and culture, especially in revolutionising how women, femininity and womanhood are perceived.

Press Release

Goddess will present a treasure trove of over 150 costumes, artefacts and objects which have been brought together to paint extraordinary visual narratives of women in film. Through behind-the-scenes photographs, archival material, projections and stunning original costumes, visitors will be able to get a peek behind the curtains into the lives of these stars and discover lesser-known stories of how they challenged social norms and dismantled stereotypes.

"*Goddess* is a daring exhibition that showcases the brave, bold, and beautiful screen icons who have shaped a more empathetic, inclusive, and culturally rich society through their work in film. While often celebrated as bombshells, starlets, and screen sirens, the actresses and filmmakers featured in *Goddess* possess depth far beyond their on-screen personas. They embody strength and resilience and have forged their own path despite pressures to conform to societal expectations. Part of our *Year of Extraordinary Women* at ArtScience Museum, this new iteration of *Goddess* places the spotlight on Asian film luminaries, such as Maggie Cheung and Michelle Yeoh, showing how they have redefined our contemporary vision of a screen goddess. The exhibition invites visitors of all ages, genders, and backgrounds to feel empowered and inspired," said Honor Harger, Vice-President of ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands.

Journey through the evolution of women in film and television

The ways in which women are represented onscreen has largely driven societal perceptions of gender and beauty. Connecting the threads across decades of film and television, *Goddess* showcases how the portrayal of women has evolved over time as actresses combined their superstar qualities with tenacity and grit to shape their own roles and take creative control despite inherent industry biases in film and television.

Featuring icons such as Marilyn Monroe, Dorothy Dandridge, and Joan Chen who fought traditional gender roles and racial stereotypes, in addition to uncovering how well-known character tropes like the femme fatale reflect society's attitudes about women, the exhibition will offer new insights into the iconic stars, their films and onscreen moments.

L to R: Featured in the exhibition, Marilyn Monroe's cheeky ensemble from comedy classic Some Like it Hot (1959) demonstrates how she reclaimed her image amid early Hollywood's self-censorship, while a spotlight is also cast on Dorothy Dandridge, who refused to play the maid and mammy roles that were relegated to black women. Goddess 2023, ACMI photographer: © Eugene Hyland.

Throughout the years, many actresses have contested passive and submissive depictions of women in film. By challenging the feminine ideal, they paved the way for female characters who are not just assertive and independent, but also complex, nuanced and full of emotional depth.

Visitors can discover how the Chinese genre of wuxia showcased female power through the depiction of stoic warriors with a moral code.
Goddess 2023, ACMI photographer: © Mark Ashkanasy.

Additionally, the exhibition explores how notions of female fragility were disrupted, highlighting the rich constellation of action heroines like Pam Grier and Zhang Ziyi who embodied fierce yet feminine characters as well as performed their own stunts in their respective films *Jackie Brown* (1997) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000).

By chronicling the representation of women across 120 years of cinema, *Goddess* celebrates the cultural legacy of trailblazers who upended the status quo and emphasises the continuing need to elevate the profiles and contributions of women in film.

Celebrate local and regional screen icons

For this iteration of *Goddess*, ArtScience Museum is incorporating the stories of several Asian screen icons across Singapore and the region who have also left an impact on adoring fans and played progressive and inspiring roles in shifting socio-cultural values.

As part of a new chapter in the exhibition, three female stars – Saloma, Maria Menado, and K Fatimah – will be featured. Heralding from the golden age of Malay cinema in Singapore that spanned the 1940s to 1970s, these actresses extended their influence into other areas such as fashion and music.

Singaporean actresses Fann Wong and Doris Young have both played prominent action heroine roles across their careers. L to R: Fann Wong. © Wee Khim. Lobby card from They Call Her…Cleopatra Wong (1978). © Doris Young/Marrie Lee.

In addition, the exhibition will feature Singaporean actresses Fann Wong and Doris Young, also known by her screen name Marrie Lee. They both joined the ranks of fierce and fabulous action heroines, with Young portraying the first and only local female Interpol agent in the cult classic and action film *They Call Her…Cleopatra Wong* (1978). Meanwhile Wong has demonstrated her fighting abilities in an impressive range of local movies and TV series in addition to becoming the first Singaporean actress to break into Hollywood, where she played leading lady Chon Lin in the action-comedy film *Shanghai Knights* (2003) alongside Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson.

As a tribute to allies working behind the camera, works by prolific Singaporean fashion and portrait photographer Russel Wong will be showcased in the exhibition. Having catapulted to stardom in his own right, Wong's career has taken him into Hollywood's inner circle where he has captured iconic images of Asian leading ladies who shattered the movie industry's glass ceiling.

Encounter over 150 cinematic treasures and behind-the-scenes content

Goddess will transport visitors through time, visually charting the groundbreaking efforts of leading stars in the entertainment industry around the world through the display of cinematic treasures and behind-the-scenes materials.

Featuring 19 original garments which have made a statement both on and off screen, the exhibition delves deeper into how challenging fashion conventions and rigid dress codes has become a way for stars to question gender-related perceptions in society.

