

Press Release
26 March 2025

Sydney Festival welcomes arts advocate Simon Chan AM to its Board of Directors

Sydney Festival is pleased to announce the appointment of Simon Chan AM to its Board of Directors. A highly respected architect, gallerist, and champion of multicultural engagement, Simon brings extensive leadership experience across the arts, culture, and community sectors.

As the Founder and Director of Art Atrium, a contemporary gallery dedicated to cross-cultural collaboration, Simon has long championed Australian, Asian, and Aboriginal artists. He has served on numerous boards and advisory committees, including as Chair of the Art Gallery of NSW's VisAsia Committee, and Director of the Aboriginal Benefits Foundation. A registered architect with a deep passion for cultural philanthropy, he actively supports artistic exchange and community engagement.

In addition to serving as President of the Chinese Australian Forum, Simon is also a Member of the Australian Multicultural Council, Board Member of Multicultural NSW Advisory Board and Director of Australian National Maritime Museum Foundation Board. He continues to foster connections across artistic and cultural communities, and his appointment strengthens the Festival's leadership, following the recent additions of Abs Osseiran, Yeeseum Lo, and Dr. Sunil Badami.

Sydney Festival Chair Kate Dundas welcomed Simon's appointment, saying, "The Board looks forward to Simon bringing his unique set of attributes to Sydney Festival deliberations including his deep knowledge of the visual and broader arts sector. Simon's inclusive leadership skills, extensive experience in community engagement and dedication to championing diverse artistic voices are a terrific fit with the organisation's strategic direction."

Reflecting on his appointment, Simon Chan AM said, "Sydney Festival transforms January into a month of extraordinary performances and cultural celebration. As a passionate advocate for arts and culture, I am excited to contribute to the Festival's ongoing success. Showcasing visual and performing arts from both Australian and international artists, Sydney Festival presents a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the diversity of arts and culture in our multicultural society."

Simon's appointment comes at a pivotal moment, as Sydney Festival approaches its milestone 50th anniversary in 2026. Under the leadership of its newly appointed Festival Director, Kris Nelson, the Festival is entering an exciting new chapter. With over two decades of experience in festival direction, artist commissioning, and international programming, Kris is well underway in shaping his creative vision for the 2026 Festival and beyond.

Simon Chan formally joined the Board on 25 March 2025.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Sydney Festival - Sydney Festival is one of Australia's largest international arts festivals, with a stellar reputation for bold, inventive and intelligent programming. Its vibrancy reflects the confidence, creativity and vigour of one of the world's most beautiful cities. Under the curation of new Festival Director Kris Nelson, the Festival's mission is to deliver an exhilarating summer of art, drawing stories from Sydney's 65,000-year history through to its contemporary zeitgeist. Sydney Festival stages the world's best artists whilst nurturing its homegrown talent; many of Australia's most memorable theatrical productions have stemmed from its premieres and commissions. The buzz of summer wouldn't be the same without the Festival's spectacular installations, immersive experiences and live events splashed across Sydney each January. In 2026 Sydney Festival will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Biography: Simon Chan AM - Simon Chan AM is a distinguished architect, gallerist, and advocate for cultural diversity in the arts. As the Founder and Director of Art Atrium, he has championed cross-cultural collaboration between Australian, Asian, and Aboriginal artists, fostering artistic exchange that reflects Australia's rich multicultural identity.

His longstanding commitment to philanthropy and the arts is evident through his leadership roles, including Chair of the Art Gallery of NSW's VisAsia Committee and Director of the Aboriginal Benefits Foundation, where he has worked to support Indigenous communities through art and culture. He also currently serves as a Member of the Australian Multicultural Council, Board Member of Multicultural NSW Advisory Board and Director of Australian National Maritime Museum Foundation Board, further extending his impact on cultural and community initiatives.

Beyond the visual arts, Simon's dedication to social cohesion and multicultural engagement has led to key appointments, including his current role as a Council Member of the Australian Multicultural Council and as President of the Chinese Australian Forum. Recognised for his contributions to arts and culture, Simon was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2023, cementing his legacy as a leader in cultural advocacy and community enrichment.