

ARTMAKING, THOUGHTS, PROCESSES: THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

by Stacy Huang Kai Lin and Susanna Tan Kher Wei, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)



The opening of the National Gallery Singapore generated tremendous excitement in Singapore. On 24 November 2015, the National Gallery opened its doors with two full weeks of celebrations that consisted of light shows, performances and a pop-up carnival at the Padang.

Hazel Lim, the Programme Leader of the BA(Hons) Fine Arts Programme in LASALLE, was a participating artist in the opening carnival. Under the Family and Community Tent, Hazel had nine large tables with nails of varying heights on their surfaces. It was a participatory piece where visitors could create tapestries of abstraction, inspired by the colours and lines in Choy Weng Yang's *Horizontal I* and Anthony Poon's *Black and White* – both of which could be found within the gallery space.

In addition, Milenko Prvacki, Salleh Japar, Dr Ian Woo and Dr S. Chandrasekaran, practising artists in their own right and full-time lecturers at LASALLE, have their works exhibited in the National Gallery.

The inauguration of the National Gallery gave us this opportunity to interview our lecturers with questions we have always wanted to know from the students' perspective (and out of personal curiosity too, of course). We share here in this little window, more about our lecturers' practices, thoughts, processes and their stories on the newly minted National Gallery.

INTERVIEW WITH HAZEL LIM FOR HER WORK, *LOOMING ISLES*

"I hope that they will eventually engage the public in the same way (through forms, shapes and colours) and to approach this relief work as if it is a piece of drawing."

Stacy Huang Kai Lin and Susanna Tan Kher Wei (S): We see you've engaged some LASALLE students to help you; how has the preparation been going?

Hazel (H): Ok, very good. (laughs)

I have these raw materials like yarn, ribbons, threads, rolls of wool so one of my main concerns is how to best engage with the public and to make use of the materials most efficiently in these three days. This is my first time doing something like that, so open, so unpredictable. In a way it is quite difficult to plan how the final work might look like and I have to rely on a fair amount of free play. To prepare, the student assistants are helping to cut the materials into specific lengths and leave them in boxes where participants can come to pick up the ones they want to use.

S: We see the nine big tables with the nails and screws affixed on it, we know it's related to the making of a tapestry but what exactly will the public be doing with them?

H: One of the considerations for a public work like this is safety, so I chose these screws in the end to allow for different angulation on the surface and also because they are less hazardous than the nails option.

I decided to create a diagram that is based on an abstracted picture of a land reclamation. These nine tables together will form the diagram. During discussion with National Gallery Singapore, it was difficult logistically to produce one large table as it will be cumbersome to transport it from point to point. In the end, we've decided to fragment the tables into nine parts, but still using the same diagram.



Providing soft and malleable materials such as wire, yarn, elastic bands, ribbons and thread, I'll leave it to the public to pick up the materials that they desire and use them to create weaving of the designs and patterns on the surface of the table. Student assistants also created a sample of how to use the materials on each table in order to guide the public on how to engage with the work.

As the day progresses, I hope the work will develop organically such that the public can spend time with it and to interact with the weavings that have been already made by others.

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Praxis Press (Tenth Edition)
ISBN: 978-981-09-5767-4

About McNally School of Fine Arts
LASALLE College of the Arts

The McNally School of Fine Arts offers contemporary practice and research-based programmes at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels with an innovative and interdisciplinary structure. The School focuses on redefining the milieu of artistic research in the Southeast Asia region and Singapore's position in the world of contemporary art.

Editor’s Note

Dear Readers

This year, we saw an increase in student contributors to Praxis Press, especially from Level 1 of the BA(Hons) Fine Arts Programme. I am pleased to see that Praxis Press is able to provide a good platform for students to exercise their talents as writers.

Most of all, we have successfully launched our Praxis Press live on our corporate website: www.lasalle.edu.sg/praxis-press

For future editions, we will be working with our Alumni to contribute articles in which they can share with our students their individual artistic journeys. On our website, we will be uploading short screenings of interviews, field trips, workshops and artists talks.

I would like to thank the students and staff who contributed earnestly to the tenth Praxis Press Edition. My upmost thanks to the Division of Communications who had greatly supported us in developing our Praxis Press website.



S: We read on the website that the work is inspired by two artworks (Choy Weng Yang’s *Horizontal I* and Anthony Poon’s *Black and White*) in the gallery. Was that a requirement from the National Gallery?

H: That was the intention of National Gallery when we started discussions on how to integrate history with contemporary interpretations of the artworks. The National Gallery selected a few key works and I chose these two works for the formal aesthetics that they inspire. I hope that they will eventually engage the public in the same way (through forms, shapes and colours) and to approach this relief work as if it is a piece of drawing.

S: Tapestry, as far as we know, is a relatively new medium for you. Is there a reason for you to adopt this?

H: I did a linen show with other artists two years back in the Brother Joseph McNally Gallery in LASALLE. The title was *100% LINEN* and different artists reacted quite differently. Some sewed, some painted on linen, some did video work. So I literally create a one hundred percent linen work, linen thread on linen cloth. It’s very much like this work and was intended to be very tactile. I tend to approach what I do with my background and training as a painter. Many of my works, even though it might be other materials, still goes back to painting - the quality of colours, the framing, the composition, the aesthetics. For me it’s not very far from what I was trained in; it’s just a matter of the materials and methods that you choose and it’s also about the limitations of space. If I have the space, I paint, if not I’ll do other things that is equally informed by my background in painting.

S: On tapestry as a concept, we feel that it’s an appropriate medium that follows the theme of the tentage – Family and Community. Can you tell us how was the theme conceived?

H: The young girl in the painting (Chua Mia Tee, *Portrait Of Lee Boon Ngan*, 1957) is the personification of Singapore. The five tentages originally were meant to convey the journey of Singapore through history. So it’s bringing us the journey of this girl through her life. The beginning stages – childhood, play, then she grows up, she goes to school followed by the riots, discord and conflicts. And then community begins rebuilding again. The intention of the Artistic Director of this festival is to parallel the story of the girl with the history of Singapore.

This particular work has been something I’ve always wanted to do but due to the scale and cost, it would have been quite expensive to personally fund it. For it to be commissioned by National Gallery, it really is a good opportunity.

S: And our last question, a trivial question. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong mentioned in an interview that the National Gallery is more than art; what is the gallery to you then?

H: It’s a crown jewel and the cherry on the cake.



INTERVIEW WITH DR S. CHANDRASEKARAN

“National Gallery defines that we have art history which solely belongs to Singaporean. We need this sort of belonging, so we can claim what defines Singapore art and how it is reflected in building our own narratives that is purely us.”

Stacy Huang Kai Lin and Susanna Tan Kher Wei (S): How do you think the inclusion of exhibiting Performance art in the National Gallery changes the public's perception of Singapore's art history?

Dr S. Chandrasekaran (C): The inclusion of performance art in the National Gallery does provide different perspectives in understanding Singapore's Art History in the early eighties. Also, it contributes in understanding emergence of diversity in art practices which goes beyond just painting.

S: In your practice, is live audience crucial? If so, please elaborate?

C: During my performance, audiences are crucial part of the performance art, as they provide various forms of crucial stances in dealing with the notion of Others.

S: Is there any specific element you look out for when you are performing?

C: For my performance, the following factors are the key contributors – Site, Body and Time. These three factors determine the overall concept of the performance. For Site, it provides meaning to location in relation to the Self. The concept of Body brings out the Bodily presence in relation the Others, and notion of Time engages the spatial elements that lies in between Self, location and Others.

S: Do you think it's justified in only exhibiting post-performance documentation in the gallery and would this discount the experiential quality of a performance?

C: The post-performance documentation is another form of archival process that is presented to the audience in real-time. These performances were performed in the early 90s where of Singapore art is still in an early state in supporting performance art. Therefore, most of the performance were performed in international events and galleries.

S: Can you identify a colour associated with your performance?

C: The element of colour in performance varies in relation to the overall concept of the performance. Mostly, they are embedded within the Hindu Culture. For example, the red colour symbolises the power of feminine energy.

S: And our last question, a trivial question. PM Lee mentioned in an interview that the National Gallery is more than art, so what is the National Gallery to you then?

C: National Gallery defines that we have art history which solely belongs to Singaporean. We need this sort of belonging, so we can claim what defines Singapore art and how it is reflected in building our own narratives that is purely us.



S. Chandrasekaran, *Visvayoni*, 1988, mixed media on fabric, 395 x 99cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore
Image courtesy of National Heritage Board



Salleh Japar, *Spirit Trap*, 1990, mixed media, 54 x 30 x 14cm
Collection of Singapore Art Museum
Image courtesy of National Heritage Board

INTERVIEW WITH SALLEH JAPAR

“Physical space could subsequently be conceptually tampered with based on the project's concerns within the space, foregrounding as political, socio-historical, cultural, or symbolic et cetera, significance.”

Stacy Huang Kai Lin and Susanna Tan Kher Wei (S): How do you differentiate between the terms “material” and “medium”?

Salleh Japar (J): Medium is a mode of expression employed by artist(s) in realising an artwork, for example, painting, sculpture, photography, video, while materials are the constituents or substances of the equipment or apparatus for artmaking or making something.

S: What is the role of space in the creation or outcome of your work?

J: First seen as a physical platform by which an artwork(s) is allocated, or a created environment for installation work. However, physical space could subsequently be conceptually tampered with based on the project's concerns within the space, foregrounding as political, socio-historical, cultural, or symbolic et cetera, significance.

S: How do you think the National Gallery as a space functions differently for your work and your audience?

J: As with most gallery spaces, National Gallery is a perceived space where an artwork(s) is displayed or represented. However, it has this one exception, when one considers that it is a national institution so audience is much more diverse.

S: Would you consider your works site-specific?

J: It depends largely on the specific project or a given theme.

S: And our last question, a trivial question. PM Lee mentioned in an interview that the National Gallery is more than art, so what is the gallery to you then?

J: Unlike most art galleries, the National Gallery is the gallery as it is 'National' and a symbol. And in being a public institution, the demand and expectations are high on how it will be able serve the public and the artistic community's interest through its vision, mission, operations, programming, acquisitions and collections policies, etc.

“Historical experience exists; it is archived but not always integrally applicable to our project. Unique works need unique working methods and processes.”

INTERVIEW WITH MILENKO PRVACKI

Stacy Huang Kai Lin and Susanna Tan Kher Wei (S): How does a work usually start for you?

Milenko Prvacki (M): I start with one idea. But the idea is not a sudden click or gift dropped from the gods. The idea is a constructed body of experience, knowledge, imagination and creativity. It is not yet integral or shaped to perfection. We have to build it up. It is a long and complex process tailored by individuals but with historical references. There is no formula. Historical experience exists; it is archived but not always integrally applicable to our project. Unique works need unique working methods and processes. My work is always related to my personal creative reasons. It is my accumulator and engine.

As a result of my research and investigations I always create my personal ‘storage’ for my collection of information. It is often confusing, conflicting, crowded (as with every storage) in the beginning and even more intense in the end.

S: Can you share with us any visual references or artists you look at during the creation of a work?

M: My references are not only restricted to visual arts. It is a very complex compilation of experience, comparative history, film, literature, and philosophy. Some are:

- Photographs (your past work)
- Images (archive of seen, documented inspiration and informative material)
- Text (your personal notes regarding your subject matter)
- Readings
- Samples



Milenko Prvacki, *Throphy Landscape - Paradise*, 1992, collage
Collection of National Gallery Singapore
Image courtesy of National Heritage Board

- Visual art references
- Objects
- Videos
- Films
- And many questions you pose yourself

S: How do you see paint and collage as suitable materials in communicating your concept?

M: Every concept should explore, look for and find appropriate working methods and materials in order to represent particular ideas. I use collage and assemblage methods even now. We should not restrict the use of materials and methods in art.

S: Do you think paintings should have a concept?

M: I do think so; every painting or art should have a concept if you want to pretend to produce art or become an artist and not just entertainment or for the pleasure of aesthetics.

S: What do you think is the relevance of painting in contemporary art today?

M: We are witnessing hundred of years of promises that painting will die or is dead already! And it never dies!

I am in 18th Street Art Centre residency in Santa Monica at the moment and in most of Los Angeles Museums and galleries are paintings – always very analytical, explorative, subversive, new and challenging. Every art method in contemporary art is a result of painting’s history and every method starts from there, though we would or not like to recognise it. And nobody is talking about the death of painting in the art world. It could be a Singapore syndrome of not understanding painting’s new journey.

S: How do you think the response to abstract art in Singapore has changed over the years?

M: After practising art in Singapore for the last 25 years, I am a living testament to the changes to the local art system - how people perceive and understand abstract art. It will take some time for the public to understand non-narrative paintings and explore more formal approaches and visual language.

S: And our last question, a trivial question. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong mentioned in an interview that the National Gallery is more than art, so what is the gallery to you then?

M: Informative, historical and artistic space for generations of people who did not have the opportunity to know art history and culture of this country and region. Finally, it is an educational space for art and for non-art students it is a great reference.

