

①

INTERVIEW

We're Young Once

VALENCIA TAN WITH IAN TEE

⑤

INTERVIEW

Negatives, Positives and Many Other Possibilities

LUNA CHANG JIA XUAN AND NADRA
AHMAD WITH ANJEE TEO

②

REFLECTION

Compositing Negatives

DESNANDO SARLIM

⑥

REVIEW

Move For?ward

SHREE SUVARNA

③

INTERVIEW

Dis-Connection In Amnesia

NUR RAJINAH BINTE MOHAMED RAFIEE
AND NAYLI MASTURINA BINTI RAMDHAN
WITH PAULINE WONG

⑦

REVIEW

The Cycle of Rebirth

STEVEN MYAT KO

④

REFLECTION

One Night Only 2021

MIRNA BARAKAT-BROWN

⑧

REFLECTION

Windstedt, The Heart of My LASALLE

HAN ROSLI

Foreword

McNally School of Fine Arts is pleased to launch the 15th edition of Praxis Press, the yearly LASALLE student publication that provides a platform to think and write critically about art, explore critical perspectives and artistic practices. We thank lecturers Zarina Binte Muhammad, Dr S Chandrasekaran and Erzan Adam for overseeing the publication

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.

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We're Young Once

Art Agenda @ 63 Spottiswoode
8–30 January 2022

Interview with
Ian Tee

by **Valencia Tan**

Ian Tee graduated with a BA(Hons) Fine Arts from LASALLE in 2018, and has since presented several solo exhibitions and participated in group shows. Besides his artistic practice, he is also a writer, podcast host, and added to this he has recently curated his debut show *We're Once Young*.

In this conversation with Ian Tee, we spoke about the curatorial process of *We're Once Young*, his motives and perspectives as an artist. Much like a conversation with an older brother, it was both an intimate sharing of information of his practice and interests, and gentle advice for young aspiring artists.

VALENCIA Can you elaborate more on the premise of the exhibition, *We're Young Once*?

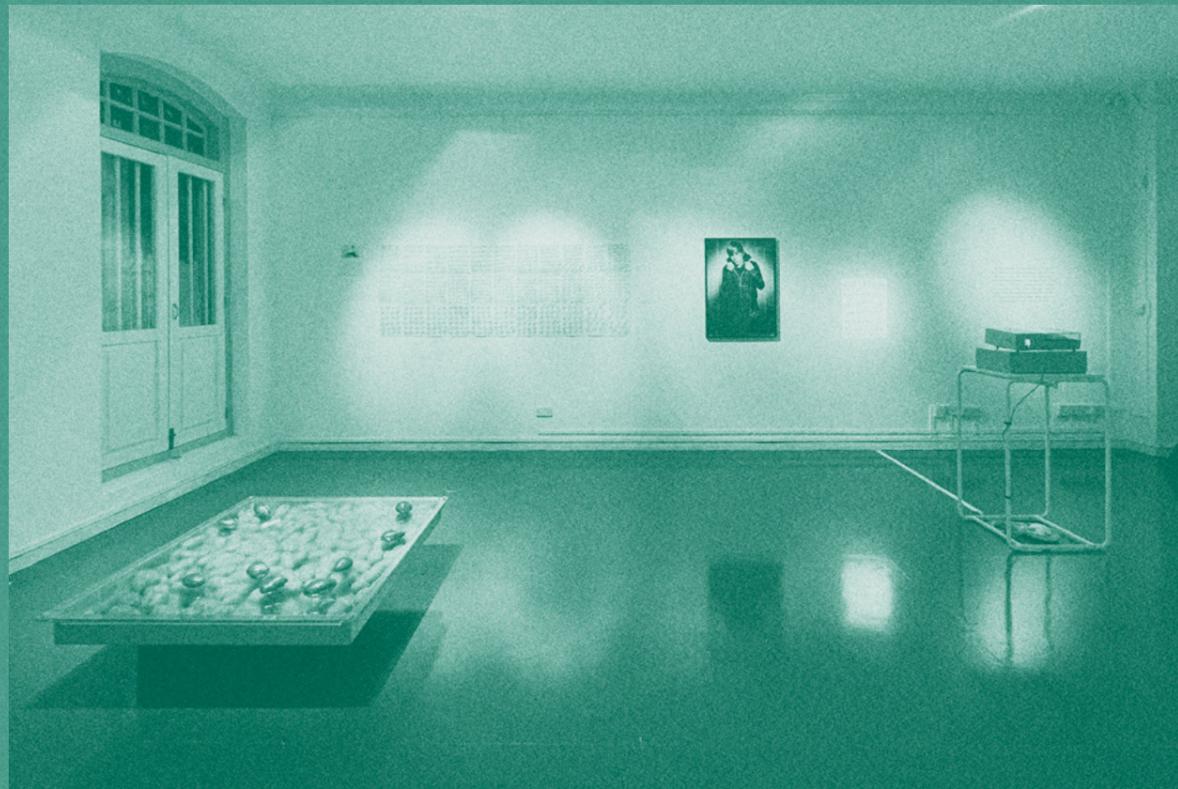
IAN *We're Young Once* is a show that gathers significant early work by Singaporean artists across generations. For me, it's a show about the artistic journey. The idea for this exhibition came about through my conversations with different artists, especially ones who are more experienced than I am. I've always been curious about how it was like when they started out. What was the art scene that they grew up in? Therefore, *We're Young Once* is an exhibition that explores what it means to be a young artist at different points in Singapore history. I wanted to capture a broad span of time. The earliest work was made pre-independence, and the most recent are commissioned pieces completed in 2022.

VALENCIA I thought it was so wonderful that you managed to present the works by renowned Singaporean artists like Amanda Heng's piece titled *Lost* which has never been exhibited before.

IAN There are two works in the show which have never been exhibited before. They are Lim Yew Kuan's *War and Peace* (1957), as well as Amanda Heng's oil-on-canvas work titled *Lost* (1989). Both paintings came to my attention, as I spoke to the artist-activist Koh Nguang How. He has one of the most comprehensive archives of photographs as well as newspaper clippings of art related activities in Singapore. Koh is also Amanda's contemporary in The Artist Village (TAV), their peers also include artists such as Lee Wen, Wong Shih Yaw and Vincent Leow.

In my research for the exhibition, I was interested in presenting works by artists associated with two key art historical movements in particular: the Equator Art Society (EAS) and TAV. For a show that deals with the theme of youth, it is necessary to represent these two movements as they were very much driven by the energy of young artists coming together. Artists from the Equator Art Society were fuelled by the need to express the social concerns of their time, while TAV in the late 1980s was a community of young artists coming together to experiment and push the boundaries of art in Singapore. I spotted *Lost* in a photo of Amanda's studio in Lorong Gambas from Koh's archive and he helped connect us.

Similarly, Koh shared his research notes on EAS and that was how I came to know of Lim Yew Kuan's *War and Peace*. It was a painting he proposed for an exhibition on EAS at Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in the early 2000s. The work did not make it into the eventual show, but Koh had information and documentation images of the painting in Lim's studio at Telok Kurau. Unfortunately, Mr Lim passed away in May 2021 so we approached his estate to borrow the work. We're grateful for the support of Amanda and Mr Lim's family, to be able to bring these two works to the public. I wish to highlight



We're Once Young
Exhibition view, 2022.

how even through the research process, it is thanks to the meticulous labour of another artist, Koh, that these two works were recovered.

VALENCIA What was the biggest curatorial challenge that you faced when conceptualising the exhibition?

IAN I would say the biggest curatorial challenge would be to select works that are both significant for the respective artists' practices, and speak to the theme of youth. The pieces should not be early works for the sake of fulfilling the curatorial premise. In my research process, I came across a number of early works by prominent Singapore artists from different generations, but they may not resonate with the theme. That said, I'm very happy with the final selection because every piece has a place in the show. They relate to the theme in different ways, through their subject matter, ethos or provenance.

VALENCIA You did a wonderful job on curating the show; the artworks spoke to one another beautifully.