![Marina Bay Sands Singapore logo]

L to R: Two kimonos worn by Anna Tsuchiya in Sakuran (2006) will be on display, where she defied expectations that Japanese actresses had to be quiet and demure by embracing her rebellious real-life persona to embody an unconventional and headstrong courtesan; the gender-bending costumes featured in Orlando (1993) rebelled against the conventions and traditions of British costume drama.
Goddess 2023, ACMI photographers: © Mark Ashkanasy and Phoebe Powell.

This includes kaleidoscopic kimonos worn by Japanese rockstar, model and actress Anna Tsuchiya in her role as Kiyoha in *Sakuran* (2006) as well as a trio of opulent period costumes that adorned Tilda Swinton's binary-breaking character in *Orlando* (1993).

Goddesses' subversion of gendered norms in fashion is documented in the exhibition through magazine clippings and behind-the-scenes costume sketches.
Goddess 2023, ACMI photographer: © Eugene Hyland.

Actors Billy Porter and the iconic Marlene Dietrich are also examined as examples of stars of the film industry who have used their sense of fashion to advocate for self-expression and to fight for minority and women's rights throughout their careers. The exhibition offers visitors the chance to have a close-up view of Porter's show-stopping red velvet and pink tulle evening suit designed by Christian Siriano for the 2019 Tony Awards as well as magazine clippings and sketches of Dietrich's tuxedos and suits that raised eyebrows in her era.

Each piece on display has been carefully selected for its significance in helping to move the needle, with other intimate yet interesting ephemera including a print of American multi-hyphenate

Mae West's feet for custom platform shoes that she had studios create to make her look taller, and a cinema ticket dating back to 1973 for Meena Kumari's Bollywood epic *Pakeezah* (1973).

Also available to visitors are soundscapes and curated film footage projected throughout the galleries, both as video essays and supercuts, as well as interactive stations.

Engage in opening programmes for the public

As part of the launch of *Goddess*, ArtScience Museum has organised a slate of public programmes to allow visitors to unleash their inner power and engage with these Goddesses beyond the exhibition.

Date and Time:	Venue:	Programme and Description:
6 Apr, Sat 2pm – 5.15pm	ArtScience Cinema, Level 4	**Goddess Opening Symposium** Organised in conjunction with the launch of *Goddess: Brave. Bold. Beautiful.* at ArtScience Museum, the symposium explores the screen goddess as a complex archetype that transcends gender binaries and continues to evolve. The programme engages with curators, archivists and artists to consider developing debates and inclusive narratives in gender, media and culture. It also spotlights the articulate, powerful and generous vision of women directors in Singapore, bringing them into a conversation on redefining representation in filmmaking. Speakers include **Bethan Johnson** (Curator at ACMI), **Russel Wong** (Photographer), **Sufiyanto Amat Sopingi** (Fashion Designer and Couturier), **Viknesh Kobinathan** (Film Programmer at Asian Film Archive), **Tan Pin Pin** (Film Director), **Eva Tang** (Film Director and Screenwriter), **Wee Li Lin** (Film Director), **Wong Chen-Hsi** (Filmmaker and Educator), **Olivia Griselda** (Film Director and Photographer), and more. The symposium is limited in capacity and ticketed at $10 per participant. To register, please visit this link.

Weekly, 4pm	Exhibition Entrance, Level 3	**Public Guided Tours** English language tours are available at an additional $5 per participant. Same day exhibition ticket will be required for entry. A picture speaks a thousand words, while a thread tells a thousand tales. In this tour, be prepared to be starstruck as you step into *Goddess* with our Education Specialist to learn about how iconic costumes and artefacts defined and defied the history of women in film.
28 Apr, 2.30pm – 5.30pm	Rainbow Room, Basement 2	**Take Your Skills High-Ya!** A Stunt Masterclass **Ticket admission:** **Individual** – $68 **Pair** – $120 In this three-hour session taught by stunt professionals from Ronin Action Group, learn the tricks of the trade as a professional stunt performer teaches you how to pose, strike and guard! At the end of the session, put your acting chops to the test and execute a choreographed stunt sequence.
From 1 Apr, Various Timings	ArtScience Cinema, Level 4	**Film Screenings** Expanding on the exhibition themes from *Goddess: Brave. Bold. Beautiful.*, ArtScience Cinema celebrates the extraordinary leading ladies of Hollywood and contemporary cinema through free screenings and film programmes across the exhibition's run. The line-up in April and May includes films starring legendary Bengali actress Madhabi Mukherjee, Taiwanese arthouse star Shu Qi, Hollywood rebel Anna May Wong, and industry-defining icon Michelle Yeoh.

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For more details on *Goddess,* please visit
https://www.marinabaysands.com/museum/exhibitions/goddess.html

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About ArtScience Museum
ArtScience Museum is a major cultural institution in Singapore that explores the intersection between art, science, technology and culture. It is the cultural component of Marina Bay Sands. Since its opening in February 2011, ArtScience Museum has staged large-scale exhibitions by some of the world's major artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, M.C. Escher, Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol and Vincent Van Gogh, as well as exhibitions that explore aspects of science and technology – including particle physics, big data, robotics, palaeontology, marine biology and space science. For more information, please visit www.marinabaysands.com/museum.html

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