INTERVIEW WITH DR IAN WOO

Stacy Huang Kai Lin and Susanna Tan Kher Wei (S): How does a work usually start for you?

Dr Ian Woo (I): At the beginning of every painting or drawing, I try to have no intention in what I want out of them. I usually start with lines and marks.

S: When you’re creating a work, do you already have in mind what you would like the viewer to get out from it?

I: Have what in mind? An image? I don’t trust the mind. I only trust what I see that is before me. But I do have hope.

S: If the audience did not get what you intended for, will it pose as a problem for you?

I: No.

S: Do you think the title of your painting can be a good clue to understand the painting if the viewer is unfamiliar to abstract painting?

I: My titles are not explanations or descriptions of my paintings. They are titles.

S: And our last question, a trivial question. PM Lee mentioned in an interview that the National Gallery is more than art, so what is the National Gallery to you then?

I: The National Gallery is a place to look at art and understand history.



Ian Woo, *Before I Give an Answer I See a Flower*, 1995, oil on canvas
200 x 180 cm, Private Collection
Image courtesy of National Heritage Board



TROPICAL LAB 2015:

ABSORPTION, STORAGE AND TRANSFERENCE OF ENERGY

by Ben Dunn

LASALLE's Tropical Lab provided an important opportunity for me to refresh and rethink my practice in a new context. Prior to relocating here to pursue the MFA, I was working towards a Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Drawing at the University of Washington in Seattle. I studied Philosophy and the Great Books curriculum at Mercer University in a small town in the Southeastern United States. Essentially I moved diagonally across the US by way of Chicago where I lived for a few years. This summer was my first opportunity to travel in Southeast Asia. I was fortunate to spend a month in Cambodia and Thailand before the beginning of Tropical Lab at LASALLE. Prior to this experience I have only travelled in Europe and North America. Needless to say, I only wish I had arrived in this part of the world sooner, and stayed much longer. This is all to say that places – built environments or the natural landscapes – are very important to me.

I work in the tradition of landscape painting. My practice consists primarily of painting, drawing and wooden sculpture. I employ digital photography, printmaking and bookbinding on a project basis. I am driven by material and process. Though the work is somewhat rooted in atmospheric European landscape painting, I attempt to push past some of the redundant tendencies and devices of the genre. I hope to continue the romance and sublimity of the genre in my work. I am attracted to the specificity of places: the qualities of light and the way that things are put together. I am interested in refining natural phenomena into progressively simpler abstractions. During my travels in Southeast Asia this summer I began to consider the historical, spiritual and human layers of meaning associated with places. In finding these human connections with the land my work has deepened.

The best thing about travelling this summer was that it stops me from painting. I am the type of artist who spends day after day in my studio painting the same image. While some things can only happen in a studio, there are many things that can

“Interruption is an important part of my work in painting, drawing and sculpture. I often paint in problems and obstacles to my work to make sure that I don't shut a painting down with familiar devices.”

not happen in there. I try to avoid repeating my own marks and colours as well as the historical influences which inform my work. New experiences are vital for me. They are the raw material from which I try to distill images. Left in my studio with a library card, I am apt to make derivative paintings of the European landscape painting tradition. Given a plane ticket, I am apt to go out and search. José Ortega y Gasset reminds us that “Life is a petty thing unless it is moved by an indomitable urge to extend its boundaries”¹ LASALLE, The Institute of Contemporary Art Singapore and my fellow participants provided a smart and steadfast, but most importantly new place to conduct my search.

Interruption is an important part of my work in painting, drawing and sculpture. I often paint in problems and obstacles to my work to make sure that I don't shut a painting down with familiar devices. Coming to an early conclusion is the same thing as killing a piece to me. To stave this off, I interrupt myself. In a larger sense, not being able to paint in my studio over the summer provided a similar obstacle. Travel is an important interruption. Prior to flying to Southeast Asia, I was lucky to drive from the west coast of the US to the east coast. The changing landscapes, geologies and ecologies were constantly surprising. I felt that this experience was further intensified by the continuation of this stint of travel across the

Pacific. After Tropical Lab, I flew back to the Midwestern US and drove back west across the Great Plains to my studio in Seattle. If we can believe that “journeys are the midwives of thought,”² I anticipate the newness of my summer to continue reverberating and maturing for a while longer. I believe the real goal is to maintain that sense of surprise and strangeness in my studio.

In Singapore, I undertook a series of digital photographs of architectural details that will be exhibited at The University of Washington in February of this year. I also fabricated a bent laminated wooden sculpture in two pieces using a regional, and unfamiliar, species of wood for the Tropical Lab exhibition. The challenge of making these objects in a new facility proved interesting. With some help from fellow Tropical Lab participants, a small blowtorch and the invaluable help from Victoria and Mo (two incredibly bright students at LASALLE), I was able to complete my work on the morning of our opening. I am fortunate to have engaged with a community of understanding, open artists committed to growing their practices in unfamiliar circumstances. If I have a singular image that embodies these qualities from my experience at Tropical Lab 9 it is this: Kay Mei Ling Beadman literally dancing with lengths of cloth until she gets completely physically entangled in it. A handful of participants nonchalantly helped her get unwrapped and she begins dancing around again.

In reflecting on Tropical Lab, I keep returning to Beuys' idea of energy. Specifically, the absorption, storage and transference of energy: the activity of the battery. I think this is due to the powerful energetic resources that Tropical Lab, travelling, my fellow 'lab mates', LASALLE, Singapore, prove to be. This resonant energy is stored somewhere in the work, the memory and the ongoing connections to other people fostered through Tropical Lab.

¹ Gasset, José Ortega Y. *The Dehumanization of Art*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956. Print.

² Botton, Alain De. *The Art of Travel*. New York: Vintage International, 2004. Print.

THE 36th INTERNATIONAL TAKIFUJI ART AWARD: JAPAN TRIP

by Belinda Sim Pei Shan, Diploma in Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

"We shared our works with one another to understand more of each individual practice and at the same time to learn from one another. This trip really inspired me a lot and gave me the chance to experience what the country is like as I have always been interested in Japanese culture."

It was really a great honour being one of the winners for such a prestigious award that gave me this opportunity to go to Japan. This trip was really a fulfilling one as it was not only my first time going to Japan, but it also gave me a chance to see what is out there and to be able learn from others. I had the opportunity to talk to lecturers and students both from overseas and from Japan, and to hear from them the different kinds of practices they adopt in their school. We shared our works with one another to understand more of each individual practice and at the same time to learn from one another. This trip really inspired me a lot and gave me the chance to experience what the country is like as I have always been interested in Japanese culture.

It was a four-day trip and each day was filled with new discoveries and understanding. The first day was exciting as there was just too much to take in, being in a country where I had always wanted to go. It was nice to experience the autumn air as we do not get to experience the four seasons in Singapore. The climate was really nice and cool as I took note of the surroundings and tried to get a feel of the environment of the country.

On the second day, the Association arranged a trip for all of the winners and their lecturers to CREARE in Atami where they produce the glass and ceramic works for public commissions in public spaces. This was the day when we had the chance to communicate with one another as everyone joined the trip.

Once there, we were introduced to their workshops and shown how the processes in which glass and ceramic works were carefully and beautifully made.



An ongoing project; all the individual ceramic pieces will be put together to form a piece.

The Association representatives brought us around on a tour of the place. We were fortunate to see an artwork for Ikebukuro station which was now there for maintenance.

After the introduction, we were invited to create our own glass or ceramic piece.

It was really a fun trip, getting to learn new things and create my own glass piece. Although it was a long and tiring day filled with activities, Junko, a new friend from Japan, and I chatted a lot with one another about our art and interests, and we kept in touch till today.



A group photo with the other winners and lecturers.

Even though we were exhausted, Bee Ling and I decided to go to the Tokyo Sky Tree. This time, another two international students went with us and we had a nice long chat getting to know and learning about each other's work.

The prize-giving ceremony took place on the third day. It was in the evening, so I had some free time before the event. I went around different places by myself to buy things, explore bookstores and most importantly to take photos; I hope to be able to use the photos for my work one day.

During the award ceremony, we listened to speeches by lecturers, the principal and Mr Takifuji, who congratulated and encouraged us, after which we received the award from him.

On the last day, before our flight, Mrs Kato from the Traffic Culture Exhibition brought us to visit a gallery. It was really a beautiful gallery, a well-designed space in which a lot of extraordinary work were displayed. There are even studios in the gallery for artists to rent and visitors to the gallery could also get to see the artists at work.

Mr Uchida, the Executive Director of the gallery, was so kind as to drive us to the airport and Mrs Kato and Mr Nishikawa, also from the Traffic Culture Association, even treated us to dinner there.



Receiving the award from Mr Takifuji.

I really enjoyed this trip: getting to know so many people and getting so much encouragement from them. This trip not only widened my horizon, but made a significant impact to my learning journey. I am more confident to continue my pursuit as an artist.

Hopefully another student would get the chance to gain this experience from such a fulfilling trip in the next award.



Creating my work together with a new friend – Junko – from Japan.

CLOSE TO OCEAN: BINTAN STUDY TRIP

by Alysha Rahmat Shah and Nur Isabella Andrews,
Diploma in Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

"This trip has inspired us to create artworks for a small exhibition that took place that followed soon after. We are very grateful to our lecturers who made the trip possible and for giving us a memorable and eventful trip!"



Together with our coursemates, 24 Fine Arts students travelled to Bintan in anticipation of a trip full of unforgettable stories and memories.

We gathered at the Tanah Merah ferry terminal, at 8am in the morning and had breakfast before we boarded the ferry at 9am. The ferry ride was one and a half hours of vast endless sea and a view of the receding specks of Singapore's skyscrapers in the distance behind us.

On arrival at the Bintan port, we were encouraged to stay quiet and respectful so as to not offend the immigration authorities, with us being foreigners in a country that is rich in culture and tradition.

Once we were left the checkpoint, we were hustled into our rides that made our first stop at an Indonesian Mini Mart to buy provisions, most of us buying more than we needed. We had to purchase drinking water because the water from the taps was not safe to drink. We also bought rolls of toilet paper in abundance. The drive to our accommodation at Bintan Mutiara Resort was very scenic and informative. Our friendly drivers related the story of the land, traditions and cultural rituals to us.

Once we arrived at our destination and checked in, we excitedly rushed to pick each our ideal hut that would serve as our living quarters for the duration of our stay. The resort was beautiful. One of the main highlights of the trip was the fact that the beach was mere footsteps away from our huts

and from within, we could hear the crashing ocean waves. Our beds and tabletops were designed to look like luxurious kampong-styled furniture that added to the design aesthetics of the entire resort.

We were given time to explore the area around our huts and we marvelled in the beauty of the land before we were whisked away in vans that took us to Bintan Mountain for an experience that was truly amazing. Our tour guide told us that it would be an easy hike. Little did we know that the ascent to the top of the mountain was incredibly steep and arduous that would leave us all huffing out of breath. Getting to the top of the mountain in single file was tougher than any of us would have expected because it was so steep and the majority of the climb was almost gravity-defying as we had to pull ourselves up with the support of ropes and whatever tree roots were available and at hand. Alysha's bum blocked out the sun and many of us behind her were vitamin D deprived.

We were exhilarated to finally reach the summit despite our extreme exhaustion and breathlessness. Our relief was short-lived however, as soon after, we had to descend the mountain. It was a struggle for many of us because of the steep incline and the lack of support. When we finally reached solid ground safely it was accompanied with a profound feeling of satisfaction and triumph for having conquered Bintan Mountain.

Later that night after recovering from the exhaustion of the climb, we had a wonderful fresh seafood dinner accompanied

by a bonfire by the beach that our lecturers kindly set up for us.

Some of us went for a night swim, experiencing the clear starry night sky that hypnotised us city people. After some leisure time in the sea, we washed up and headed to the common room where all of us gathered with a couple of drinks and stayed up chatting throughout the night.

After a long bonding session we headed back to our rooms and bid each other goodnight.

At the break of dawn, only a handful of us woke up early to witness the sunrise over the sea. Everyone else woke up in time for breakfast. It was a simple, local breakfast. Following breakfast we all went swimming, snorkelling and kayaking to explore Bintan's waters and the floating houses over the sea.

Before the island trip ended, we were brought to our final destination, a small pizza place on the beach that was owned and run by two authentic Italian women.

On the bus ride back to the ferry, we all slept very soundly, our tummies full of cheese and gluten. When we finally reached Singapore we were all completely tired out but contented. This trip has inspired us to create artworks for a small exhibition that took place that followed soon after. We are very grateful to our lecturers who made the trip possible and for giving us a memorable and eventful trip!



INTERVIEW WITH ASHLEY YEO

BRUTALISM OF THIS UNIVERSE

ART STAGE SINGAPORE 2016

by Gerald Tay Chao Siong, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 (2016)

“Amongst all the fleeting moments in our fast-paced lives, I think it is important that we slow down and experience. Making the drawings allowed an intimate relationship between the work and me.”



Gerald Tay Chao Siong (G): Could you share more about the process involved in the making of *brutalism of this universe*? What inspired you to do this series of drawings?