IAN These connections become clearer when the works are gathered in a physical space. My job was to present the pieces in a way that highlights possible conversations among works and guide the audience to look out for these elements.

VALENCIA Let's talk about your work as an artist. Your work titled *FIRE BLANKET 12* was displayed at S.E.A. Focus 2022. Can you elaborate more on the concept and artistic decisions?

IAN It's from a series that's called *Fire Blankets*, and the title comes from the material that was used as a lining for the work. It is a textile-based piece that resembles a patchwork quilt. In *FIRE BLANKET 12*, you'll see white negative spaces along the sides of the work. The material that peeking through is the lining made of woven fibreglass. It is a functional fire blanket that can be used to put out fires, or used to protect oneself as they escape

from fire. Protection and comfort are ideas I want to deal with on a material level.

At the same time, fabric is also a material most people are familiar with because we use it in our daily lives. It is tactile and everyone has their own personal relationships with fabric. My work gathers textile fragments of different shapes, textures, and patterns. You'll see bleached denim, a bandana, a rainbow stripe that cuts across the middle of the work as well as a children's romper that's taken apart from the seam. Scale matters greatly and the *Fire Blankets* come in two different formats: large adult size that measures around 180 by 180 cm, and smaller children-sized blankets that are about 120 by 120 cm. This blanket belongs to this second group.

On a conceptual level, the project tries to connect the aesthetics of geometric abstraction with social history tied to the practice of quilting. Quilting is a gendered form of art making associated with marginalised communities and I want to complicate its relationship with hard-edged abstraction which shares similar formal qualities. The *Fire Blankets* can be appreciated on a purely formal level as abstract paintings, yet the materials used carry social signifiers that the audience picks up intuitively.

VALENCIA How did you handle the work, given that fibreglass can prick you?

IAN I have to wear gloves to handle the work, even when pinning the patchwork onto the lining. It is kind of troublesome but I think the discomfort adds another layer of meaning that perhaps only people who have handled the material might know. Even though the fire blanket is supposed to protect you, it is also uncomfortable so you don't want to use it unless it is an emergency. I like that tension embedded in the material.



FIRE BLANKET 12

Fibre-glass fire blanket, old clothes, unwanted textile, and safety straps.
Ian Tee, 2022. Image courtesy of the artist.

VALENCIA What is integral to the works of an artist? Or more specifically, what qualities are essential to contemporary artists?

IAN The question assumes that there might be a difference between artists working today as compared to those in the past. Personally, I'm more interested in the continuity, rather than how the context might change over time. Regardless, I think artists are driven by intuition and obsession. Perhaps what is more important for an artist practising today is to find a way to work in a manner that makes most sense to their context, values and aspirations.

VALENCIA How does your practice at LASALLE differ from your current practice as a multidisciplinary artist?

IAN What I'm working on currently is a natural development of explorations that began in my student days, both conceptually and materially. Perhaps the biggest difference has to do with exposure and risk. School is a bubble where one can experiment and show work in a safe space. After graduating, your works are for public consumption. In school, you have that protective environment to do things without fearing the consequences. However, I will say even now, it is okay to be vulnerable and learn from 'mistakes'.

Moving slightly off-tangent, I want to add that even when you're still in art school, it is important to think and carry yourself as an artist. Stay true to your personal interests and gather as many perspectives as you can. Also, understand that the advice or knowledge you're handed comes from someone who might have very different experiences from you. It is okay to just take what you need and run with it.

VALENCIA Starting out as an artist and then now branching out to becoming an editor, podcast host and now a curator, do you have any further plans you would like to explore?

IAN There are two ideas I've been thinking

about recently. One would be the artist book as a medium, because I personally enjoy them a lot. It's a very democratic format that circulates more easily, allowing more audiences to engage with my work. It is also a way for people to support my practice and own a meaningful object, especially if they might not have the means to acquire an artwork.

The other medium is clothes. As part of the *Walk Walk Don't Run* open studios in 2021, I presented some DIY reworked garments which are produced in my process of sourcing for materials to create the *Fire Blanket*. With the right context and collaborators, it would be nice to partner with someone on a clothing-based project.

VALENCIA For the last question, how would you define success? And do you consider yourself successful?

IAN I think success is tied to three things: a sense of purpose, freedom and gratitude. It's a privilege to be able to do what you love and find a way to make a living out of it. I have many people to thank for their direct and concrete support. They could be things like giving me a physical space to develop my studio practice, opening doors and providing opportunities, or looking out for my well-being. These are not to be taken for granted.

I don't think I can answer whether I consider myself successful, but this is how I define what it means. I think the best way to thank those who helped you is to pay it forward, by supporting others in your own capacity with the means you have.

More information on the artist can be found [here](#).

Compositing Negatives

Review by
Desnando Salim

A trip through my mind and a journey captured in film for the first time.

A few months ago, as I was scrolling through Instagram as one does, I came across an open call for these workshops by Annjee Teo and Pauline Wong. This project aims to teach youths how they discover their own creativity during times of difficulty and showcase. I did not know what to expect from the sessions.

I chose to attend their film photography workshop which consisted of two sessions.

When I walked in, I was greeted and I promptly took a seat at one of the tables; some people were already present. I was both nervous and excited. After a short briefing the workshop organisers distributed the cameras; it was a surprise when I saw that they were black & white film cameras. The night before when we were given a form to fill our ideas, mine involved playing with colour and the absence of colour in certain areas.

Our task was pretty simple; each camera contained a roll of film that could shoot up to 27 photos. We were to finish up the whole roll by the next session after which we were to return to develop them. At this point, I was excited for the many possibilities that I could grasp and capture in each film. I tried out some shots of the view from the balcony. ^(IMAGE 2 & 3)

One advice that they gave us was that this camera works better in natural bright lighting, and that was something to bear in mind as I shot.

Subsequently, on my way back, I took a picture

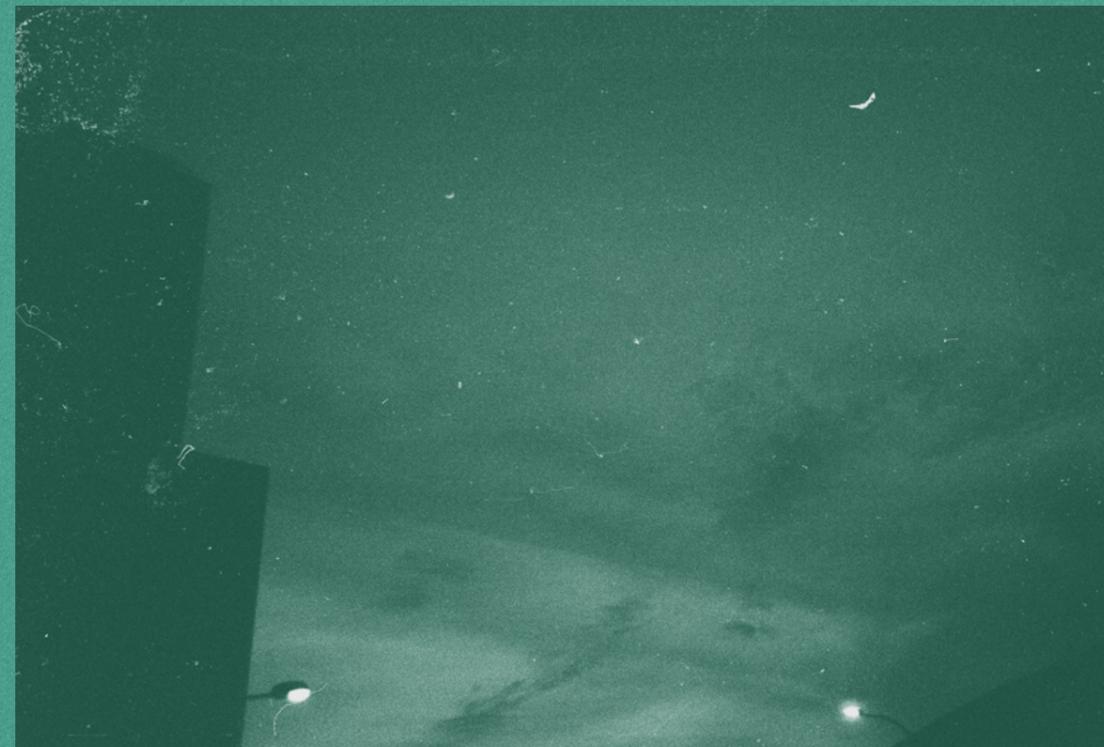


IMAGE 1 The sky with silhouettes of buildings framing the picture.