Ashley Yeo (A): Well, I was focusing on the idea of slowness, as a reaction to the technological revolution that is happening within the last century. Amongst all the fleeting moments in our fast-paced lives, I think it is important that we slow down and experience. Making the drawings allowed an intimate relationship between the work and me. By taking time to make the work I hope to extend the experience of slowness to the viewer.

G: What atmosphere were you trying to create in your drawings for your viewers?

A: I try to create a presence. It could be of the unknown, it could be tension within the atmosphere. I try to avoid the word poetic, but I do hope to introduce a sense of lightness and quietness within the space of my drawings. Through creating a series of work I'm able to build up the atmosphere more successfully.

G: The drawings on view here are made with graphite. Could you share with us what quality of graphite attracts you?

A: Drawing is definitely a comfortable technique for me. The quickness, convenience of the graphite, the warmth in the greys of graphite makes it an attractive medium for me to work with.

G: So, your reason for choosing graphite was to retain it as an element of control?

A: Well, I believe some artists have a certain obsession over control, at least for me. I wouldn't say I chose graphite as an element of control in how my works will be read, but more on how my works will be made.

G: Did you choose to make drawings that speak to a wide audience, so that you can reach as many people as you can without bearing the burden of language barriers or cultural differences?

A: Definitely! I hope my work can reach out to a universal audience as everyone can relate to landscapes, though now as people are getting more educated, they want more complex cultural “products” as well. One issue that I faced when talking to other artists about abstraction or conceptual work is that they feel that they do not want to make their works look too literal or representational. Drawing the way I do for my recent series of works, the technique I suppose, can create a more relatable visual language. Though I admire abstraction very much!

G: What is your understanding of drawing in today's context?

A: The history of drawing goes a long way back. I think most recently, contemporary drawing focuses on presenting an idea instead of the technique itself.

G: Do you ever consider something a failure?

A: Of course, I believe most artists will feel this way somewhere in their process of art-making. I often feel unsatisfied even after working long hours and can end up with nothing substantial. Or perhaps when a lot of time is spent on research and conceptualising but it does not translate onto the final works. But that's all part of the artist's process.

G: Would you care to share your current projects on hand, or what you are currently obsessed with?

A: I'm just about to fly to Seoul next week to collaborate with a Korean artist that I have been working with for the show in the Esplanade.¹ Not too sure about obsessions, but recently I've been moving away from drawings to try other things.

G: As a part-time lecturer in LASALLE, what advice would you give to the students?

A: During my experience here, I realise that Fine Arts students like to do too much thinking sometimes. I'm not saying that as artists we shouldn't think, but what I feel is that it is crucial not to get crippled by it. Keep making and constantly reflect on what you're making instead. Research is always necessary, so read up more from books and even films to understand yourself better. As students I think it is easy to fall into the trap of being swayed by external influences or what is fashionable so it's good to be mindful of that as well.

¹ The joint exhibition with Monica So-Young Moon (South Korea), *In Their Oceans*, took place at the Tunnel, Esplanade, from 16 Jan to 27 Mar 2016.

WHAT IF WE...

WORK-IN-PROGRESS EXHIBITION BY FINAL YEAR BA(HONS) FINE ARTS PROGRAMME STUDENTS

26 February – 17 March 2016

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) Singapore

by Kayleigh Goh Chian Ching, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

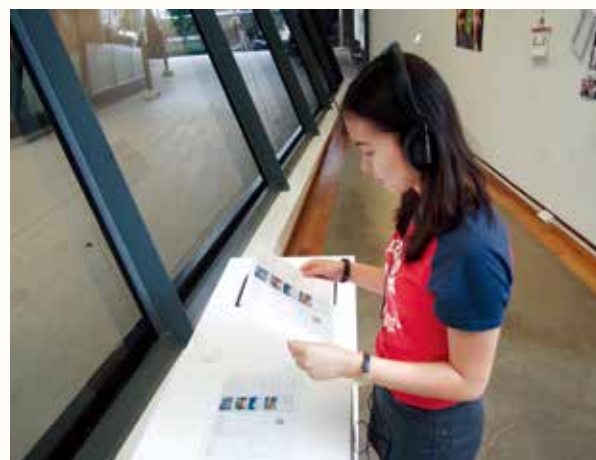
What if we... presents the works-in-progress by 41 final year students from BA(Hons) Fine Arts Programme.

Mentored by, Guo Liang Tan, *What if we...* can be seen as a documentation of the unexpected collective conversation that took place behind and beyond the studio. Exploring the student's diverse approaches in their artmaking processes, the exhibition reflects on the uncertainty, the chances and the contradictions of artmaking.

The show was held in the middle of the school semester, when the students were in the midst of preparing for their final year graduation show. This show was an opportunity for the audience to catch a glimpse, a peek, into the student's work-in-progress. With a wide range of artworks, viewers can see how the students work from medium to medium, using paint, photography, rice, intestine, blood and even smartphone applications as materials in their works.

What if we... showcased a body of students' experimentations, showing the success, failures, possibilities and potentials in their work-in-progress, showing their attempts in articulating, conveying, challenging and exploring different ideas and concepts. How can painting act as a host to convey certain experiences? What can we do to prepare for or to face our fear of losing our loved ones?

Together with the BA(Hons) Product Design students, student-curator Stacy Huang and Nick Modrzewski opened the show by giving a dialogue-style opening speech. Their humorous interaction and conversation livened up the crowd at the opening reception, injecting fun and lightening up the mood for the opening night.



THE 10th EDITION OF THE FLORENCE BIENNALE

ART AND THE POLIS 2015: *UNDER MY SKIN*

by Tinu Verghis, MA Fine Arts (2017)

The Fortezza da Basso, a Renaissance masterpiece of military architecture, has been the main centre for the Florence Biennale. I was selected to participate in the 10th edition of this Biennale: Art and the Polis in 2015. I had the pleasure of meeting some renowned scholars, art critics and curators from India, Japan, Italy, Brazil and so on. Naming a few: R.B. Bhaskaran, Elza Ajzenberg, Dominique E. Baechler, Pasquale Celona were some prominent members of the Florence Biennale whom I had the opportunity to meet and discuss the role of art in society.

In the city that owes its name to the ludi florales in honour of Flora, goddess of blooming, it is Michelangelo's David that brings art and the polis in a closer embrace, thus giving breath

of life to Giambologna's Apennine Colossus in Pratolino and other 'presences', including Michelangelo Pistoletto's Dietro-Front sculpture at Porta Romana. In that perspective, the polis should be interpreted not only as environment, but also as a microcosm with balanced interrelation between Man and Nature. And, not least, as a privileged scene where talents from across the world added lustre to Florence. Debuting artists, emerging artists, and established artists, all committed to experimenting forms, materials and techniques with increasingly raised awareness.

I was honoured to be bestowed the President's Award for my video work *Under My Skin*, 2:32 secs, 2015.



WINSTON OH TRAVEL AWARD: *THE COAST IS CLEAR*

by Teo Wan Xiu Nicolette, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

“By displacing ourselves from our own comfort zone, we become more perceptive, shedding the burdens and the roles we play from our shoulders. We get to live in the moment.”

As with most problems, we start with a question and then search for the answer. With the title of the show as a navigational cue, some Winston Oh awardees search for personal histories in their relationship to the country or for other means of finding answers to certain questions that only pertain to that place. It was interesting to see how these questions were answered through the works.

The Winston Oh Travel Award has been giving grants to promising students, giving them the opportunity to travel out of Singapore to expand their horizons. A total of eight students travelled to different countries across Asia, exploring the show's theme for that year, *The Coast is Clear*. Travel Award recipients Rachel Tan, Abigail Goh, Ng Wu Gang, Chelsey Hong and Christopherson Ho, travelled to Myanmar, Korea, Indonesia, Laos and Southern Islands, Vietnam and Thailand, while the Research Award recipients, Dominic Tong, Terry Wee and Kanchana Gupta, travelled independently to China, Christmas Island and India, respectively.

For some of the recipients, the place's history was their driving consideration throughout their travels. Chelsey travelled to Vietnam asking how its people could return to the ordinary everyday after suffering the siege of the Vietnam War and how they could move on. Her work were phone-snaps taken during her trip in Vietnam and she recounts that, as she was taking these images, she felt guilty due to her empathy with the weight of Vietnam's historical burden. Blacking out certain parts of the photographs, fragmenting it and yet placing them together to form this mosaic-like picture was her form of response towards that guilt. Being in a foreign place, it gave her the chance to observe her emotions and how these shifted as the journey progressed. As an outsider, it was an interesting experience for her: alienated, observing quietly on the side, she was able to change her perceptions of things and to reevaluate the questions asked before the trip.

Searching for answers to one's personal history was another approach, as with Dominic's work. His research starts from his looking, as Singapore Chinese, as an outsider, toward China as a way of returning home. In the course of his search, he thought about how the idea of home can be constructed from stories told among people as well from physical manifestations of a home. He had always wanted to find out more about the place from which his family came, and he began this journey armed with only a photograph and address of an ancestral hall. Yet 'returning' brought a sense of alienation. As with Chelsey's work, in this foreign place, one is was a stranger, so how does one straddle between the line between of being an outsider and being part of the 'family'. This demarcation was conveyed in his installation that resembles a generic living



Rachel Tan, *When the edges close in on the moving artefact*, 2015, mixed media installation

room but which also bore his own personal belongings, making the viewer feel like a stranger to the space as Dominic had felt in his own search for his family's history. This feeling of displacement was also expressed in his two-dimensional work: his photographs of houses and windows provoked a sense of peeping into an out-of-bounds space. However, what if that space is your family's neighbourhood? Memory also comes into play with the overlaying of images as a representation of memories and stories, recreating an image in one's eye. How much can we trust that image?

Questioning the theme of the show and the country's culture was something that Christopherson wanted to work with. Observing how any country places a bigger importance on their temples, which are more extravagant than people's homes, he grappled with the question of what Thailand could be if they focused on economic growth rather than spiritual. Taking aspects of Thailand's culture, such as the *Naga*, which is believed to have assisted people in establishing state cities, bestowing prosperity and richness, he used elements of the *Naga* in his work, provoking us to imagine this creature trapped in the temples, being prevented from spreading its wealth to the other parts of Bangkok. Using these elements on a bell also provides a reference to temples and spirituality.



Kanchana Gupta, *Two Tales and a City*, 2015, digital video projection of *Black Friday* (2004) by Anurag Kashyap on tarpaulin.

Some of the recipients looked for answers to questions relating to that certain place. Always drawn to Eastern aesthetics and philosophy, Abigail's search for *meot* in Korea was a way for her to explore it further. Throughout her trip, she tried to define what *meot* is. She examined Korean culture by looking at the everyday life there, trying to search for an understanding from a foreign perspective. As *meot* is unique to Koreans, it was something she could not experience herself. But her experience with the fog was a way for her to gain insight into this philosophy. Encountering the fog had to be very specific. As she said, the meeting with the fog had to be at that very place, that very time and that very land. Through this trip, she realised that *meot* was something that could not be found, it was a chance encounter that had to find its way to her.

This award gave the recipients a rewarding experience of finding out about themselves and also to further understand their practice. It allowed them to search for different perspectives, gain new ways of seeing, to help shape thoughts and artmaking. Abigail said, "By displacing ourselves from our own comfort zone, we become more perceptive, shedding the burdens and the roles we play from our shoulders. We get to live in the moment."



Terry Wee, Left to right: *Expedite decay I*, *Expedite decay II*, *Non-trafficable*, *Expedite decay III*, 2015, synthetic polymer paint on wood



Betty Susiarjo, *Deep Blue*, 2015, digital print



Adeline Kueh, *So Near Yet So Far*, 2015, brass/thread

“Art provides an avenue for us to imagine as deep; as far; as dark; as bright; as crazy; and as fantastical as possible.”

UMBRA:

EXHIBITION BY ADELINE KUEH AND BETTY SUSIARJO

Objectifs - Centre for Photography and Film

by Kheyton Lim Shiquan, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

It is not just shadow, it is *Umbra*. Two artists, Adeline Kueh and Betty Susiarjo, ventured deep into the darkest part of themselves to bring the poetic voice that dwells within to light. For the exhibition, they brought together installations, moving images and stills to contemplate the notions of *Umbra*. The exhibition was curated by Dr Ian Woo.

Stepping from the bustling streets of Bugis into the Chapel Gallery, visitors' immediate impression was of a contrasting sublime tranquility. The space was filled with a visual play of shadow and light. Spending a moment with each work triggered feelings of nostalgia and solitude. The work that first greeted the visitors was Susiarjo's *Precious Sediments*. From a distance, the work appeared to be a display of dazzling gemstones embedded in their matrixes. However, a closer look revealed that the gemstones were actually artificial glitter and beads the artist had delicately embedded on found rocks. Her artistic practice often includes elements of craft in her work, juxtaposing methods such as sewing, embroidery and beading to create visual sensations that lie between the perceptible and the illusion. Video projections played out over handcrafted surfaces, like the glittered fabric in *A Seascape*, and the beaded canvas in *Bougainvillea Serenade*.

Artmaking for Susiarjo has always been a process to seek beauty that transpires from the reconciliation of nature and man, the landscape and the urban, the longing and the actuality we all live in. Her works trigger slightly melancholic, romantic and philosophical questions about everyday reality and beauty. Such quality is evident in her photographic series of nature titled *The Dusk Series*. The stills were like windows into a dream. The lone flower in *The Lullaby* mediates between the twilight and the city lights as it contrasts dramatically with

the deep shadows in the background. With a similar play on light, the swan in *The Waiting* sits poised over the surface of the water that mirrors the hues of the sky, as ripples gently radiate from the swan, a symbol of grace and beauty. Each is represented in its own meditative moment, undisturbed by the bustle beyond the self.

“Draw your lover and ring the bells. Summon your lover.” Visitors were welcomed to interact with Kueh's installation piece titled *So Near Yet So Far*. Suspended slightly above the ground by red threads, 32 brass bells were arranged in a circle. Being so close to the floor, there was a sense of groundedness that complemented the sentimental nature of the work and also anchored the overall atmosphere of the space.

The visual in Kueh's work *If Little By Little* is familiar to many. The story behind the work is deeply personal to the artist but the act of reading the piece is effectively a relational experience. The work was inspired by an experience during the course of her recovery from a knee replacement surgery, a period she thought was the darkest moment of her life. The solace that saw her through the sleepless nights came from the light beams of passing cars coupled with the shadows of the window cast on the various surfaces of her room. The reflected light and cast shadows drifted from one side to the other and together with the resulting rhythm, this scene was abstracted for the video projection. Only in the darkest space would one notice the brightest glimmer of light.

Kueh's artistic practice reconsiders the relationship we have with things and rituals around us. With desire and longing infused in her works, she brings forth overlooked moments in time. Her interest in hotels and motels as transient spaces for



Photograph by See Kian Wee

love and intimacy led her to the photographic series titled *The Morning After*. The photographs are of certain scenes from a motel in Tasmania, like the bar counter in *Last Night*, and the corridor outside a room in *Your Eyes Say Things I Never Hear from You*. The respective titles of the images suggest a narrative that aims to evoke emotions of nostalgia and romantic sentiments. The narratives hinted at are not necessarily autobiographical in nature. They serve to invite the viewers to interpret them, consciously or unconsciously, based on their own experiences and memories they have in similar situations.

“Art provides an avenue for us to imagine as deep; as far; as dark; as bright; as crazy; and as fantastical as possible.” The resulting resonance of their combined artmaking was one that was magical. Both artists continue their roaming observations of life as they seek to satisfy their cravings for beauty that transcends the everyday.

COLLABORATIVE WORKS BY STAFF AND STUDENTS OF MCNALLY SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS (STAFF SHOW)

THE GREAT LUBRICATOR

THE POWER OF IMAGE • THE IMAGE OF POWER

Presented by Alliance Française de Singapour
14 January – 5 February 2016

Better Than

(Artists: Hazel Lim, Wulan Dirgantoro, Maria Clare Khoo and Raymond Wu)
by Maria Clare Khoo Suet Ling, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)



Our mutual love for the trashiness of nostalgic pop culture paved the general direction which we eventually explored. Informed by tacky advertising imagery of the 90s, Chinese-made lenticular posters and the quackery of commercialism, we took some of these elements and transformed them into a multi-sensorial installation meant to seduce a viewer.

Inspired by the familiar sight of display television sets in a departmental stores with pastel colour schemes emanating a sickening glow from the screens, we wanted to recreate the dated memory, revisited, but not quite the same. Therefore, we employed the tactics of illusion: moving images of multiple moving images in a slow, calming pace, aided by a spa-like voiceover, and to add to the uncanniness, constantly



interrupted by an announcement jingle along with background muzak. It was almost like a deconstruction of an advertisement for something that did not tangibly exist.

The experience working together with the group (Hazel, Wulan and Raymond) was challenging as we had so many different subjective ideas to draw from, but in the end I was still highly pleased with the variety of themes the work had covered, as no unnecessary reductions were made in the process of production. We all had a lot of fun in our discussions and I guess our collective definition of humour, though strange and often incongruous, was instrumental in producing a Frankenstein or chameleon of some sort.

Endgame

(Artists: Jeremy Sharma and Ng Wugang)
by Ng Wu Gang, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

My experience working with Jeremy has been a great one.

We first started working together on the Endgame series in mid-2015. For his residency in The NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, Jeremy had approached me with the idea of Endgames, when he required help with the photoshoot. As we commenced with the shoot, Jeremy would tell me what was needed and I would try my best to assist him. He required the play to be in perfect detail and he would often direct me on where to move the chess pieces. He had also asked my input on how the idea of the shoot could change as well and I suggested some ideas that we could work with, upon which we started to execute them.

I remembered consulting him on my work and it was then that he asked if I wanted to collaborate with him on The Great Lubricator show. I thought it was a fantastic time to work with Jeremy. Jeremy had approached the Endgames series initially as a really strict and seamless idea. For the collaboration, he wanted me to take control of the project, almost as if like he was to lose all control of the project.

In the time that we have worked together, I really enjoyed helping and working with Jeremy. We both helped each other, complementing each other with our individual strengths. It was definitely a fun experience working with him as well.

Lady 7

(Artists: Ian Woo and George Liu)
by George Liu Zhen, MA Fine Arts (2016)

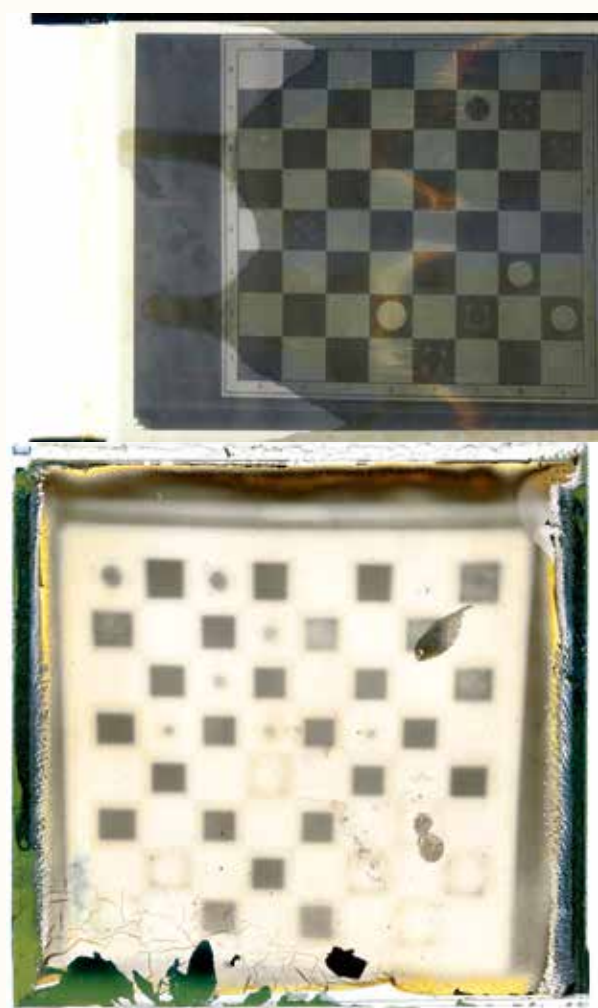
It was my honour to work with Dr Ian Woo on this project *Lady 7* and I really had a great time. As two painters, we both agreed that painting seemed quite obvious for us. Having just returned from North Korea where I had taken a good amount of photos during my journey, we decided to use the photographs to document Kim Jong Un's visit to Chongji Lubricant Factory.

We were impressed about how enthusiastic and cheerful Kim Jong Un appeared when he looked at the lubricator and this led us to consider the notion of 'looking'. Naturally, the idea of "eyeball" popped up in our minds. We were then able to purchase some artificial eyeballs meant for medical use, which we hoped to create into a surveillance camera system that was a response of the strict censorship policies in North Korea.

Ian happened to have a mannequin available. We both thought it would be really cool if we could create a robot, who was also a sexy artificial intelligent spy that worked for the North Korea government.

From here, a story gradually unfolded by itself: Aiming to destroy the evil American capitalism, two crazy communist scientists decided to create a sexy robot spy. As the design was based on an old American fashion magazine from the 70s, the robot ended up looking like a beautiful Caucasian woman with cheesy makeup. Unfortunately, they failed. Though it was left as an unfinished project, the robot herself had already started to develop her own mind. She was very curious about the world outside the lab window. But she could not move for she had no limbs, though her body was attached to the surveillance camera system camouflaged as eyeballs. Leaving behind evidence of a failed experiment: wires entangled together, diagrams and sketches still left on the table, the two scientists were peremptorily sent to the prison for their failure.

It was quite interesting that on the dummy, were engraved the words "Lady 7". We decided to keep it that way as a trace of her past. Plus, it just worked perfectly as a spy's name. "Lady 7" was a temptress, seeking information in the form of liquid desire. She proposed seductive transmissions between retina and the body with technology. To us, *Lady 7* symbolises wild imagination and desire, a journey of seeking the perfect human body, a crazy invention that fulfills our most erotic fantasy. It was a wet dream come alive in reality.



The Most Beautiful Day Of My Life

(Artists: Gilles Massot and Moses Tan)
by Moses Tan Qian Yi,
BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

Working with Gilles Massot was a very organic and beautiful process and I gained much in terms of knowledge and experience than before. The whole process started out in August 2015 until the show in January 2016. The reason that Gilles chose me to collaborate with him was a result of a Facebook post in which I gave a political perspective to Newton Food Centre in reply to a friend's post; it was, if I may say so, bullshit.

Although it may sound like I am singing high praises for Gilles but Gilles is a very nurturing person with a genuine intention of helping students. I observed him during the collaboration, and learnt how his thought process which were interesting and streamlined, helped in making clear-cut decisions, something that one needs to often face.

As the work was part of an exhibition that engaged lecturer-student collaborations, the outcome could be both experimental and unrestricted. This then filtered down to the working process between Gilles and myself in which we preferred to allow ourselves plenty of space to learn and experiment, rather than be held captive to the stress of achieving a polished work.



The Four-headed Hydra

(Artists: Adeline Kueh, Kray Chen Kerui, Patrick Ong and Paul Hurley)
by Paul Gerald Hurley, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

Over the past three and a half years, my focus has been on developing and refining my creative ideas as a Fine Arts student. I began my studies in the city of London and I soon relocated to the city-state of Singapore. The cultural and environmental transition over this period presented me with the invaluable opportunity of being in a position where I was able to reevaluate my ideas using a new perspective offered to me by this new environment.

In late 2015, another invaluable opportunity presented itself to me: I was asked by Adeline Kueh, an established contemporary artist and tutor at LASALLE to join her and two other artists, Kray Chen and Patrick Ong, in collaborative work for *The Great Lubricator* Exhibition. This coproduction by the Alliance française de Singapour and the LASALLE McNally School of Fine Arts presented the collaborative works by lecturers and students.

The theme, 'The Power of Image – The Image of Power', has an increasing plethora of potential interpretations and avenues to explore in the contemporary culture. The aim of the exhibition was to respond to the given theme by drawing from diverse points of view and cultural backgrounds to examine this subject.

The work that was produced between my collaborators and myself was a work titled *The Four-Headed Hydra*. It was a work designed to explore the potential cultural complexities of the given theme by engineering a scenario that presented

an even environmental and conceptual starting point for the collaborative process. We began the process by meeting at a kopitiam chosen at random. We were connected to each other by the wrist using an arm's length of string to allow us to move as one entity through the surrounding environment with differing perspectives. We were each equipped with a disposable camera to document this collective experience as a single entity with individual experiential nuances.

Our resulting documentation was carefully selected to display visual links and patterns that would, in turn, present a countless number of narratives that are wholly dependent on the viewer's subjectivity. The power of the image is its ability to create myth, and the nature of the myth is determined in the eye of the beholder.

This collaboration allowed me to personally engage other contemporary artists whose own interests shared common ground with my own. This collaborative process was valuable in that it encouraged me to approach the creative process organically, and using new modes of approach which I learnt from my collaborators. It was also of great interest to view the varied and unique outcomes of other, vastly disparate works that came to fruition as a result of this exhibition. The collaborative experience is one that I would recommend to any artist or creative, especially if they are beginning to feel too comfortable in their own creative practice.



The Alan Smithee Project

(Artists: Lina Adam and Victoria Tan)
by Victoria Tan Hsi-Yueh Frances, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

"The Great Lubricator allowed for the blurring of roles normally assumed between lecturer and student, creating a platform where both could not only collaborate but also contribute on equal ground."

When Lina Adam and I first began working on this project together, we had no pre-conceived idea of what we wanted to achieve. The theme of *The Great Lubricator* was to respond to two images, one of Kim Jong Un marvelling at a mound of industrial lubricator, and the other of Sophia Loren, captured in mid-gaze, casting a look of jealousy on the generous bosom of Jayne Mansfield, seated next to her at a dinner table - and acknowledging the relationship of power and image.