IMAGE 2 & 3 The second floor of SCAPE overlooking the street.

of this quaint path ^(IMAGE 4) in between the small bars where the sunlight peeked through the shaded canopy of trees. There were beer bottle caps strewn over the ground making the picture a little fantastical as they gleamed and reflected the sunlight.

Prior to this, I already had a habit of bringing a compact digital camera everywhere I go, so remembering to take pictures when I go out was not really an issue. What wracked my brain was more about what picture should I take. With film photography, treading with caution and precision was something I had to keep in mind. The nature of film photography is fleeting and more unforgiving.

It is a beautiful experience to capture one moment as it is without looking back. In a way that can be a metaphor for life, no?

Here are some of the shots I took:

This next image was from a fruit shop that I frequent in Tai Seng ^(IMAGE 5) quite near where I used to live. They have a vivid selection of cut and whole fruits. I grabbed a bottle of water from the vending machine in the back of the shop, feeling the cold from the condensed droplets. As the shop owner rang me up I took a glance at his rugged hands. It showed years and years of labour. That day, these baskets of pineapples looked particularly striking to me so I decided to document it. A simple cosy street view that I hope can bring some sense of familiarity.

I wanted to have at least one picture with a human subject ^(IMAGE 6) as the figure of expression. In this photograph, the figure sits on the bed clutching the blanket. The messy fabric screams tension, wildness. Maybe that is what freedom is. Or... maybe not...

^(IMAGE 7 & 8) These pictures were also taken in the pathway between Tai Seng and Bartley. At the time I was working part-time at a cafe nearby. Although I'm already familiar with this place, I now have a new thing to associate it with which is work and serving food and cleaning tables. It's enough to occupy my mind for a while, but not enough to override my experience of this area. It was calm... comforting. I could feel the warmth



IMAGE 4 A dirt path near Orchard.



15 IMAGE 5 Mangoes and pineapples in a fruit shop.



IMAGE 6 A man clutching a blanket.



IMAGE 7 & 8 Along a pathway lined with leaves and foliage.

of home and the breeze blowing through my hair and the trees.

Bikes could be found abandoned and tied to the green railings which lined the paths. Some bikes were even adorned with overgrown weeds. I found it quite sad, but also soothing. The weeds entangling the tires reminds me of how nature and time always takes their course, and are inherently inescapable. Although the lifespan of the bike was likely over, the least I could do is try to prolong it, in the form of documentation through photography.

Light.

Look up, there's always light. (IMAGE 9)

I believe this was taken in Esplanade, one of my go-to places when I feel like I'm in a slump.

That place is just so full of creativity and enchanting bits and bobs.

If you look hard enough, you can find new things in familiar places.

In the hallway of the 2nd floor, you can look up to see these skylights which are absolutely breathtaking. I felt as if I were inside a lighthouse, and on top was something aglow waiting for me to discover it.

Chinatown: one of my favourite places to go sightseeing. (IMAGE 10) There's always something you can find in every corner. On off-days when the shops are closed, around noon time is when you can really feel the tranquillity. The uninhabited stalls, empty alleys that welcome adventurers, leaves rustling on the ground, lanterns and banners flapping to the beat of the wind.

My eyes were always involuntarily redirected to these beer containers. (IMAGE 11) I was attracted by the arrangement and colours. The afternoon sun hits just right at the angle such that it looks grand and dramatic. The bicycle parked at the side hints at someone's livelihood and gives leeway for the mind to whip up a narrative. Who could have been riding it before? What business do they have in that place?

Just as I was, I hope you'll have fun compositing your own story.

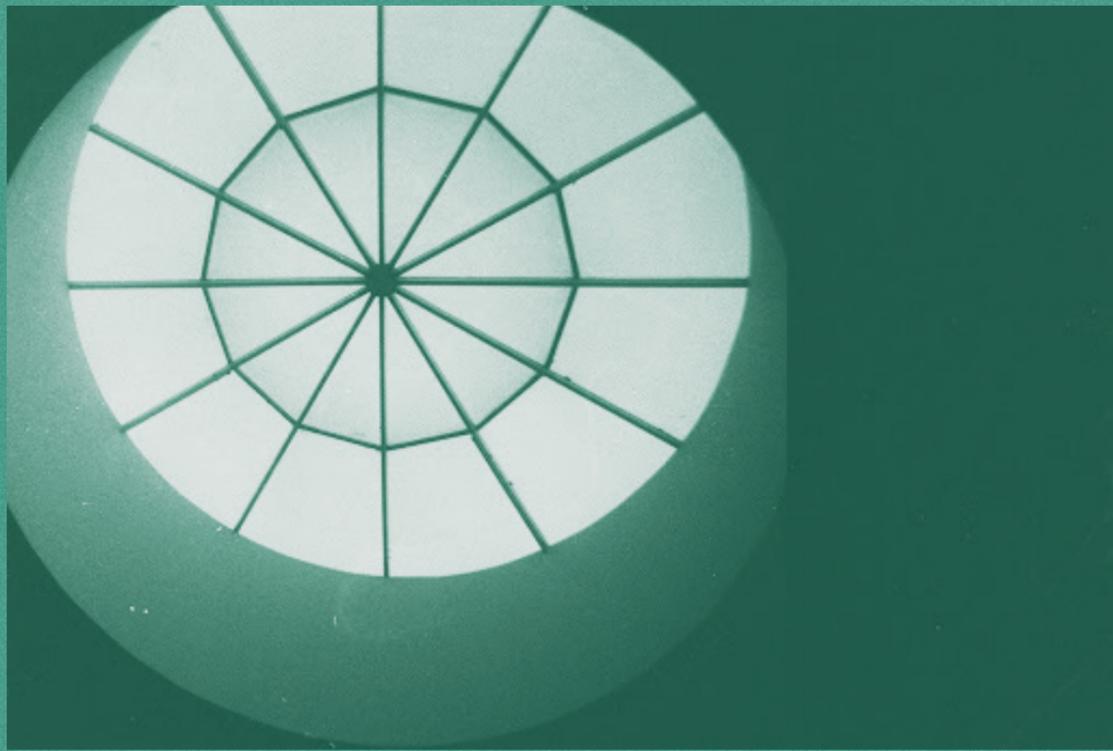


IMAGE 9 Ceiling with a skylight.



IMAGE 10 The street with a staircase and buildings in Chinatown.



IMAGE 11 A bike parked along racks of beer containers.

Interview with Pauline Wong: Dis-Connection In Amnesia

Interview with
Pauline Wong

by **Nur Rajinah Binte
Mohamed Rafiee**
and **Nayli Masturina
Binti Ramdhan**

Singaporean visual artist Pauline Wong (b.1997) recently graduated with distinction in Diploma in Fine Arts in the past year, majoring in Art Photography at LASALLE College of the Arts. Rooted in the practice of storytelling, Pauline's art focuses on various types of spaces—physically, mentally and digitally—in the hopes of re-discovering conversations of overlooked things and issues in human culture.

A musician and photographer before her admission to LASALLE, Pauline loved learning new skills and was not afraid of failure and making mistakes. This spiritedness brought her to experiment with a wide range of mediums including installation, to incorporate into her works. In two short years, Pauline's practice has developed from art-for-self to art-for-the-community. She strongly believes that as an artist, she holds the power to connect people and open conversations to make the world a better place. Her final year project, *Dis-connection in Amnesia* was an example of a social commentary that focuses on the theme of nature in Singapore, urging us how we should not take nature for granted.

Since she completed her course of study in LASALLE, Pauline has been actively participating in exhibitions both locally and outside Singapore. Upon graduation, Pauline was inspired to pursue larger-scale projects and participate in a community arts residency, *Compositing Negatives*, and an exhibition, *Veiled Prefaces, Jotted Lines*—both events were a part of the

Singapore Art Week (SAW) 2022.

In her community art's residency project presented by *SCAPE and supported by the National Arts Council, Pauline hosted educational workshops such as film development and cyanotype to engage youths of different backgrounds into the local arts scene and use art as a platform for the youth to express themselves in this trying time.

Recently, this endearing and passionate artist had the opportunity to take part in a collaborative project between two academic institutions: an online collaborative project between the Diploma in Fine Arts programme, LASALLE College of the Arts and Sabanci University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (VAVCD Program). Her latest work was exhibited at the Earl Lu Gallery in LASALLE as part of the exhibition *3V (Visualise, Voice and Vision)*. The objective of this project is to inspire students, artists, and designers to collaborate on critical analysis, contemplation and research to study the challenges that surround the topic through its social, cultural, environmental and contemporary creative practice.

Dis-connection In Amnesia highlights how the presence of nature in Singapore was mostly managed and planned due to the fast-growing urbanisation. As a Singaporean who was born into a revolutionising digital age and concrete living estates known as HDBs (Housing Development Board), Pauline had never truly interacted with nature in the way an earlier generation, like her elder family members, did. Having to learn to find comfort living with artificial nature and romanticising nature with the use of digital manipulation has become a norm. Upon this realisation, she found it important to protect what is left of 'Mother Nature.'

She replicated 'nature' in miniature, using both photography and diorama, and displayed them as different parts of a home décor exhibition. The condensation and mould from the diorama (glass capsules) function as a filter to the images, and this filter suggests forgetfulness and uncertainties of the future of

natural life in Singapore. She feels that while nature may change for future generations, every active step and effort made to conserve our environment can make a difference.

Pauline, who has adopted a personal mantra of affirmation—"I can and I will"—gives us an insight into her inspiration and motivation behind her work. She also shares her personal background as an artist.

RAJINAH Who or what inspires/motivates you to create your artwork?

PAULINE The things around me, especially on social media.

NAYLI What is *Dis-connection In Amnesia* about? Do elaborate.

PAULINE *Dis-connection In Amnesia* is a three-part series work that explores my disconnection with nature. The word 'dis' in the title, is a wordplay; it is a common internet slang used as a short form of spelling for the word 'this', so this title can be seen either as a 'dis'connection in amnesia or 'this' connection in amnesia.

As a Singaporean who was born into a revolutionising digital age and concrete living estates—or HDBs (Housing Development Board), I have never truly interacted with nature. The nature I interacted with is artificial and growing up in the age of technology, romanticising nature with the use of digital manipulation is a norm and it has inevitably affected me, allowing me to find comfort living with artificial nature. My disconnection with nature has caused my perception to differ vastly from my elders and this perception is known as environmental generational amnesia, where it varies from people of different generations and it does not affect our biophilic tendency which is our innate ability to seek and connect with nature. Despite the fact that lines have been blurred and nature for future generations may differ, it is important that we continue to protect what is left and not be complacent because every effort we put into protecting our nature can make a difference.



Dis-connection in Amnesia
Installation view
Inkjet on photo paper, various materials
Pauline Wong, 2021

RAJINAH What's the purpose or goal of your artworks? Is there a message you would like to share to the viewers?

PAULINE The goal of my artworks is to spark conversations of the overlooked things and issues in society and culture.

NAYLI What made you want to take part in SAW?

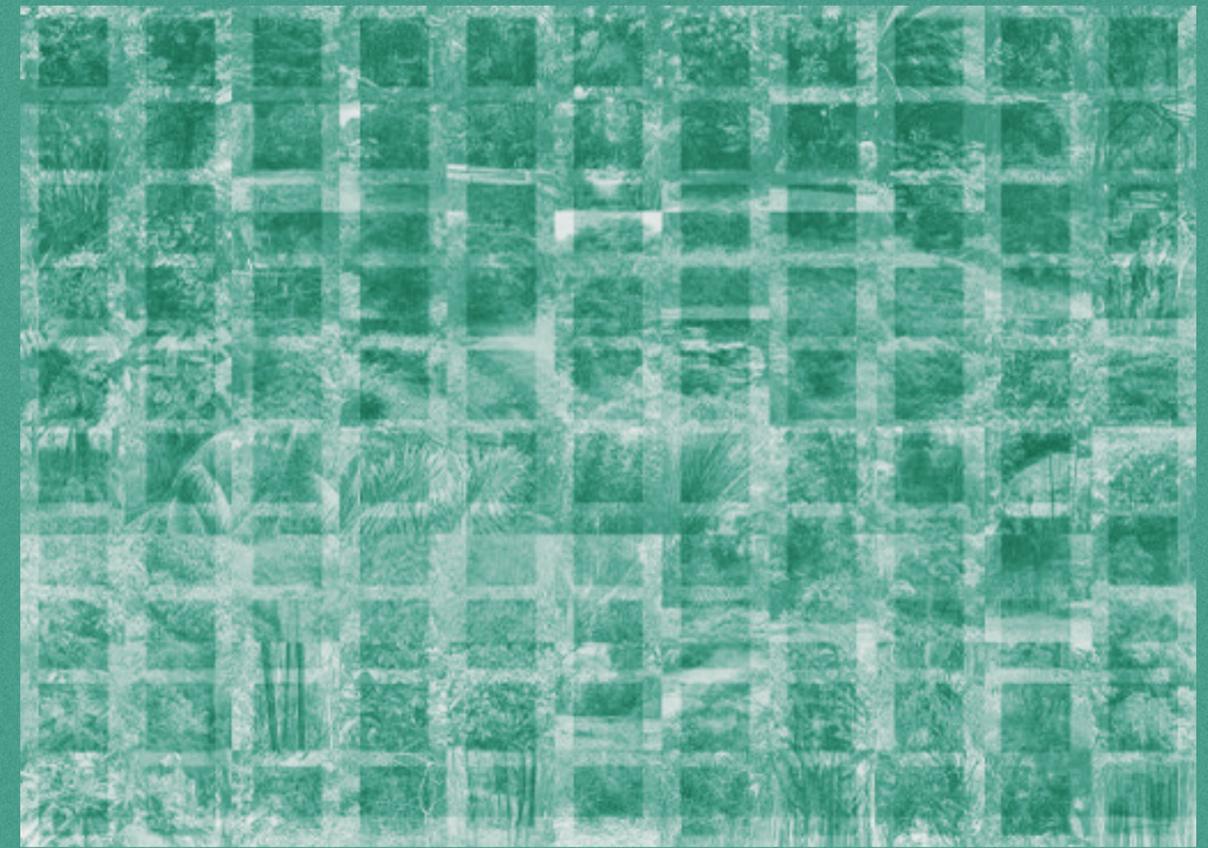
PAULINE To be honest, it's more like a milestone to see where I stand in delivering my message in my works. After all, the criticism you're going to get is not going to be all nice and considerate to not hurt your ego, not that I'm saying the general public's responses will all be negative but targeting actual problems that I may fall short on.

RAJINAH What was it like being an art student in LASALLE?

PAULINE Being an art student in LASALLE has been fun. I learned a lot about myself and also lost myself during my time there [laughs]. Importantly, I learned to fight for myself and stand firm on my beliefs (or works). It's like tough love, you know. Sometimes your ego gets slapped but it's ultimately good for you because you need to check your ego, that kind of thing. It was also the time I learned that I'm not out to please people on what they like; whether it's my aesthetics or my concept, art cannot be rushed. This doesn't just apply to art but to life in general.

NAYLI What is it like to be a professional artist after graduating from LASALLE?