Prior to this project, Lina and I already had a comfortable working relationship; our easy rapport cultivated in the printmaking workshop between technician and student. Having assisted her solo performances before, I knew we could feed off each other's ideas and thoughts with ease. Initially, I brought up the idea of Alan Smithee, a fictitious name used

by the Directors Guild of America to disavow a film that the director was not satisfied with or could not exercise creative control over. This kickstarted a series of discussions regarding authorship, or a lack thereof in various artworks. We discussed John Baldessari's *Cremation Project*, in which his paintings were burnt and made into cookies - almost an antithesis to both Lina's and my printmaking practice.

Over countless cigarettes and a couple of meetings later, these ideas would eventually lead to our collecting artworks from multiple artists based in Singapore, donated under the condition that the artists would have to give up complete authorship, unknowing of the future outcome and our intentions for these works. The artworks, in varying media were presented under the pseudonym Macita Ranavit D/O Anil (an

anagram of Lina's name and my own), our intention to subvert the idea of authorship of artworks. At the opening of *The Great Lubricator*, the question we were often asked was: "Where is your work?" The works presented were vastly diverse in styles and approaches, yet somehow the collection formed its own pluralism, creating a single identity.

The atmosphere for the rest of the night was lively and the show saw many familiar faces, from alumni to staff and everyone else in between. *The Great Lubricator* allowed for the blurring of roles normally assumed between lecturer and student, creating a platform where both could not only collaborate but also contribute on equal ground.



Within Vein

(Artists: Wang Ruobing and Nadiah Alsagoff)
by Nadiah Alsagoff, BA(Hons) Fine Arts (2015)

The Great Lubricator looks at themes of power and image, approaching these themes from multiple standpoints. Ruobing and I presented *Within Vein*, which explored the human experience of power, fear, love and death through the living ornaments - plants.

When Ruobing approached me to collaborate with her for *The Great Lubricator* and told me about the show, what struck me was the irony of how the conceptualisation of the project is a play on power, which we had a giggle about. The lecturers were given the power to choose with whom they would like to work, not the other way around. Having just recently graduated, I was glad to be given an opportunity to work with my lecturers and familiar faces again. It was a nice though surreal feeling walking onto campus again for our meetings.

We began our first meeting over coffee at Lowercase by throwing around ideas and identifying a shared angle. We looked at our old works and discussed them to give each other more familiarity of the direction we wanted to go to begin our collaboration. We relooked at our old works with the theme of power in focus. This was an interesting process that I enjoyed as it really gives one an opportunity to focus on the objective of a project, and at the same time, to learn and understand the personal insights of the artists involved.

We eventually reached a middle ground by examining the theme of power through the framework of nature versus human beings. My practice examines human beings' existence and their position in the worldly world. While Ruobing's explores how the environment or nature is a source of disjuncture and a reflection of human struggles, my idea for Prick and Prune was inspired by an incident in which I had my finger pricked by accident.

I work in a plant nursery and deal with plants everyday. I was moving several potted cactus plants around rather incautiously when I pricked my finger accidentally on the thorns. The sudden pain and bleeding, placed me in a humbled position to that plant. It was a sharp reminder of its hazard and my own vulnerability, its thorns became almost threatening when just moments before, it was just another plant to be bought as an ornament for someone's house. The incident seemed to be so absurd but made so much sense at the same time. The simplicity of it was what made me feel so strongly for the performance.

When I shared this idea, Ruobing was reminded of an earlier work that she had, which was *Transfusion*. The work shows an old tree that was transplanted from its original place to the city centre of Chengdu (China) for the purpose of beautifying and adding cultural value to the site. To sustain it in its new environment, a drip with vital nutrients is attached to the tree to keep it alive.

From there, working together was simply a matter of updating the progress of the work and tweaking details in the performance, such as the addition of the painstaking clipping of each of the thorns on the cactus. This was a response to the China landscape designer forcefully bringing the tree to its new site in *Transfusion*, which shows how human beings use our power unthinkingly to make things good for us. We decided to present *Transfusion* and *Prick and Prune* together under the title, *Within Vein*, which Ruobing brilliantly came up with as it complements the works and highlights how the two seamlessly interlaced. The works transfuse each other both visually through the living ornaments and the actions taken in each work: the pricking to of the finger to draw blood and the drip placed to sustain the life of ancient tree; and it reflected the creative exchanges between Ruobing and I.

Overall, I feel that we were able to work together easily with assurance, respect and trust from the beginning till opening night. It was a great opportunity and a great experience, and I hope to have future collaborations like this as well.



DIPLOMA LEVEL 3 SHOWCASES: FINDING ONESELF AS AN ARTIST

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) Singapore

by Prakriti Jassal, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 (2016)

"Each work had its own character, in the sense that it reflected an original identity. These artworks also reflected the artists' individual personalities and beliefs and values very closely."

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." – Maya Angelou

The final-year students from Diploma in Fine Arts showcased their artwork at LASALLE College of the Arts between September and October 2015. This show was truly inspirational and expressed the agenda behind LASALLE's curriculum for the arts. It showcased the perfect blend between skill and concept by exhibiting works that were so different from one another but somehow worked brilliantly together to form this unique exhibition. From mixed media work to three-dimensional sculptures to pure paintings, this exhibition had it all.

As a BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 student myself, I found this exhibition completely awe-inspiring. Just looking at all the works brought on this wave of motivation and fulfilment that moved me to realise that LASALLE exceeded my expectations in mentoring us toward becoming artists.

The execution of all the concepts showcased in this exhibit was magnificent. The works here showcased contemporary ideas and symbols with a touch of classical styles as well as the use of religious symbols.

Another major component that actually unified the whole exhibition, in my opinion, was the use of similar tones and colours in most of the works. Also, each work had its own character, in the sense that it reflected an original identity. These artworks also reflected the artists' individual personalities and beliefs and values (what they are passionate about, what they believe in, et cetera) very closely.



This exhibition was one of the few shows which I enjoyed completely and I was actually compelled to stay for the entire duration of the opening, just to look in awe at all the works created by our diploma students. This exhibition was truly inspiring and what really came across was the desire of every student of finding oneself as an artist.





TRANSCENDING FILM: WORKSHOP AND ARTISTS' TALK WITH LYNN LOO AND GUY SHERWIN

by Siong Chung Hua, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

The room darkened in anticipation. You could still hear careful adjustments being made. Whirring motor sounds from two 16mm projectors placed in the centre of the room (considered vintage by nostalgic standards) break the silence. The facing wall erupts into a visual and aural feast of flashing ambers, greens and blues made by coloured filters placed over the projectors. The sound experience was heightened further by the use of portable speakers. The experiential performance by Guy Sherwin and Lynn Loo was about to begin.

Incidentally, Sherwin and Loo do not think their artwork is a performance though art curators may disagree. The often-collaborated duo regard their work as an example of 'live cinema' as two of their 'screenings' are never the same as it is always broadcast in the presence of the artists and always on 16mm.

But why adopt that traditional mode and not its more contemporary digital endeavours, especially when the tool's parts are hard to come by and with its maintenance and upkeep possibly running high. "In spite of the digital era," says Sherwin, "I haven't been quite seduced enough by what digital technology can do. I've worked and done quite a couple of things digitally, made sound installations. One might have a slight crisis...should I abandon all these stuff and go digital...but it's too interesting."

"It's an area that's not been explored there's so much more to physical film," adds Loo. "Because of the commercial industry, this is what we follow, what has been achieved, what's available. Most of the time, projectors and cameras are used as recording devices; you use it to tell a story, but you're not challenging the tool...it's good to question your tools."

The way a gramophone needle reads the vinyl record's grooves is analogous to the way the filmstrip is applied in this art work. Put simply, the projector reads the manipulated filmstrip, the light reads the handmade codes, and in return, the projected light generates sounds, creating optical sound waves. 'Performing' this sound is an integral and a unique synchronised part of their collaborative screenings. For

instance, if Loo's work is screened, Sherwin will 'perform' the sound and handle the projections vice versa.

Chemistry between the two is very much evident on-screen as it is off-screen. During the intensive one-day workshop that was conducted at the LASALLE Winstedt campus to a small group of students, the duo shared generously their methodologies and experiences; in sync with each other each quietly, subtly picking up where the other trailed off. But when it comes to the artwork, individual styles emerges – Loo's abstract compositions of images and sounds, and Sherwin's cinematic fundamental forms of time, light and motion. It becomes a brilliant contrast and blend of aesthetics, truly a fascinating piece to watch.

The beauty of the cinema-making process, as one might describe it, is that there is no definitive version of how it may be played out or what dictates the visual rhythm of the performance. "What I like about this is that we can't control everything...but part of the process," Loo echoes. "It's like pottery, you don't know what can be the outcome...there's an element of chance and we welcome it...it's part of the performance."

With endless possibilities in mind, the multi-projector screening not only moulds upon whatever surfaces it projects itself in tandem, adding more nuances and layers to the work's concept. The experience is altered by its immediate environment, and with its improvised character and deliberately unrehearsed screening nature, the resulting cinematic 'live' experience is immediate, immersive, responsive, temporal and extremely surreal.

However, the question remains: if performing live is an integral part of their work, how does it play out in a gallery context? And do they consider documenting as part of the 'performance'?

"I would say that it is a documentation," Loo replies. "We're talking about preservation of the work. Sometimes, some artists will be so strict about their work, but to us, why not. The work leaves you, it's no longer by itself, which is great."

"What I like about this is that we can't control everything...but part of the process. It's like pottery, you don't know what can be the outcome...there's an element of chance and we welcome it...it's part of the performance."





THE HEART IS A VARIANT

INTERVIEW WITH NAVIN THOMAS

by Loh Hui Ying Abby, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 (2016)

Navin Thomas' exhibition, *The Heart is a Variant*, explores the effects of electro-acoustic ecologies with natural ecologies. By sharing art that engages the audience in considering how man-made archaeology could co-exist with natural elements, Navin Thomas broadens up discussions on urbanism, culture and context through the use of space, sound and architecture - as seen in his installations and digital prints.

Loh Hui Ying Abby (A): For those who are not familiar with you and your work, could you provide us with a brief background of yourself?

Navin Thomas (N): I live in a city called Bangalore in the south of India. I am a multi-media artist, these days people mostly know me for my sound sculpture work. I have interests in built architecture and ecology, I look for situations where the two are able to coexist and from these spaces I arrange aural pieces from time to time.

A: There are a number of instances where urbanisation and development of our society were brought up in the context of your work; what influenced you to further explore urbanisation and architecture in the beginning?

N: Once upon a time, I lived near a rainforest in a place called Ahungalla for a couple of months, the nights were tropically humid and you had to sleep on the cold floor for relief; after midnight, I went around doing field recordings of shrub frogs that lived in large sewage pipes alongside a lagoon, nature has its own complex aural arrangements through which we are able to understand the cartographic of an area...I call it "electro acoustic ecology" and the system of us!

A: During the exhibition, you mentioned that you "like to look at India as an idea." Could you elaborate on that phrase?

N: The truth about India is that it should possibly be a continent, with its population of so many cultures, languages and races...but that fact that we all get along as one people, you have to accept that it surely is a beautiful idea.

A: How important do you think it is for young artists today to explore cultural aesthetics within their work, whether it be directly related to their country of origin or a commentary of culture in general?

N: I heard about a tradition where young people leave home and travel freely for three years and a day...my advice to younger artists is to lose your cultural baggage on your way out, lose your passports, learn a new language and then make your way home, if such a place does exist...

A: Having worked with photographs in the past, what spurred your interest to explore sound and found objects as a part of your work?

N: I studied graphic design and cinematography. I got into sound because at that time I knew nothing about it and it was very exciting; as for working with salvaged material, one of the reasons I indulge in it is mainly because I dislike the pressure of being at an art supply store and complying to its predetermined ideas of production and art making...when you work with salvaged material a lot of the time its has a special fragility and its final outcome uncertain and that's what makes its all human...

A: How do the dynamics of an artwork change when there is an additional audio aspect incorporated? For instance in your piece titled *Long Live the New Flesh*?

N: I do not necessarily consider sound as an additional element, however I do enjoy building things that are of a challenge to me, giving it a voice is possibly the most important part.

A: Why did you decide to screen your video piece specifically to the Indian culture?

N: Because that way, outsiders could learn more. It is specific to the geography to where I am. But it's about consciousness. When we watch, we all become one. The more you view the footage, the more the footage becomes your own at some point.

"The truth about India is that it should possibly be a continent, with its population of so many cultures, languages and races...but that fact that we all get along as one people, you have to accept that it surely is a beautiful idea."





BETWIXT FESTIVAL 2016

#dataselfieme

25 – 28 February 2016
ArtScience Museum

by Siti Sarah Binte Mamat, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

“The whole experience, being the first time I showcased my work outside of college, gave me a great sense of accomplishment. It allows me a sneak peek into what artists deal with prior to the exhibition opening.”

Curated by founders Serena Pang and Wen Lei, *Betwixt Festival* 2016 was an inaugural event in Singapore that celebrated the interaction between digital and art. Held at the ArtScience Museum, the festival attracted more than 170 applicants during its open call.