PAULINE Becoming a professional artist after graduating from LASALLE is way tougher than I thought it would be. You are pretty much on your own and playing multiple roles at a time. Back in school, you're being represented by school and all you need to do is really just make works and submit. The lecturers are always there to



Dis-connection in Amnesia (Part I)

Inkjet on photo paper

Pauline Wong, 2021

assist and guide you whenever you get stuck and there's always a strong support system that you can always fall back to. Whereas when you're a solo artist, you're pretty much on your own and finding yourself a strong support system is important. The struggle is real.

RAJINAH What are some of your best pieces of artwork that you have created? Why?

PAULINE The best one is the next one [bursts into laughter]. OK, but for real, *DIA* is by far one of my best pieces of work. In my opinion I felt that I had sufficient time to do a fair amount of research that I need and to experiment with various mediums and methods to make this body of work to be articulated well enough. Moreover, it's a social commentary and I felt that it's one of the more successful bodies of work I've made.

NAYLI Have you ever come across a creative block? If so, how did you overcome it?

PAULINE I did have a brief period of creative block! It happened when I was in the first semester of my final year! I was exhausted inside out and it was so painful and I constantly have to tell myself it's okay to take a short break, get some sleep and it'll all pass!

RAJINAH Where or how do you see yourself in 10 years?

PAULINE In 10 years' time, I'd like to see myself being able to inspire and support young artists and creatives to be bold with pursuing the things that they are passionate about even if it feels like their whole world is against it.

NAYLI What are some advice that you would like to give to LASALLE students? Especially the ones who are graduating?

PAULINE Pace yourself and plan for the long term. You really don't want to be jumping from burnout to burnout. Find yourself a good support system that will act as your



Dis-connection in Amnesia (Part II)
Inkjet on photo paper
Pauline Wong, 2021

soundboard when you pitch ideas and most importantly,
GET SUFFICIENT SLEEP! There's nothing more
important than your well-being!



Dis-connection in Amnesia (Part III)
Installation view (detail)
Various materials
Pauline Wong, 2021

One Night Only 2021

Reflection by
Mirna Barakat-Brown

In the midst of the continued pandemic, student-artists in years 2 and 3 of the BA(Hons) Fine Arts programme at LASALLE responded with remarkable resilience. With over 70 artists, it took a village to realise the annual *One Night Only 2021* (ONO2021) exhibition. Faced by the uncertainty of today's world, each student expanded their visual language to uncover new sensibilities and push boundaries of their art practices. Artists' investigations illuminated challenging topics such as the natural environment, disappearance, chaos, heroes, home and so much more.

The curatorial team for *ONO2021* consisted of 12 students undergoing the elective 'Artist as Curator'. A few weeks into the planning for a physical exhibition previously held at LASALLE'S sister campus Winstedt, our curatorial team had to pivot and created an online exhibition. The team further divided into groups of two to three, with each team responsible for curating one of five electives. These electives were able to expand students' artistic practices in the areas of fieldwork, the performative body, code abstraction, video art and wearable art. As artist curators we quickly realised one of the best ways to learn this process was to literally reinvent the wheel—meaning we had to figure out how an exhibition was put together from scratch. With Dhiya Rahman as lecturer and Clarice Tjahyadi as teammate, I was part of the Wearable Art curatorial team.

The role for each curatorial team was to plan, organise, communicate, promote, problem solve

and manage expectations within their elective, and our ambition was to create a cohesive exhibition with extensive themes, mediums and forms of expressions. Our experienced leader, Cheong Kah Kit, a curator and artist himself, had warned us to be patient for the first several weeks because the bulk of curatorial activities took place toward the end of the semester, the time when artists resolved and finalised work.

Formulating the exhibition's theme to showcase student-artists' works became evident as our curatorial team collaborated with Tristan Lim, an artist and former graduate of LASALLE. As our web designer, Tristan's integral contribution helped us fuse our inspirations and vision for the site www.onenightonly.sg. The team deliberated over colour choices, navigation, design, layout, font and so many other minute details to construct an online exhibition. This was where we would figuratively 'hang' the artists' final works and invite the public to view the presentation. While the site may be viewed on all devices, one of the best ways to see it is on a desktop/laptop. When a user enters the site they may notice the subtle changes in colour between one rectangle and another. Each colour represents a different elective. These colours were also echoed in our promotional materials such as our posters as well as promoting the artists' themselves and curators' talk @mcnallyfinearts.

Feedback was a crucial component in designing the exhibition. It was important for us to listen to each other, to our lecturers, to the artists, to our web designer, to guest curators and translate the different perspectives into a coherent, tangible production. As part of team Wearable Art, we knew the wearables may not be read in quite the same way online as they might in real space. A physical presentation would have animated the three-dimensional objects made for the body and carried by the body. However, thanks to Dhiya's guidance and the professional videography and photographs by the team at Studio Silo, the artworks were given a sense of depth and movement. Studio Silo

elevated the experience and added an audio element, a component which a live audience may not have experienced. Presenting the visual with this added sound dimension transformed the texture of each work for our digital audience.

Working against the challenging circumstances of a pandemic, I shout out: Challenge accepted COVID! But most of all a shout out to the valuable contribution of Team *ONO2021* and a special mention to Team Wearable Art. The online exhibition for *One Night Only 2021* became the culmination of what it meant for artists to find dynamic ways to counter continued incertitude.



Screengrab from the landing page of the *ONO2021* website.



Clarice and Mirna—Team Wearable Art.



Artist Vanessa SJ Toung and her work.



Photoshoot session with artist Nur Afiqah and Studio Silo.

Negatives, Positives and Many Other Possibilities

Interview with
Anjee Teo

by **Luna Chang Jia Xuan**
and **Nadra Ahmad**

Situated at a quaint corner of *SCAPE, two young artists have been laboriously planning workshops, mixing chemicals and developing film in the name of community art. *Compositing Negatives* is an initiative by Anjee Teo and Pauline Wong – a project that was formulated by Anjee during a time where she was investigating the idea of using art as a form of catharsis during a pandemic, while also making fine art accessible to a large number of young people.

Coming across the open call for *Compositing Negatives* as an Instagram advertisement, I decided to apply for the cyanotype workshop as it has always been an art form I wanted to explore. The workshop was casual yet informative and engaging – conversations between artists and participants flowed smoothly as we created (adjective) works. Anjee and Pauline gave us a platform for people from different walks of life to connect with each other and create art. The demographic of their workshops, which consisted mostly of those outside the arts industry, is a testament to their ability to make fine art accessible to the younger generation.

During the workshop, I had meaningful conversations with both Anjee and Pauline. As an artist who works with photography and digital imaging, I was keen on finding out about how *Compositing Negatives* came to life.

LUNA Tell us more about how you partnered with *SCAPE for the programme and what prompted you to go for it!

ANNJEE Sure! We decided to apply for the residency because we were curious about exploring community arts and the potential that it had to bring people together. We were initially a bit intimidated by the scope of the project, but we're glad that we stuck with it to the end.

LUNA Most people only see the beautiful end results of your workshops and exhibitions, but not everyone knows about the efforts put into making all these possible. What are some of the lowest points and setbacks you have experienced in the process of *Compositing Negatives*?

ANNJEE I think our biggest challenge was the fact that we were fresh grads who were very new to this whole thing. This was the biggest project that we had taken on at that point, and we hadn't dabbled in community arts before. Furthermore, we were occupied with other projects leading up to Singapore Art Week. We also found it difficult to navigate the pipeline from classmate to collaborator, and sometimes there was tension because of our differences in opinions. I think the most valuable thing that we learned was definitely to remain flexible and open-minded. Although it was hard and we struggled at times, it was worth it.

LUNA This has been a great achievement and I'm sure the process has been immensely fulfilling. What were your happiest or proudest moments throughout *Compositing Negatives*?

ANNJEE I think we were happiest during our workshops; days were long and stressful, but we really enjoyed the interactions that we had with the participants. There isn't a specific moment that stands out as something we're proud of, but we think we're most proud of the community that we've managed to build during our time at *SCAPE. *Compositing Negatives* was a very grassroots project that was entirely youth-led and run. From the both of us, to our designers, participants and even our gallery sitters; we're honoured that many of the brilliant young people we've met through *Compositing Negatives* have



Cyanotype workshop in progress: participants dip their works into water to wash off the excess chemicals.



Film shooting and developing workshop in progress.

become our close friends. They willingly offered logistics support during the busier days of the exhibition set-up and tear-down. When they came back to collect their prints, some of them also showed up with notes and handmade presents with affirmations that they'd love to help out for the next iteration. Although I'm not entirely sure if that is a possibility, we're optimistic about the future, and what it holds for *Compositing Negatives*.

Nadra's review

A cluttered corridor, a crowded commute, a quiet shadow casted by the afternoon sun – these are a few windows I peered into as I visited *Compositing Negatives*. Elegant yet prosaic, the artist's prints depict intimate scenes that allow us an insight into their everyday lives. Black and white photographs are delicately juxtaposed alongside blue cyanotypes, in which artists explored the potential of materiality and text. Some chose to print on unorthodox surfaces, notably a salvaged McDonalds takeaway bag, while others chose to embrace cyanotypes as a painterly material. I found myself moved by the images and words; “repeat and repeat and repeat...” particularly resonated with me as someone with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Compositing Negatives offers us a sense of connection through glimpses into the artist's worlds, aiding us in meaningfully understanding one another. This initiative is a step forward in combating the elitism and exclusivity that has plagued fine art for too long.

All answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Move For?ward

Review by
Shree Suvarna

Move For?ward was an experiential installation presented by Unseen Art Initiatives and was part of the *Light to Night Festival 2022* in the National Gallery Singapore. This was a two year long collaboration with a diverse group of artists and 12 visually impaired co-creators led by Claire Teo, the first visually impaired artist who graduated with a Diploma in Performance at LASALLE in 2019. Some of the notable artists include another LASALLE graduate Kira Lim (Key Artist Collaborator), Clarence Chung (Music Composer and Audience Experience Lead) and Samuel Woo (Installation Artist and Design Lead). In addition, Alicia Neo and Jesslyn Lim, the founder and project manager of Unseen Art Initiatives respectively, supported and produced the project. Unseen Art Initiatives is a "volunteer-run platform which advocates for inclusive art practices and artistic collaborations across abilities".

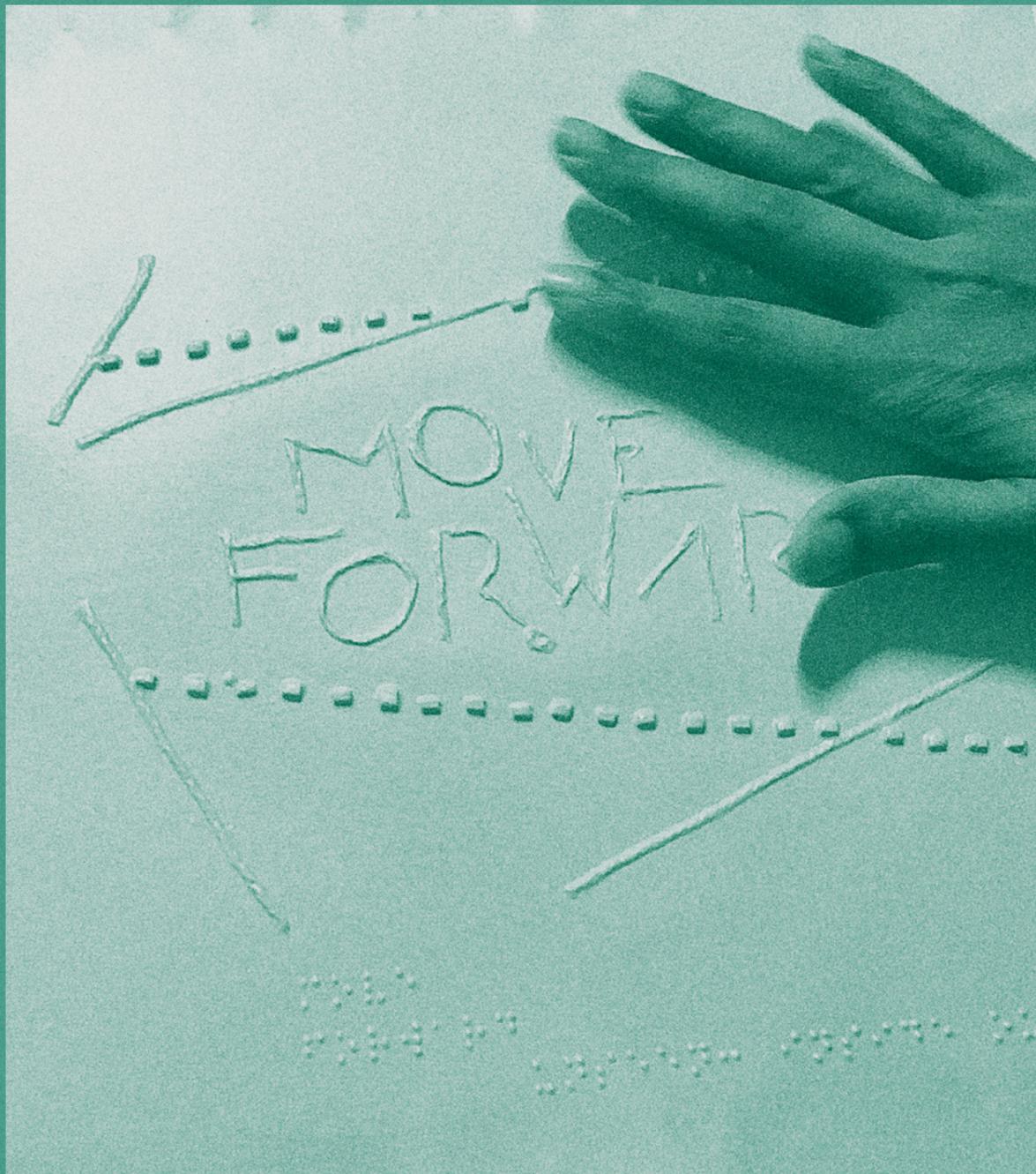
When I entered the basement level, it was a dimly lit space with a few spotlights aiming at the installation. It consisted of several columns along the sides, with yarn of different colours stretched and attached back and forth in the middle to create a maze. At first glance, the soft yarn created an intimidating entanglement, which became even more challenging when I realised I had to navigate the maze with closed eyes. As I faced the maze, the thought of going in without sight felt somewhat anxiety-inducing with what seemed like a room full of possibilities of tripping or getting tangled and bringing the whole installation

down! However, it became more pleasant once I pushed away from the nervousness of trying something new and focused more on the tactile sense of my hands and body. When a rope would brush by, it would feel like a clue for a constant puzzle to which direction I could continue or what path would be the safest.