#dataselfieme was chosen as one of the six artworks presented at the festival.

Ongoing since September 2015, #dataselfieme is a representation of self through collection of data put together in a form of an installation with elements depicting the working space of an artist. The term selfie, popularised in recent years and deemed one of the most used words in 2013 by Oxford dictionary, simply means to take an image of oneself which is then uploaded onto various social media platforms.

While the concept of selfie is very much apparent in my work, #dataselfieme is a selfie (the user) represented by collected data: data that is abundantly available in cyberspace especially in the light of current advanced of technology today. It acts to replace the visual image that we always relate to when we use the term selfie.

Data is collected using an app called *Moment* created by Kevin Holesh who ironically designed this app to discourage its users from constantly using their smartphone. It detects the number of hours, minutes and pickups an individual takes making them aware of the amount of time they spend on their phone. *Moment* app also generate map route that tracks the movement of the user similar to that of a GPS.

In #dataselfieme, this data is uploaded into different elements as part of the peripherals for the installation piece. These elements include: a threaded map, an iMac, an iPad, a desk calendar and a book.

The map shows the tracks of the user (me, in this case) on a monthly basis. Different colours represent different months. The iMac carries the website dataselfieme.weebly.com which gives a more detailed insight into the daily data. The data is being curated and distributed across the different months and days. Each day is divided into specific hours, minutes, as well as the number of pickups that I have taken per day.

The bound book shows data that has been collected so far, in its raw form and on the iPad is a video documentation titled *4h 37mins 97 pickups* of the amount of time spent on the screen while in the presence of real company on 27 September 2015.

The video also shows scenes along the way that captures behavioural aspects of today's society where gadgets or technology holds an invisible control over us.

Together with the exhibition, artists are also invited for an Artist Talk where we shared our thoughts on the intervention of art in the digital world as well as sharing our work and processes. Prior to the talk, we had a brief session when we are introduced to other artists who were involved in the festival. Here, I remember meeting Boedi Widjaja for the first time and learning more about the work titled *Metron* that he presented in *Betwixt Festival*.

The whole experience, being the first time I showcased my work outside of college, gave me a great sense of accomplishment. It allows me a sneak peek into what artists deal with prior to the exhibition opening. The setting up of the work two days before the festival was hectic, as you had to be there within the stipulated time to ensure all set up was done properly. I also learnt that you need to be adept in improvising as you may need to make necessary adjustments whilst setting up. It is also important to maintain good communication be it through texts or emails with the curators and their team: to be constantly updated on the progress of the show and to keep each other updated on the progress of your work as well.



MULTI-FACETED, MULTI-SENSORIAL, MULTI-CULTURAL:

MA ASIAN ART HISTORIES STUDY TRIP TO NEW DELHI

7-12 December 2015

by Christiaan Haridas, Hsu Chin Miao and Yeow Ju Li,
MA Asian Art Histories Level 3 (2016)

“The trip was not only an enjoyable and fruitful learning experience, it was an eye-opener and even a homecoming of sorts for at least one of us, as a Singaporean of Indian descent who had never visited India.”



There was no better place to begin our trip and introduction to Indian art history than a visit to the National Museum, New Delhi, where we were awed by the richness of the Indus Valley civilisation as seen through its collection of Harrapan, Mauryan, Buddhist artefacts and miniature paintings. There, we learnt about the iconography of Indian deities and how to identify each through their vehicles of hybrid animals. We were captivated as much by the warmth of the bright smile from a sculpture of the Sun God Surya as by the physical harmony and philosophical oneness in the fused representation of the Harihara, and by the beauty of simplicity in the *Dancing Girl* figurine.

The visit to National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) was a very instructive one, given our limited knowledge of modern Indian art and we were all deeply impressed by the diversity and the vibrancy of India's modern art showcased at NGMA. It was fortuitous that at the time of our visit, there was an ongoing survey show of Amrita Sher Gill, known as one of India's 'Nine Treasured' artists, whose works are considered national treasures and cannot be exported out of the country. We were treated to an exclusive curator's tour and were enthralled by Amrita's paintings. There was something magical about Amrita's life journey that mimicked a Hollywood biopic, possibly owing to the enthusiasm of the curator and Amrita's astonishing resemblance to Frida Kahlo. Although Amrita died at the tender age of 28, she left behind an important legacy of paintings that traced India's intersection with Western modernity. Most appropriately, our visit ended at the gift shop where all of us rummaged for Amrita 'souvenirs' to immortalise her in our memories.

Our visit to the Foundation of Indian Contemporary Art (FICA) was a great learning experience in terms of contributing to our understanding of contemporary art in India. We saw what this self-sufficient non-profit organisation, with very little state support for the arts in India in general, can do to bring various stakeholders together and work in collaboration to enrich lives of its community members and to develop art education as a life tool. FICA is one of the few private support initiatives in India where its various annual grants supporting the arts have come to be recognised as markers of excellence in the field of contemporary visual arts in India. On top of operating a couple of art galleries, FICA is also committed to be a space for the public as it has a reading room with a library free for all to use. FICA's bookstore was a gem for many of us who were looking for good art books to buy and quite a number of us found great art reference books for our personal interests as well as for our individual research works.

New Delhi was an extraordinary profusion of experiences for all of us, to say the least. The intensity of these new encounters and impressions culminated for one writer in our visit to KHÖJ, arguably the most important independent art space in India, run by artists. A short trek through the somewhat rough Khirki village led us to this oasis, where an exhibition *Burning Against the Dying of the Light* was taking place, depicting the act of self-immolation by Tibetans through video installations and film. It was impossible not to reflect on the powerful messages of life and death, reinforced too poignantly as we witnessed just outside the exhibition space, a scene of crows encircling a body.

Even the business model of KHÖJ and how it could possibly survive and flourish in its environs inspired some serious reflection. Similar to FICA, KHÖJ is a fine example of how a responsive arts community and the private sector in India stepped in to buttress state support for the arts, by adopting a funding system that alleviates them from the entanglement of state and corporate dictation. Established Indian artists such as Anish Kapoor and Subodh Gupta, who had previously benefited from the emerging artist platform at KHÖJ, contribute to its financial sustainability by donating works to the organisation that had nurtured them. Using a trust fund model, the works are then consigned to Christie's auction house to generate funding for the organisation.

Mimicking the 'swag' of New York's East Village galleries, commercial art gallery, Delhi Art Gallery or DAG Modern, is situated within the ultra-hip neighbourhood of Hauz Khas Village where you can find trendy Indian youths looking for an epic night out. Upon entering, we were surprised by its sleek interior and museum-like presentation format. We were even more excited when we saw that DAG was currently showing an exhibition of Santiniketan, the site of one of India's most influential arts institutions. We had discussed Santiniketan in class and to see at first hand, the works of artists who were closely associated with the institution, such as Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose, made art history truly relevant and alive for us.

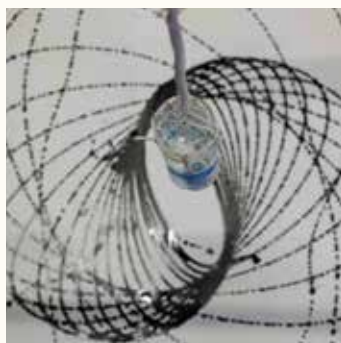
One of the most beautiful museum spaces we had visited over this trip had to be the Sanskriti Museums, which houses three specialised museums namely the Museum of Everyday Art of India, the Museum of Indian Terracotta and the Museum of Indian Textiles. This beautiful compound consists of five acres of land with hundreds of trees and shrubs, truly an oasis

for the creativity community. On the day of our visit, it was significantly colder and the grounds were covered with mist. With an experienced museum guide, we toured the Museums and learnt so much of Indian art and culture. Though it was such a great experience, it was the piping hot Chai tea infused with cloves and ginger that accompanied the delicious potato fritters and cumin-spiced Dutch shortbread cookies served to us at tea-time that sealed our favourable impression of the place, extending perhaps to even our whole impression of New Delhi since our first day there. What lent to this sentiment was that it was, after all, our last day of the trip. What can surpass the power of smell and taste of delicious food and spices in aiding memory!

The visit to the Taj Mahal was definitely a highlight of our trip. Despite the long bus journey from Delhi to Agra, the trip turned out to be a comfortable one, thanks to a sophisticated expressway peppered with many amenities (the foresight of Uttar Pradesh's Kumari Mayawati), and experiencing the Taj Mahal at first hand made the journey all worthwhile. We marvelled over the grandeur of Mughal architecture and hard work behind the intricately inlaid marble, in surely one of the most elaborate manifestations of romantic love. Afterwards, our tour guide brought us on a mandatory stop to a shop selling objects purportedly made from the same marble that was used to make the Taj Mahal and whose craftsmen have the same inlaying pietra dura seen on the monument. A couple of us brought home mementoes from the shop after some heavy bargaining.

Though the trip had seen a few glitches beyond our control, such as the three-and-a-half hour delay on our outbound flight, it certainly had its lighter moments, such as in sharing ice cold lattes with our Programme Leader Jeffrey, bargaining in Mandarin (!) with talented Indian salespersons or watching a classmate's futile attempt to charm snakes. Regardless, the good, the bad or the unexpected, it is all part of the fun and enriching experience of travel.

All in all, the trip was not only an enjoyable and fruitful learning experience, it was an eye-opener and even a homecoming of sorts for at least one of us, as a Singaporean of Indian descent who had never visited India. Multi-faceted, multi-sensorial, multi-cultural – we each took in this richly diverse country through our own lens, and took away mementoes and memories to cherish in our own ways.



ONE NIGHT ONLY LASALLE WINSTEDT CAMPUS

by Nandini Hasija, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

“This student-based and student-initiated event provided for a successful learning experience for all participants equally; it served as a very realistic experience of what the curatorial world is going to be like.”

One Night Only, as the name suggests, is an annual exhibition held exclusively for a duration of one day. This exhibition showcased the works of students from BA(Hons) Fine Arts Levels 1 and 2, developed over a time span of four months. This exhibition is the culmination of the works of 74 artists, eight elective groups and ten curators - produced by students, curated by students and exhibited for students. This was the second edition of *One Night Only* and it was graced by Miss Tamares Goh, Head of Visual Arts Programming, Esplanade Singapore. As a LASALLE alumna, an artist and a curator, she was an inspiration and we were honoured to have her as a Guest of Honour for the event.

As part of the curriculum, each student is required to select a particular topic. The choices were as follows: Artist and Community Art, Artist as Curator, Beneath the Surface (of Photography), Ceramics, Drawing Machines, Performance Art, Semiotics of Food and Video Art. The artworks produced by students were then curated by a group of students who worked under Artist as Curator. The Artist and Community and The Semiotics of Food groups were given a generous budget of S\$600 each due to the participatory nature of the works; all other groups were limited to a budget of S\$200.

Aside from the already youthful and festive nature of the showcase what made it truly special was the bond that was forged among the students at the Winstedt campus. The works were scattered around Blocks A and B and the self-made outdoor enclosures.

This curatorial decision doubled as a blessing and a bane. On the one hand, the use of the outdoor venues was exciting, and making the work interactive and placing the work in either the self-made closures or pre-existing fixtures gave a sense

of comfort and belonging. On the other hand, this was also a bane from the reality that Winstedt campus is a leased space and therefore subject to limitations for a lot of the options for the installations of works.

Further adding to the interactive nature of this showcase was an element of participation that was newly introduced in this edition of *One Night Only*. Firstly, the students of the Semiotics of Food group turned their final project into a relatable and edible artwork. The artwork comprised of certain food items that were not originally from Singapore but have found homes within Singaporean cuisine. Secondly, all the students from the Performance Art elective performed individually for a live audience, as opposed to doing so in a group or through the crutches of a recorded medium.

After having observed and participated in the realisation of *One Night Only*, I learnt that the high volume of visitors was owed to the curatorial decision of laying a strong digital foundation by creating the event's first microsite, Facebook page and Instagram account. This is in addition to the basic posters, invitation cards, maps and flyers. Variety of different media in terms of images and videos were used and uploaded according to the specification of each online domain.

In conclusion, this student-based and student-initiated event provided for a successful learning experience for all participants equally; it served as a very realistic experience of what the curatorial world is going to be like. The various facets of involvement here provided for a very accurate demonstration of many potential career opportunities in the arts industry that could allow for artists to participate collectively and also to continue pursuing a fine arts practice.



ART FOR THE PUBLIC: *ARTWALK LITTLE INDIA*

by Tan Luo Yi, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

Artwalk Little India was a public art project jointly organised by LASALLE College of the Arts and Singapore Tourism Board that ran in conjunction with Singapore Art Week. The Artwalk pays tribute to the vibrant and rich heritage of the Little India precinct while attempting to make art more accessible to the public. Months of tight collaboration between LASALLE's Arts Management students and Fine Arts students culminated in a series of works installed throughout the streets of Little India.