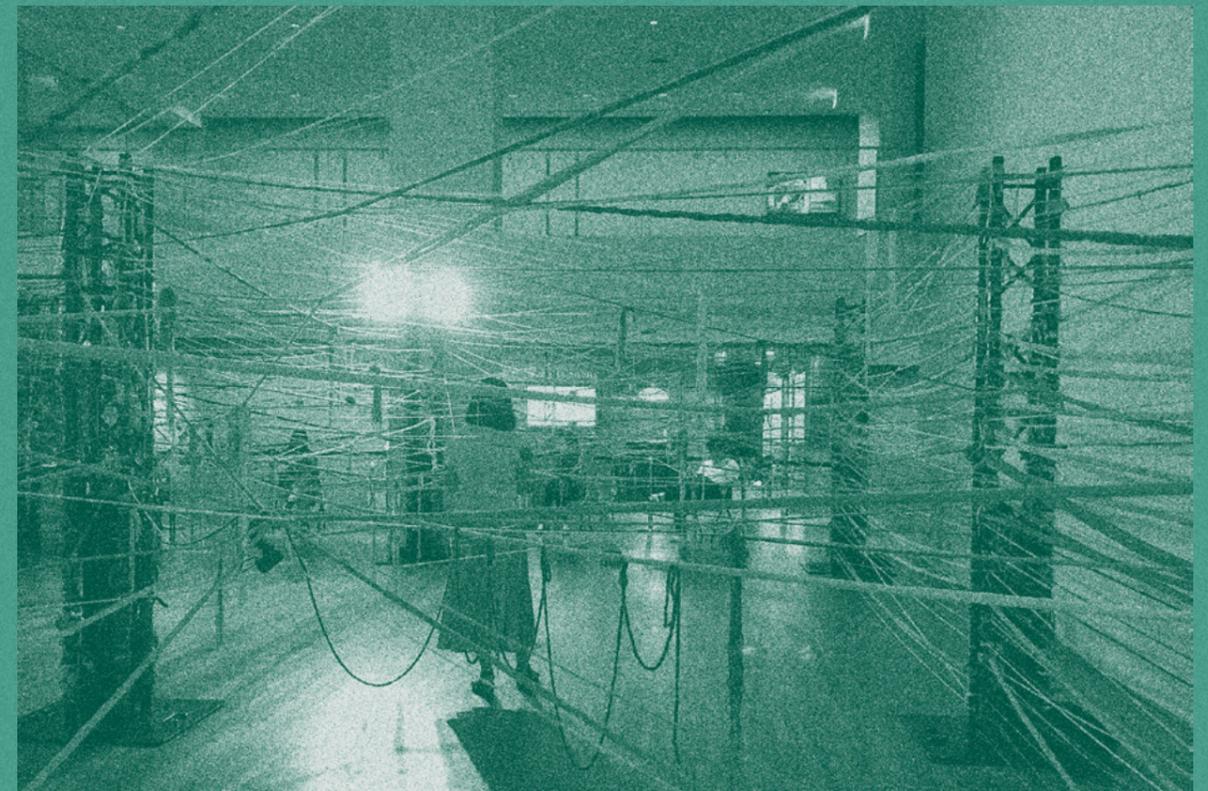
While navigating the maze, I was required to listen to their audio on my phone and earphones. The experience began with eight questions that were directly correlated with my progress through the maze. The questions cause the viewer to reflect on our personal as well as societal perceptions and interactions with disability. While a voice explained that there is no clear right or wrong answer, if you were to say yes, you would take one step going over or under the closest rope, and if you said no or were not sure, you would stay in your spot. At times, my answer felt unclear as it felt like it could be a biased assumption as an abled person, however the calm space and solitary method of answering created less pressure to immediately answer and instead think it through.

After the question segment, the voice requested for me to open my eyes and search for a number (made out of yarn) attached to the nearest rope and listen to one of the interview excerpts. I scrolled through the different numbered audios to the fourth track and listened while stationary in the middle of the maze. The audio was of a young visually impaired man sharing his experience of struggling with his education due to the lack of understanding from lecturers with his disability as well as going through the effects of his father's passing at the time. He persevered in remembrance of his father's support and advice, making significant progress in his education as well as choosing to become a social worker to help those in need.

Finally, I was asked to find a seat at the end of the maze and settle down comfortably to listen to one of the audio works inspired by the visually impaired co-creators. They were presented as either a poem, monologue, dialogue, song, or a combination.



Tactile exhibition poster with text in braille.



Move For?ward
Installation view, 2022

I was encouraged to choose from the various audios titled love, inclusion, empowerment, access, social connection and dreams, based on the question "What would you like to see more in your life". I chose dreams and was led to a self-composed melody by Shermaine along with a self-written mandarin poem by Cinderella. This piece conveyed their dreams of freedom in what they long for in relationships such as having shared empathy, connection, and trust.

As it was the last day of the festival and installation, I had decided I would take the opportunity to be more involved in a discussion rather than leave after experiencing the artwork. I signed up for the last session of Conversations from Inside Out, to interact with three of the visually impaired co-creators; Firdaus Jaafar, Desmond Toh, and Cheyenne Phua as well as later joined by Claire Teo and Kira Lim. I was one of the four viewers during this session and was fairly timid as this was not only my first time in an experiential installation but also meeting with the artists of one. However, they were very welcoming, clear with their answers, and helped direct the conversation when we were unsure what to ask. After being asked about our experience, I expressed my feelings of uncertainty and anxiety about where to take my next step throughout the maze in case I tripped and fell, even being honest about occasionally opening my eyes slightly for a second to have my bearings. They expressed that these feelings were a constant occurrence in their lives and that it is understandable to feel nervous as this is something that the viewers may not experience in their daily life. They also conveyed that this installation was to share these feelings to bridge the gap between abled and disabled people caused by physical and mental barriers. We also discussed some of the questions from the audio to create more context and further the conversation to understand their experiences. Additionally, I was able to hear the voice from the fourth interview excerpt. It was interesting to connect a voice to a person in front of me. It made me reflect on my perception of meeting people

and how visual I truly am as I could not recognise him from his voice, although I had just heard him narrate his story in audio form and then lead the majority of the session in person.

Overall, the installation felt like a thoughtful piece that combined various interactive and sensorial elements. I especially admired the musical compositions as they created an ambiance appropriate for listening and reflecting. The audios consisted of genuine and personal narratives expressed through short stories and poetry connecting to dreams, reflections, painful memories, uncomfortable interactions and flawed systems. This installation aimed to create a space for viewers to question and reflect on the public speculations and views of disability, I feel they successfully executed this in an immersive way. To conclude, the creators hoped to create empathy and more allies for the unseen people around us as the audio ended with the question that caused me to continue to reflect on this experience even afterwards: what would you do to create a stronger support system for those around you?

The Cycle of Rebirth

Cornucopia—of Abundance and Giving

by Delia Prvački

18 Sep–30 Oct 2021

Earl Lu Gallery, LASALLE College of the Arts

Review by
Steven Myat Ko

For her work, Singapore-Romanian artist Delia Prvački has always focused on her natural surroundings and the cultural environment. She has experimented with ceramics as a sculptural medium, often mixing techniques with influences from archaeology. Using ancient symbols and tales from Greek mythology, *Cornucopia* comments on the unrestrained consumption of a seemingly boundless Earth in the modern era.

Prvački produced several sculptures featuring forms of horns and tusks, which are inspired by the Greek mythology of cornucopia, also known as 'horn of plenty.' This symbol was taken from the Bibliotheca of Pseudo-Apollodorus, which is a compendium of Greek mythology and heroic legends that were written during the first or second century AD.

The cornucopia arises from the story of the birth of the god Zeus, who was nurtured by a goat goddess known as Amaltheia. She had nursed him with her milk, until one day when one of her horns broke. It transformed into an uninterrupted flow of fruits, vegetables and even milk, the supply of which was enough to provide nourishment to the rest of the world.

The way Prvački represented the old tales of Greek lore and fable in a contemporary way is fascinating. The old tusks and horns, which are decorated with patterns and natural processes of distressing, add to the authenticity of the folktales from the tales and mythology. The sculptures' silhouettes are very intertwined with the natural versions of tusks and horns, and the colour

choices of brown, tan and beige are evocative of an era through the remarkable blend of aged and distressed forms.

The engorged and overfilled sculptures comment on the over-consumption and excessive food waste that humans produce. In ancient times, food was given out and eaten in a distinctive and controlled quantity. Times have changed, so have the extent of our hunger. Prvački is trying to show how we have been needlessly filling our gullets with unnecessary amounts of food, and that a lot of the unwanted food as waste gets thrown out when it could have been donated or given to the ones who need it or are starving.

Delia Prvački's *Cornucopia—of abundance and giving* let the viewers appreciate the surplus of nature's perpetual giving. The ancient roots that the horn represents can be traced back to the classical era. We were born into nature that was filled with every element that was needed to adequately survive and prosper. It has been a long time since the tales were heard, and in the 21st century, humans still cannot survive without the natural resources that our planet provides.