On the opening evening of the *Artwalk*, the public was treated to an array of performances put up by various music and dance groups. It featured a variety of different performances that created a vibrant atmosphere at the precinct, from Bhangra dancers and traditional Indian instrumentalists to experimental improvised musical collaborations. Members of the public were brought around on a tour to the various artwork venues of the Artwalk, spanning the entire area near the Indian Heritage Centre. Along the guided tour, the student artists from Fine Arts gave quick introductions of their works to the public.

At the Indian Heritage Centre, Kana Higashino, a second year BA(Hons) Fine Arts student, had created a series of paintings titled *Hands: God of Shiva*, an interactive work that invites engagement from the community. The work is a result of Kana's interaction with a traditional Indian dancer who shared her own experience as she studied the dance form, where she developed a close bond with her dance instructor as well as her difficulty in mastering the *hamsa* hands that represent the Hindu god Shiva. Visitors were invited to paint on Kana's illustrations and contribute to the artwork. This work encapsulates the vibrancy of Little India's culture and effectively brings the community closer to art by encouraging active participation in the artmaking process.

Priyageetha's *Loops of the Precious* featured a brilliant golden mural at a building on Upper Dickson Road. The artist was inspired by her grandfather, a goldsmith who specialised in hand-crafted jewellery. Even though the artist did not have the chance to build a close relationship with her grandfather, her fondest memory of him is an intricately handcrafted piece of jewellery, a family heirloom, that she owns. The mural consisted of intricate jewellery intertwining patterns against a golden background. Priyageetha pays tribute to the traditional craftsmanship of handmade jewellery, a trade that is quickly losing its presence in contemporary society.

Crystal Carpet by Tan Luo Yi/Conjecture Chicken was a relief mural inspired by the multitude of textile stores in Little India. The work is made up of pieces of fabric donated by the residents and business owners of Little India; these were carefully wrapped around shaped pieces of wood to form patterned reliefs. Through her dialogue with the shop owners of these textile and fabric stores, she discovered that most of these stores had been in existence for more than 50 years, passed down from generation to generation. This work was inspired by textile patterns, with a great focus on the circular form. The installation consisted of a multi-coloured mandala-like mural, representative of the unique microcosm that is Little India.

Artwalk Little India 2016 had been an enriching experience for all our Fine Arts students as they witnessed at first-hand the nuances of collaboration with a managing organisation. Despite the various complications and hurdles that came along the way, the entire process of finalising the various projects was a wonderful lesson for our students. It had indeed been an excellent opportunity for exposure as well as an engaging learning experience.

"This work encapsulates the vibrancy of Little India's culture and effectively brings the community closer to art by encouraging active participation in the artmaking process."



INTERVIEW WITH ANA PRVACKI

by Bajaj Tanak Mahendrabhai, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 (2016)

"I feel it is very important to maintain a personal daily studio practice that is separate and independent of the work one makes specifically for public showing."

Ana Prvacki is a multidisciplinary artist, predominantly working in performance and video art. She received her BFA from Pratt University in Brooklyn and MA Fine Arts from LASALLE. Her work mostly engages ideas of daily practices and economic/social research. The artist intends to provide the viewers a cleansing experience dealing with everyday issues. Her approach is very comedic and at the same time she practices discipline as a daily routine.

Her works, such as *Stealing Shadows*, instigates a dialogue about the art world, economics and social change, exploring the ideas of originality and appropriation. This interview reveals Ana Prvacki growth as an artist who started off as an art student and who made a successful practice.

Tanak (T): How would you introduce yourself as an artist and tell us a little bit about your journey from being a student to a successful artist?

Ana (A): Thank you for the generous words, it is wonderful to be perceived as a successful artist! But ideally one is both a student AND a successful artist, and a teacher all at the same time. I have been practising for 20 years now and what I can say is that it is a long and dynamic process, it takes trust and discipline. I think the ability to be comfortable in the unknown is also essential.

T: Has your creative processes changed from the time you were in school to your being out in the world?

A: I certainly have more experience and confidence negotiating my work and process in the world, one gets better at saying yes and saying no and knowing why that is so. I think that at its core my practice and my interests have not changed, they have only clarified. I see the connections from 20 years ago. Keeping notebooks and writing your thoughts and ideas is essential because it allows you to have that overview and keep track of your thinking.

T: As art students we all know it is tough to make a career in the creative fields, we struggle with questions of integrity, how honest is our work to ourselves or should we give audience what they would like; it's a constant battle. What are your thoughts on whether we should make art that matters or art that pleases other people in order to succeed?

A: Yes, thinking that we need to please others or do the right thing is common. It is the psychology and the unconscious of our art practice, which must be examined and dealt with. Meditation and/or a psychoanalyst should help! I think this is a very important question. Ethics but also personal mental health and well being of the artist on the road to success is essential, I hope they teach it in art school!

But I think there is a big distinction but also connection between making art that matters and art that pleases others. I would be very decadent and stress the importance of having pleasure in the art we make and talk about. Having a practice that is invigorating and has stamina is what interests me, I want to have a practice that lasts at least 60 more years!

T: Most of your art revolves around the idea of current social structures like etiquette, economic issues, human body interactions and overall navigating in contemporary life. Did you ever have a moment in your practice where you thought you just needed to make art for yourself?

A: Yes, I think at some points in one's career you go from show to show, making work for specific venues and contexts, working with different premises of curators. But still one should be always making work that stimulates and interests you, if you are making work to fit the curators or institutions interests that are not your own it's a problem, and very rarely makes for a fun and reciprocal dialogue!

I feel it is very, VERY important to maintain a personal daily studio practice that is separate and independent of the work one makes specifically for public showing. If it happens that there is interest and it fits into a show, all the better. I was talking to my father about it, Ellsworth Kelly's drawings of flowers or Hokusai's daily tiger; they are such powerful but totally personal and independent bodies of work. And many artists have such a practice. I hope this answers your question.

T: Your ways to protect *sensitive audience* series has just released mainly your erotic drawings; what made you want to come up with methods of cloaking your artworks?

A: I am very excited about these series so I am happy you ask about it. Over the last three years, I have been working on a series of very explicit erotic drawings. I only showed them a few months ago and it was an interesting experience! I guess my hostess/etiquette sensitivity took note that even though the visitors to the show very much enjoyed the work and were titillated there was some...how should I put it, awkwardness! So I had this desire to elevate the discomfort of the viewers, soften the blow. Of course cloaking is also a great method of seduction.

T: You said this in an interview in early 2016: "The one per cent, the pricing that I came up with 10 years ago, I didn't

think that 10 years later there would be such incredible economic inequality, that there would be this [wealthy] one per cent, or that the art market or the art world would be dominated by the one per cent." By this statement I gather that the art world runs and operates according to the power of the public that buys art. How much does this economic inequality affect the young and upcoming artists' thought processes and their art itself?

A: Last year at Davos the major economists stated that the art market was one of the most corrupt in the world and often used for money laundering (also an interest of mine). There was a call for regulation. So the *Stealing Shadows* project was among other things a critique of the pricing, and it questioned the value of objects versus the value of ideas. It helped me understand better the literal amounts, for example I have no sense of how much US\$60 million is, I have no concept of it. But 1%, being US\$600,000, gives me some perspective. I don't sell my work for such sums, not even close, but of course the market affects me and everyone else, and I think about it and wonder how to relate to it, and how to find value in my work, which is outside the corrupt market. Also important to state, practising now in the US, the government and institutional support is non-existent or minimal so I have much gratitude and appreciation for the time I lived and worked in Singapore.

T: "No one owns the shadows, not even Peter Pan. No one can stop you from making art. I'm not doing anything criminal." *Stealing Shadows* must have incited a lot of controversies for directly appropriating existing sculptures. We, even as art students, fear the critics for not being "original"; what drives you to make such a bold choice?

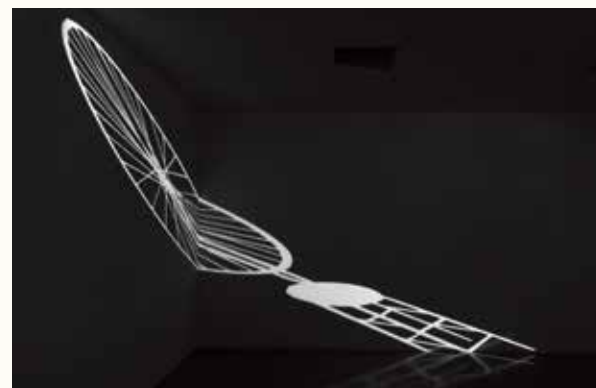
A: Have no fear! And don't worry about critics. Read Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*; it will help and boost your morale and give you hope.

T: And finally, coming to the end of the interview, could you please tell us a little bit about your comedic approach to your artworks, and further, what inspires you to persist with your practice and overcoming that 'artist's block' now and then that we usually face as art students?

A: I believe in the power of humour, I do not think comedy is frivolous. I agree with the Greeks. I think for me a comedic approach allows for certain lightness, it connects and disarms yet you can say powerful and meaningful things with it. I think it is interesting that you are asking me about humour and the 'artists block' in the same question! Perhaps humour cures blocks. For sure laughter opens up the body, relaxes the belly, makes you breathe better. And the body is connected to the mind and the psyche so it all works together. But as much as I believe in humour I believe in discipline, perhaps even more. You need to be disciplined all the time, but you can't laugh non-stop. Maybe there is a project in that.



Ana Prvacki, *Finding comfort in an uncomfortable imagination*
ICA Singapore, 2015
Image courtesy of Sit Weng San



Ana Prvacki, *Stealing Shadows*, Duchamp, 2007
2016 Installation at 1301PE
Image courtesy of Ana Prvacki

YOUNG TALENT PROGRAM 2014/15 WINNER'S SOLO EXHIBITION: *AT SOURCE* 根源

INTERVIEW WITH EZEKIEL WONG KEL WIN

ION Art gallery

by Tristan Lim You Jie and Ian Tee Wang Loong, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 (2016)

"To not have any fear when you're in school. To just do and make it happen. The only way to achieve your goals is to work, not just to sit, talk and think."

Ezekiel Wong Kel Win is a LASALLE BA(Hons) Fine Arts alumnus who recently exhibited at ION Art gallery as one of the three winners of the Affordable Art Fair Young Talent Programme. Wong's artworks often confront social and political issues with wit and humour, using this approach to express his views on these matters. We had the opportunity to have Ezekiel walk us through his exhibition, discussing his artistic practice, his experiences as a student in LASALLE and after and his participation in the Young Talent Programme.

Tristan Lim You Jie and Ian Tee Wang Loong (T): Tell us more about the artworks you have presented for this exhibition, and the message you would like to convey with them?

Ezekiel Wong Kel Win (E): Starting from the centrepiece, *Steer*, the lion dance costume is a metaphor, a commentary on Singaporean society. I imagine the lion dance head as the government, the country, with the lion's body representing the people, which steers the lion's head. I feel that in our society today, a lot of us are not really steering the head; we want changes in our society, but oftentimes we just make comments on Facebook or online forums, or discuss the issue among friends. There is little action to actually effect these changes, and you can see it from the multiple legs facing different directions on the piece. Probably we are too busy or too self-centred and so on to actually take the time to take action or make a difference, to improve our society.

I'm interested in human behaviour and how our emotions can affect the people around us, and so the GIFs I made is very human-like and is a reflection on human nature. If you read the titles of the GIFs, for example, *Shit-Stirrer*, you can roughly know what's going on in the GIFs. Whatever you see here are imaginings of certain types of people within our society through my observations, that you probably came across them on the news. I'm not trying to convey if these people are good or bad; it is all very human. It isn't also about pointing fingers, and often times it points back to ourselves, if we do these things as well, and we find a dialogue within us as we question ourselves.

Moving on to the paintings, they enhance the overarching narrative starting from *Steer* and the GIFs. I take the characters from the GIFs, and I imagine a scenario where they come together and collaborate. For example, there's a saying that when an ostrich encounters danger it will dig a hole and hide its head in it. You meet similar people in life who push away responsibilities or dwell in their self-pity when facing threats or danger. So in this painting there's this character that literally puts his head in a hole, and there's another character, the Problem-Solver from my GIFs, whose solution is to dig a hole for him to put his head in. So these are the kind of stories my paintings

tell, how a group of people behave when they are together, with just additional points to reinforce the ideas behind my artworks here. The rest are really up to the audience's interpretation.

T: Your previous works mostly involve prints and works on paper. Can you tell us about your move away from this medium for this exhibition?

E: I crave for this visual impact in my exhibitions. For someone to walk into the gallery and be invited to look closer because he does not quite understand what he is looking at. This idea of sensory experience is something I had been developing since graduating from LASALLE, hence in this exhibition I took the opportunity to move away from works on paper to include sculpture and large canvases. There is also the consideration of conserving artworks, especially because of the humidity in Singapore, paper is a lot harder to handle and store. As for the animation GIFs, it is just taking an image and playing with different media to enhance your storytelling.

T: Your alter ego is a recurring character in your work which, as you described on your website is to "challenge the world with." Do you find it easier to make art through this alter ego?

E: He is a character I use to express my responses and reaction to situations, which in everyday life you might not do yourself. I wouldn't say my alter ego is the only way to express concepts in making art, but it is the approach I have been taking in my practice so far.