The sculptures remind of the original benefit of nature's gift, which is food and water. These ingredients brought upon evolution and civilization. The way the horns sprout objects signifies our need for nature, and how much we demand of it. The objects are mostly viewed as our needs, a clear example being food. The horn provided Zeus with an endless supply of milk, so in our context, it's providing humanity with an abundance of food and water to be shared by everyone.

Have humans ever shown gratitude and appreciation for our planet?

We fill up landfills with waste, pollute the oceans, destroy forests to build infrastructure and kill wildlife for sport. I'll say humanity is definitely on a slippery slope.

As humans progress, our exploitation of nature has grown and its resources are in high demand. The mining and deforestation for materials that we



Cornucopia—of Abundance and Giving
Exhibition View, 2021.

require to develop humanity into a technological powerhouse has been catastrophic. We no longer take only what we need, but what we desire.

The planet is taking a huge impact in terms of destruction and elimination. Man is using whatever method necessary to gain absolute control over raw materials and minerals, methods that consequently result in chaos. We draw materials from the planet to produce food or things to satisfy the hunger of almost everyone on earth, but this comes at the cost of destroying our home. Whatever we think we are doing to prolong our lives, we are also killing life at the same time.

Earth has always provided us with everything we've needed. But is there a limit to this bounty?

"When you give, you shall receive," as my grandma would say. There will always be an unspoken agreement when something is gifted, an equal exchange is required, especially when that 'something' is life.

Windstedt, The Heart of My LASALLE

Reflection
by **Han Rosli**

Synopsis: A personal and wholesome recollection of the writer's experience at Winstedt campus as a graduating student. This piece also offers her first impressions and thoughts, and why she chose Windstedt to be her 'home' over the McNally campus.

The picture that first comes to mind when one mentions 'LASALLE' would be the McNally campus. The grand, uniquely designed campus that has won three distinguished awards over the years has drawn the praise and attention of many all around the world. In all honesty, the high-end, contemporary structure with shiny floor-to-ceiling glass panels stays impressed in your mind, as vivid as your reflection when you gaze upon it; this will always be the first image to appear when you hear the word 'LASALLE'.

To me, however, 'LASALLE' will always remind me of Winstedt campus, that is and was home to many students, including myself. Popularly identified as "the other campus" locally, Windstedt is as endearing as the other iconic campus to me, despite the apparent differences which I will relate here.

I spent most of my time at Windstedt and not McNally as a sculpting major. At first, I did not know that this campus existed. Only after a few months of attending LASALLE, word of mouth eventually got around about Windstedt and its scary supernatural stories, and that was how I was first introduced to the campus. Occasionally, I would hear recollections of people who may have experiences with paranormal encounters within the school area. A few claimed to

have seen them with their own eyes, but many have heard of such stories from other people, imaginative anecdotes that were probably just to amuse their friends with. In spite of the spooky tales surrounding the place, I was determined to pick sculpting as my specialism in Year 2. I knew that the workshop classes would be held on a campus that is constantly proclaimed as haunted, but I was confident of my decision and that no silly ghost stories would easily scare me away.

I remember the first time I arrived. It was my very first sculpting class and I was late as I had never visited the campus before and I needed some time to navigate the place. Truth be told, the first impression I had the moment I arrived was unforgettable. I was well aware that the campus would be different from the one that I was familiar with, but what I initially felt is difficult to put into words accurately. It was not terrible, nor was it ugly, but it reminded me so much of the schools¹ that I had attended in my earlier years as a pre-tertiary student in Singapore. Unlike McNally, it was not all new and shiny, but it consisted of old sprawling buildings, with walls painted in white, a typically safe colour; from a distance, it looked a little worn and old, almost to the point of appearing in a state of neglect.

I remember the morning was a tad quiet; there was barely any student hanging around the campus, which made it seem harrowing at first. Compared to the modernist six blocks at McNally, which are connected by high sky bridges, Windstedt has three long, isolated blocks with long, quiet hallways—which surprisingly gave me a warm, welcoming feeling that seemed to embrace my inner spirit.

I found it neither creepy nor scary but, on the contrary, I felt I was back in my school of my younger days, rather than at a campus that should match the grander environment of McNally. This campus felt ordinary to me. This big distinction made me question if the campus was not deemed special enough to be part of the LASALLE reputation.

I did find it a little bit dull and boring initially.

¹ Winstedt campus at 9 Winstedt Road was formerly Monk's Hill Primary School which operated in the 1940s-50s. remembersingapore.org/2016/05/22/monks-hill-winstedt-estate/
Accessed 3 Apr 22.

However, my later experience proved otherwise as it completely shattered my first disappointing impression of the campus. I soon discovered that it contained more than I had imagined. It was so much more than just dull and boring. In the same way as McNally, it was fitted out with all the necessary equipment and appliances, complete with fully-equipped studios that cater for photography majors, for example. Outside of Block C, the last block of the three, there is a workshop that specially caters to sculpting majors; it provides a diverse range of tools and machines that can help sculpting majors build whatever and whenever they need. Koh Kwang Wei, the workshop technical officer, is always on standby, ready to offer help to any student and he often goes the extra mile. When I first arrived, an introductory tour session was held in the workshop conducted by Kwang Wei. I was able to recognise some of the machines based on my previous sculpting experience, but I soon realised that his help was very much needed—and appreciated—in the making of my artworks. Under his guidance, I learnt how to use these tools properly. It was thanks to him that I also became the knight in shining armour whenever my friends from other majors came to the workshop for their projects. That way, he would then be able to attend to the other students' needs, and I would help out to guide my friends. I was glad that my skills came in handy, not only benefiting me, but also the others around me. Although sometimes, this knight's armour gets a little rusty and I have to give credit where it's due—it was Kwang Wei who will always be the one repeatedly coming to the rescue, helping students with whatever they need.

Not only was the workshop interesting but the outdoor environment as well. The workshop is located at the back of the campus compound, where the ambience is refreshing, full of trees and lush natural greenery. Outside the workshop area, my class—comprising wooden benches—is located next to a big tree that is home to many inhabitants. I remember the days when my friends and I would spot squirrels running

in and out of the tree, and we would rush over to take a closer look, where we would also unwittingly scare them away with our presence. The place was never quiet, with the occasional times when chickens randomly barge into our workshop area, causing a ruckus under the tables, interrupting our lessons. The back compound is also located opposite a boys' school, from which school bells ring at intervals, in the middle of our lessons. Our classes were the furthest thing from boredom, what with the chickens interrupting, the school lunch bells chiming simultaneously—hearty laughter often fills the air. There were also stray cats in the area, walking about looking for food and then chasing the chickens all over the place. Gradually, this boring, shabby-looking campus became a most interesting place, a place that I look forward to going to every week.

As a sculpting major, I am fortunate that I was at Windstedt. I was able to learn in a very different environment from that of most of my batch-mates who were stuck at McNally for three years. Even though there's nothing wrong per se with staying in McNally, or on one campus, I felt I had the best of both worlds being able to attend classes at both campuses. Whenever I want to work on my sketchbook, I prefer to do it at McNally. Whenever I wanted to work on my sculptures, I would go to Windstedt. Sometimes I would even kill two birds with one stone by doing both at Windstedt, and this way, my work progressed a lot faster.

Sculpting is one of the many things I am highly passionate about. I love being able to work hands-on, being able to dig my fingernails into bags of clay and being able to experience art-making techniques through many 3D physical media like metal, wood and acrylic. Windstedt has its special charms, and I owe the enjoyment of my specialism as much to Kwang Wei, and my lecturer Shane, for being part of my overall pleasant experience at Windstedt. I have learnt so much for the past two years: I have learnt the ways of art-making and machinery, and how sculpting works in a diverse form. Beyond this, I am very glad to have experienced

another side of LASALLE, far different from what we all experience at McNally. Looking back, I realised my first impression had been too harsh. It may be an older site that is not familiar to many, but it left a strong impression on me. For whatever it is worth, I will always treasure my memories at Windstedt; it truly defines what 'LASALLE' is to me, which is 'home' where I feel like I truly belonged.