T: What is the experience and process like in putting this exhibition together since your presentation at Affordable Art Fair?

E: The Affordable Art Fair presentation was much smaller, both in terms of the simplicity and size of the works, most of them are A3-size works on paper. When I found out about the results for this winner's solo exhibition in March, it was just non-stop work since. The first three to four months was just thinking about how I wanted to develop from the series I showed, and how I want to use the space I was allocated.

The process was more interesting, because I just graduated last year, so it was all happening together. You are thinking if you want to practice full-time, or work part-time, studio spaces to make your work, etc. At that time, I told myself that I wanted to work part-time and rent a studio with my friends. However, the money from part-time work is unstable so I went on to work full time. It takes a lot of discipline and time management to balance work and studio time. It is also important to work smart, and to keep the process going, not to miss a day no matter how tired you are coming from work.



So I will say that this experience was one that showed me how much work I can do in a year while juggling with a full time job. You can say it's a testing ground, and of course there was a lot of support from the curator and ION staff to handle the media publicity and logistics.

T: Going back to your time at LASALLE, in what ways has the education shaped your practice?

E: When you're in school, diploma or degree programme, sometimes you feel like you're left on your own to figure things out. You're being drilled to handle concepts and research techniques. It's a lot about confidence, school definitely helps build up confidence as an artist. It is not just about being able to paint or having great ideas, being an artist is more than just that. After graduating, when you can't afford it: you're the accountant, the curator, the editor, the communications team... Applying for grants and installing the work, all these you learn from school in the little exhibitions and time with lecturers. Small details like contacts for printing labels and also lightings for the exhibition are things you learn from such hands-on experience.

T: What advice would you give to a student studying Fine Arts now?

E: To not have any fear when you're in school. To just do and make it happen. The only way to achieve your goals is to work, not just to sit, talk and think. It is only in working where you realise if things are going the way you want them to and to try to solve problems. School is the best time for trial and error; can you imagine if those mistakes are made in this exhibition?

So really, have no fear. Often in school you think you are an artist already and close out to what others have to say, I admit I was like that at times too. But there is no harm in keeping an open ear, listen and not be too affected by negative comments. Don't be afraid of failure when you're young because you can still stand up again.

T: Final question. Do you mind sharing with us any future project on which you are working?

E: Right now I am working on a new series for exhibitions that are pending. Sometimes it is difficult to work without the certainty of an exhibition happening in the near future, but you just need to switch that button off and go a little crazy. Of course this is not practical when you tell people about it, but you need to believe in what you want.

LISTENING IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS: MARGARET LENG TAN

by Xenia Jamshed Bapasola, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 2 (2016)

“Every activity requires some creative input and this understanding is only possible if we continue till the end regardless of the nature of the action.”

A single woman dominated the stage with her presence. She was the sole performer and her repertoire comprises only a bare set of instruments. Her instruments were her actors, characters and puppets, while she took on the role as their conductor and musician. Each piece was carefully crafted to elicit a particular response from the audience. She created unique scores using nothing more than sound.

Margaret Leng Tan's performance, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, transcended our conventional understanding of sound and music, creating active characters and story lines, using toy pianos, whistles, children's toys and masks, leading her audience to appreciate every sound they hear as a possible source of music. It was a privilege to be her audience for a unique artistic experience and it was an even greater privilege to be given an opportunity to attend her workshop.

Tan met John Cage in 1981. She was trained in classical music but had desired to look for something more in sound. “I like to joke about this: I'm the first woman to graduate with a doctorate from Juilliard. And now, I play the toy piano!” she said.

After graduating, she was not content with simply playing a composed piece on the piano, she wanted to create art with her music and to be free to interpret music beyond the score sheets of classicalism. Under John Cage's mentorship, she grew to be an artistic performer quite unlike any other. She became the interpreter and muse for his pieces. John Cage himself was an unconventional musician, known for using found objects and household items to create music. He did not believe in the discrimination of sound, but rather in the incorporation of it into known music, an underlying conviction that Margaret herself has carried forward to create her own pieces.

She became known to be one of the most convincing interpreters of his work and we were privileged to have her share her vast understanding of music with us. She explained that within our auditory strata, silence is the greatest illusion. Silence is simply the sound we ignore and dismiss. Hence, the first and the last lesson we learned, a lesson that we are to continue learning throughout our artistic interactions with sound, is to listen.

Musical instruments are not the only things capable of making music. John Cage and Tan have creatively included everyday objects in music, which today is the reason we have so many

new genres of music that see the potential of sounds. These included Death Metal and Dub Step.

Among John Cage's musical pieces is the famous 4'33". The performer stands on stage and does absolutely nothing, makes not a sound. In such an atmosphere, the silence is heightened and carefully observed by the audience. In this way, the sounds we ignore are brought to the forefront of the performance. We learn that there is no silence, such as we have grown to understand it. Before, the anticipation of music detracts people from the silence in order to listen to the sounds that are constantly around them.

On the first day of the workshop we were given a rather interesting piece of homework. We were given the opportunity to engage in Cage's pieces, by interpreting either one of two Cage's preformative pieces. The two pieces were *49 Waltzes* (adapted for the Singaporean setting), and *0'00"*.

49 Waltzes was originally a public performance piece to be filmed in the different states of America. It was adapted for the Singaporean student. A performance was to be enacted by students in any part of the city. The piece is meant to be performed in the locality in which it is created. This gives us a fresh perspective on the possibilities and identities of each locality. Each person had a different way of interpreting the performance, from recording the sounds of the street below, to videos detailing a simple journey home; as such, each performance was unique and helped redefine spaces in Singapore.

0'00" is a performance which John Cage created to be interpreted at the discretion of the performer. However, they had to follow certain conditions.

When John Cage first performed the piece, there was only a single instruction: “In a situation provided with maximum amplification, perform a disciplined action.” After his performance, however, he added a few more guidelines for future interpreters to follow:

“The performer should allow any interruptions of the action.

The action should fulfill an obligation to others.

The same action should not be used in more than one performance, and should not be the performance of a musical composition.”

Each student went about performing in different ways. From classmates pouring drinks and others blowing balloons, each action led to an element of heightened sound, with a microphone to amplify the volume.

We also received the opportunity to read and understand John Cage's essay, *Lecture on Nothing*. The title is quite befitting, as it is quite literally a lecture on nothing at all. In it, he rambles about Kansas and New York, and the simplicity of Kansas in comparison to life in New York. He peppers it with a repetition of the phrases, “More and more I have this feeling that we are getting nowhere. Slowly as the talk goes on, we are getting nowhere and that is a pleasure, it is not irritating to be where one is, it is only irritating to think one would like to be somewhere else.”

His piece is set with very definite pauses that are meant to last a particular duration of time. It is slow and floating, and the formation is carefully constructed like a piece of music. Each word is a beat to be played at the exact right time, with a particular speed and rhythm.

The piece is meant to illustrate a theory purported by Cage: “If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, then eight. Then sixteen. Then thirty-two. Eventually one discovers that it is not boring at all.” It was not a piece that is meant to be stimulating, however, once the reading was completed, we could not deny that it ignited the creative spark in every one of us. Every activity requires some creative input and this understanding is only possible if we continue till the end regardless of the nature of the action.

Although the workshop lasted only two days, the lessons remain invaluable and I believe will continue to be relevant to my artistic practice. In the complex art stratum, sound, performance and visual, all play a vital role; from the activities, we realise that it is important to build up our sensitivities in both auditory as well as the visual dimensions, to understand the senses more completely so as to enable us to know how to evoke better connections with our audience.

Listening is a continuous process that should be constantly developed. It is an important lesson that is helpful for musicians, artists, writers and poets alike: the power to appreciate the beauty of all our senses.



IF YOU THINK I WINKED, I DID

INTERVIEW WITH KHAIRULLAH RAHIM

by Muhammad Masuri Bin Mazlan, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 1 (2016)



Promising young talent, Khairullah Rahim, alumnus of LASALLE graduated in 2013 with a BA(Hons) Fine Arts with a First Class Honours in Painting. He was also awarded the Future Leader Scholarship from the College. Although he was formally trained as a painter, he also immersed himself in other form of specialisms like sculpture and installation, to further expand his creative output.

Since his graduation, he has had his works showcased internationally in numerous art fairs and group exhibitions such as *CRUISE* (SHOPHOUSE5, Chan Hampe Galleries, 2015); *No Approval* (Grey Projects, 2013); and *PROJECT 6581*

(JCC, Embassy of Japan, 2013). He was cordially invited to be involved as artist-in-residence programme organised by YOUKOBO Art Residency Programme, Japan, and INSTINC Gallery, Singapore which allowed him a great space and time away to explore his art practices within a community: meeting new people, using new materials as well as experiencing life in a new environment.

Recently at Singapore's FOST Gallery, he debuted his solo exhibition, *If you think I winked, I did*, which I chanced upon unexpectedly. I truly admire how he approached a very delicate subject-matter yet was painstakingly able to subtly speak

volumes of an issue that is taboo in our society. His work of art is often apropos to the ever growing conspicuity of the queer agenda, through the intersection of art, binary opposition and his youthful imagination decked out against a vernacular architectural backdrop. His work engages the dialogue of the queer community as it investigates the proscribed intimacy of queer encounters far away from the prying eyes of the conservative society.

His current body of work features various swimming paraphernalia superimposed in various scenarios, symbolic of a pool in the heartlands. His successful play of rigid dichotomy of space and subject-matter leaves more to the imagination of the viewer. His signature choice of a pastel palette and orgiastic array of inflatable animalistic buoys seemingly give free rein to one's imagination – a realm of rituals and quotidian behaviour such as playing, commuting, and interacting with each other within the parameters of the oasis in tropical Singapore. His playful approach reveals sexual innuendoes yet concealing the proscribed activities. The tension is further amplified by the stark juxtaposition of soft edges of the teratoids against the flat colour rendering of the background.

His breadth of work clearly pays homage to the animal kingdom and his cleverly fused metaphors and symbolism speaks about the grand scheme of things that matters to him as an artist. He titles his paintings with lighthearted irony which, despite the humour, steers us back to his thematic concerns.

HOUSE OF CARDS...

IN COLLABORATION WITH LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

by Mohini Mehta, BA(Hons) Fine Arts Level 3 (2016)

"The contemporary art world today breaks away from the tradition of just painting and is exploring areas of sculpture and media in the expression of perspectives."

House of Cards was an exhibition by the renowned artist Owais Husain who lives and works in Mumbai and Dubai. This exhibition was produced in collaboration with the students from LASALLE.

This exhibition was preceded by a workshop project which was based on the concept that within oneself, a person carries different Identities. It was an attempt to realise one's own identity, through the exploration of others. Being a contemporary multi-media artist, Owais explores identity, iconography and its evolution from one generation to the next, depicting his relationship with and abstraction of a more traditional Indian art aesthetic. His works are drawn from the personal reflections on his experience of growing up in India, evolving to modern day notions of displacement, journey and cultural identity. He uses a combination of photography, painting, video and installation to visually bring out the ideas of his work.

My recent participation in the three-day workshop with Owais, turned out to be a very insightful session for me as a practising artist. There were students from the Diploma and BA(Hons) Fine Arts and BA(Hons) Film students. During the first day of the workshop, we were introduced to him, after which he spoke to us about his journey as an artist and his upcoming project. It was interesting to know how he had evolved as an artist and



carved his way through in this art world today. His experiences and journey made us think about how we see ourselves.

On the second day of the workshop, he visited each one of us individually in our respective studio spaces to discuss the current ideas we were working on. It was a very interesting conversation from an outsider's perspective. It was somewhat important to us for our work to be reviewed and discussed by another artist. Later in the afternoon, all the students gathered to have an interactive session where we exchanged ideas visually and began to build ideas as to how we see ourselves and how visually we can best represent our self.

And finally on the third day we had a final presentation where each student had to present the worked-out ideas and sketches she or he had come up with and explain how it played a significant role in their lives.

This workshop was really helpful for every student. Working with the artist as well as examining the theme of identity, was an interesting engagement for us as practising artist. It helped us question ourselves and find out answers. Made to face the reality of where do we stand in the art world today and how we see ourselves there, the entire workshop compelled each of us go through the phase of being lost and then realising how our journey began in the first place.

Coming across different themes that the students are working on, made me aware of how individual each student's view of himself or herself is, and how this can vary from person to person. I also saw how the various mediums used in the contemporary world today can explain a complex concept as Identity.

The contemporary art world today breaks away from the tradition of just painting and is exploring areas of sculpture and media in the expression of perspectives. The concept of media art has evolved so big that just media art alone is strong enough to reflect a message has become significant and relevant.

Participating in this workshop for me has been challenging; I have learned to develop a conscious yet unconscious thinking of my identity today. My final-year work also deals with the issue of identity with a cultural context. From this workshop, an important question has resonated, which one should never forget. It is about asking how we started and where are we today. Our past and present play an important role on how we are perceived and viewed today.

The workshop was a success, and it culminated in an exhibition of our works, together with the works of Owais Husain, in the Praxis Space, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore.