



# ARTS & DISABILITY FORUM 2023

18.02.23 - 23.02.23

**Enabling Aspirations**

**Diversifying Pathways**

## Organised by



## Programme Partner



## Venue Partner



## ABOUT ART:DIS

ART:DIS (Singapore) Ltd, formerly known as Very Special Arts Singapore, is a non-profit organisation focused on creating learning and livelihood opportunities in the arts for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Founded in 1993 by Ambassador-at-large Professor Tommy Koh, ART:DIS offers diverse pathways in the arts, covering a wide range of foundational art programmes, professional development initiatives and showcase opportunities.

We envision an inclusive society, where PwDs are confident to express themselves, empowered to achieve their fullest potential, and engaged as integral members of a community.

## ABOUT NAC

The National Arts Council (NAC) champions the arts in Singapore. By nurturing creative excellence and supporting broad audience engagement, our diverse and distinctive arts inspire our people, connect communities and profile Singapore internationally. We preserve our rich, cultural traditions as we cultivate accomplished artists and vibrant companies for the future. Our support for the arts is comprehensive – from grants and partnerships to industry facilitation and arts housing. The Council welcomes greater private and corporate giving to and through the arts, so that together we can make the arts an integral part of everyone's lives.



# ARTS AND DISABILITY FORUM 2023

The 5th edition of the Arts and Disability Forum (ADF) organised by ART:DIS and the National Arts Council brings together international and local speakers across the arts and disability sector to share their diverse experiences, providing a space for learning and reflection on best practices in the field of disability arts and access. The theme of “Enabling Aspirations, Diversifying Pathways” spotlights the continuum of access in community-based programmes to programmes that support the professional development and leadership of D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse persons in the arts. We will discuss access within inclusive environments and communities, and the support of collaborative processes and professional practices facilitated with and led by persons with disabilities.

## **ART:DIS Bukit Merah**

3779 Jalan Bukit Merah, #03-02 Community Hub,  
Singapore 159462

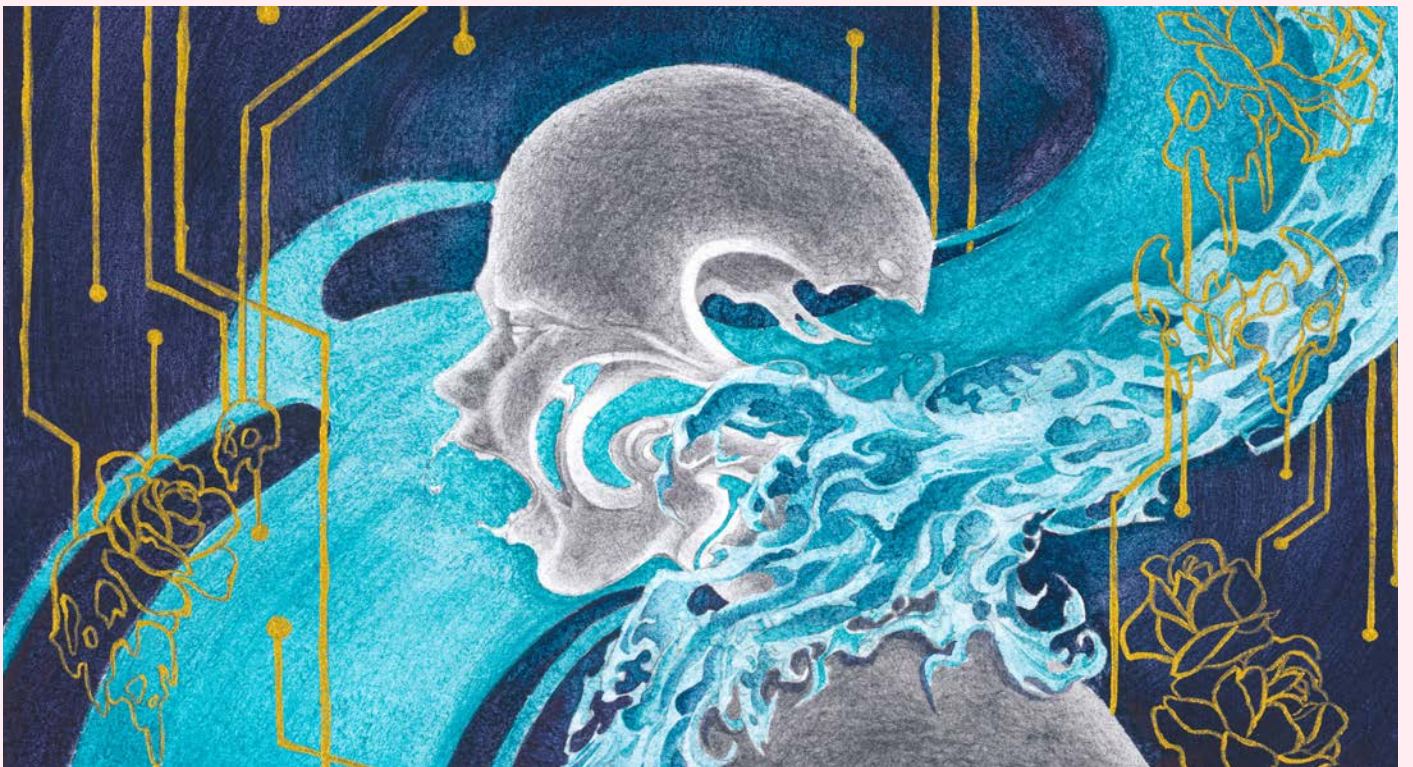
## **Gateway Theatre**

3615 Jalan Bukit Merah, Singapore 159461

## **Singapore Art Museum**

39 Keppel Road, #01-02, Tanjong Pagar Distripark  
Singapore 089065





*Illustrated by Amelia Tan, for the performance BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Day I Met The Prince*

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# Message from ART:DIS

*“Yes, you have a million dreams and so do I. As long as I can be real to myself, I can achieve anything. This is where I’m going to change my destiny.”*

– **Yuki Neoh, 29**

*Graduate of ART:DIS BEYOND DIS:PLAY programme  
Recipient of NAC Undergraduate Scholarship 2022*

Above is an extract from Yuki’s self-devised performance piece, one that was spoken into the piercing silence of the audience. She echoed the thoughts of her disabled peers, many of whom like her are still navigating their sense of place, purpose and aspirations, vis-à-vis broader social constructs and expectations of them.

Are we ready to recognise them on their own terms? How do we reframe mainstream definitions of success; to enable and not further disable Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) who desire not just to participate in cultural activities, but also to be active contributors, creative content producers and key opinion leaders?

This year’s forum discusses the various dimensions of empowerment of a PwD in and through the arts, across a spectrum of disability profiles and support levels. It is both a conversation about professional pathways and empowerment at the community level, always recognising the individual first, before the disability.

As ART:DIS (formerly Very Special Arts) celebrates our 30th anniversary this year, we celebrate our partners and allies who have walked with us in this journey championing the inclusion of PwDs in, and through the arts.

Thank you for being here, and being part of this collective journey.

Yours Sincerely,

**Angela Tan**  
Executive Director



# Message from NAC

Welcome to the Arts and Disability Forum (ADF) 2023!

First organised in 2016, and now in its 5th edition, the ADF has become an important platform where the arts and disability community can come together to learn, reflect and share best practices. Over the years, the National Arts Council (NAC) has witnessed significant progress made by cultural institutions and the wider arts community in promoting inclusive practices, and we look forward to continuing our efforts in supporting this.

This year's theme "Enabling Aspirations, Diversifying Pathways" tackles some of the challenges that disabled artists face, — from accessing resources, receiving sufficient support from the wider community, to taking on leadership positions — providing us with perspectives to think about what we can all do to lower these barriers.

NAC believes that accessible arts experiences open up new opportunities for everyone, artists and audiences alike, and through shared experiences of diverse and distinctive arts, we will emerge more cohesive as a society.

I am delighted that we are able to gather in person after our last online conference in 2020, to make new connections, and to host distinguished speakers from Australia, England and Japan. I trust that you will have a fruitful and inspiring time.

Sincerely yours,

**Elaine Ng**  
Senior Director - Engagement & Participation



08:45	<b>Registration Open</b>
09:15	<b>Welcome Address</b> <i>Professor Tommy Koh (Founder, ART:DIS Singapore)</i>
	<b>Guest-of-Honour Address</b> <i>Mr Eric Chua (Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and Ministry of Social and Family Development)</i>
	Opening Remarks <b>Mapping the Arts and Disability Landscape in Singapore</b> <i>Ms Angela Tan (Executive Director, ART:DIS Singapore)</i>
09:40	Performance 1 <b>DANCE DRAMA: Breakthrough Journey (Film)</b> <i>ART:DIS in collaboration with BiG-i, featuring Luqman B As'ad, Ammar Ameenzy, Timothy Lee, Eileen Tong, Pang Yi Wei, Nur Arianty Binte Djonaede</i>
09:45	Panel Discussion 1 <b>From Access to a Future of Disability-led Leadership: Individual Aspirations and Equitable Representation</b> <i>Dr Azariah Tan (Pianist and Educator, Board Member, ART:DIS), Dr Balbir Singh (Advisor and Founding Chair, Down Syndrome Association), Eric Chua (Senior Parliamentary Secretary, MCCY, MSF), Sky Shen (Singer-Songwriter). Moderated by Maureen Goh (Former Executive Director, ART:DIS Singapore)</i>
10:40	<b>Tea Break</b>
11:10	Keynote 1 <b>Art. Freedom. Care.</b> <i>Project Art Works (UK), represented by Tim Corrigan (Creative Director) and Katie Taylor (Creative Programme Manager)</i>
	Panel Discussion 2 <b>Bridging Community-based Engagement to Professional Pathways: Intervening in Complex Culture Systems</b> <i>Tim Corrigan (Creative Director, Project Art Works), Roger Lee (Parent-Guardian of Performing Artist Timothy Lee), Ranae Lee-Nasir (Visual Artist and Educator), Claire Teo (Actor, Director, Singer, Lyricist, Script Writer). Moderated by Alecia Neo (Co-Founder of Brack and Artistic Director of Unseen Art Initiatives)</i>
12:30	<b>Networking Lunch</b>



13:30	<p>Performance 2  <b>BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Wheel You Love Me? (Live)</b>  <i>Performance by Sky Shen</i></p>
13:45	<p>Keynote 2  <b>The Happiness of Each Person is the Happiness of Society</b>  <i>Kyoko Suzuki (Arts Executive Producer and Deputy Director), BiG-i International Communication Centre for Persons with Disability (JPN)</i></p>
	<p>Keynote 3  <b>Studio A: Supporting Individual and Social Outcomes for Artists with Intellectual Disability</b>  <i>Gabrielle Mordy (CEO and Artistic Director), Studio A (AUS)</i></p>
	<p>Panel Discussion 3  <b>Reframing Meaningfulness and Empowerment in Community-based Case Services</b>  <i>Evelyn Ang (Head of Department, Arts, AWWA School @ Napiri), Gabrielle Mordy (CEO and Artistic Director, Studio A), Kelvin Koh (CEO, MINDS), Ron Loh (Assistant CEO, SG Enable). Moderated by Angela Tan (Executive Director, ART:DIS)</i></p>
15:45	<p><b>Tea Break</b></p>
16:15	<p>Performance 3  <b>BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Aspirations &amp; Pathways (Film)</b>  <i>Featuring Claire Teo, Grace Ng, Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon, Wan Wai Yee, Yuki Neoh</i></p>
16:40	<p>Performance 4  <b>BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Day I Met The Prince (Live)</b>  <i>Performance by Timothy Lee, Ivni Yaakub, Choo Jun Wei, supported by Amelia Tan, Courtney Mae Lim, Shai, Su Paing Tun</i></p>
17:15	<p>Roundtable  <b>Industry Mentorship and Asset-based Collaboration</b>  <i>Haresh Sharma (Resident Playwright, The Necessary Stage), Dr Philip Tan (Creative Director, The Creative Playground), Verena Tay (Artist-Educator, Playwright and Storyteller), Grace Ng (Actor), Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon (Dancer-Actor-Advocate), Wan Wai Yee (Singer-Actor). Moderated by Peter Sau (Head of Artistic Development, Performing Arts, ART:DIS)</i></p>
18:00	<p><b>End</b></p>



## 1) Art. Freedom. Care.

*Tim Corrigan, Creative Director and Katie Taylor, Creative Programme Manager  
Project Art Works (UK)*

Project Art Works collaborates with people with complex support needs, their families and their circles of support to enable authentic expression and self-representation through art making. The archive of work, produced over 20 years, offers a unique record of the lives of people often made invisible in cultural life and wider society. This keynote address will introduce Project Art Works' practice, from studio-based activity to training, advocacy and peer support for families, offering insights into the ways in which the organisation and the artists it works with have disrupted entrenched dynamics of representation in the art world and beyond.

## 2) The Happiness of Each Person is the Happiness of Society

*Kyoko Suzuki, Deputy Director  
BiG-i International Communication Centre for Persons with Disabilities*

The BiG-i International Communication Centre for Persons with Disabilities was established in Osaka in 2001 by the Japanese Government as a centre for artistic and cultural activities by persons with disabilities. For more than twenty years, the BiG-i has been creating an environment where anyone, including persons with disabilities, can participate in art appreciation and creative activities. BiG-i provides advice and coordination to theatres and museums across the country, sharing their programmes and techniques. Through their international networks, they also develop co-productions with overseas organisations such as the production "DANCE DRAMA: Breakthrough Journey" in collaboration with ART:DIS. This keynote address will introduce the work of BiG-i and reflect on ways of supporting artistic activities by persons with disabilities as well as the results of such programmes.

## 3) Studio A: Supporting Individual and Social Outcomes for Artists with Intellectual Disability

*Gabrielle Mordy, CEO and Artistic Director  
Studio A (AUS)*

Studio A is one of Australia's leading supported studios for professional artists with intellectual disability and a social enterprise initiative of Studio ARTES Northside. Through Studio A, our artists consistently exhibit and sell their work, receive major commissions and even licence their intellectual property. Four Studio A artists were finalists in Australia's major portrait prize The Archibald in 2022. Studio A's program works in complement with Studio ARTES which delivers more recreationally focused creative programs for adults with disability with a focus on building life skills. This keynote address will outline how Studio A artists achieve their professional outcomes and how Studio A and ARTES programs work in collaboration, paying particular attention to the personal and social outcomes these creative programs produce including improved self esteem and social cohesion.



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## 1) From Access to a Future of Disability-led Leadership: Individual Aspirations and Equitable Representation

The arts thrive on diversity, not just as a cultural form but also as a creative field offering innumerable ways of reimagining our present and our futures. How might the Arts & Disabilities sector be collectively conceived from the perspectives of artists, producers, and leaders within our communities? How do we shift conversations of inclusivity for disabled persons from that of culture access to equitable representation in leadership within the arts and cultural sectors? What does the future look like?

*Dr Azariah Tan (Pianist and Educator, Board Member, ART:DIS), Dr Balbir Singh (Advisor and Founding Chair, Down Syndrome Association, Singapore), Eric Chua (SPS, MCCY, MSF), Sky Shen (Singer-Songwriter). Moderated by Maureen Goh (Former Executive Director, ART:DIS)*

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## 2) Bridging Community-based Engagement to Professional Pathways: Intervening in Complex Culture Systems

The work of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent communities are important and relevant voices that add to the diversity of our culture landscape and narratives, contributing and partaking in cultural content and production. Developing and sustaining professional careers for artists with disabilities require particular interventions, scaffolds, and support systems within our current cultural climate. What changes are necessary for the advancement of such opportunities and possibilities? How do we intervene in complex culture systems and disrupt preconceptions about what people with disabilities can or cannot do, who they are, and how they live?

*Tim Corrigan (Creative Director, Project Art Works), Roger Lee (Parent-Guardian of Performing Artist Timothy Lee), Ranae Lee-Nasir (Visual Artist and Educator), Claire Teo (Actor, Director, Singer, Lyricist, Script Writer). Moderated by Alecia Neo (Co-Founder of Brack and Artistic Director of Unseen Art Initiatives)*

### 3) Reframing Meaningfulness and Empowerment in Community-based Care Services

With the growing number of arts programmes in Social Service Agencies and Special Education Schools in Singapore, how might we see the arts as a platform for supporting disabled individuals in becoming community assets, givers and empowered individuals? How do we maintain inclusivity of participation when developing these programmes, moving away from 'functional abilities' to asset-based development? In what ways can we reframe and rethink approaches to meaningful engagement in these settings, and across different support levels.

*Evelyn Ang (Head of Department, Arts, AWWA School @ Napiri), Gabrielle Mordy (CEO and Artistic Director, Studio A), Kelvin Koh (CEO, MINDS), Ron Loh (Assistant CEO, SG Enable). Moderated by Angela Tan (Executive Director, ART:DIS)*

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### 4) ROUNDTABLE — Industry Mentorship and Asset-based Collaboration

In this roundtable, mentors and artists exchange perspectives and insights on challenging norms and establishing benchmarks in the disability arts sector.

*Hareesh Sharma (Resident Playwright, The Necessary Stage), Dr Philip Tan (Creative Director, The Creative Playground), Verena Tay (Artist-Educator, Playwright and Storyteller), Grace Ng (Actor), Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon (Dancer-Actor-Advocate), Wan Wai Yee (Singer-Actor). Moderated by Peter Sau (Head of Artistic Development, Performing Arts, ART:DIS)*





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## 1) DANCE DRAMA: Breakthrough Journey (Film)

*ART:DIS in collaboration with BiG-i, featuring Luqman B As'ad, Ammar Ameerzy, Timothy Lee, Eileen Tong, Pang Yi Wei, Nur Arianty Binte Djonaede*

Witness how an international call for collaboration ignited the formation of an inclusive dance collective to champion inclusion and diversity in stage representation.

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## 2) BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Wheel You Love Me? (Live)

*Performance by Sky Shen*

Through contemporary songs created from lived experiences, Sky reflects on the right to love and to be seen as an equal human being.

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## 3) BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Aspirations & Pathways (Film)

*Featuring Claire Teo, Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon, Grace Ng, Wan Wai Yee, Yuki Neoh*

Take a deep dive into different characters, lives, dreams, dilemmas, battles, and triumphs, invigorated and shaped through the lens of disability.

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## 4) BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Day I Met The Prince (Live)

*Performance by Timothy Lee, Ivni Yaakub, Choo Jun Wei, supported by Amelia Tan, Shai, Su Paing Tun, Courtney Mae Lim*

Through this seminal play written by Kuo Pao Kun portraying the common pains of growing up in Singapore, let's embark on an adventure to honour our unique identities and paradigms. Performed by a pan-disability cast with original visual artwork projection, creative captioning, and creative narration.

 Singapore Art Museum

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16:00 - 17:30

## **[SAM ART DOSE - Talk] A Framework for Action: Exploring Artistic Approaches Within the Arts Ecosystem to Support People Often Excluded from Cultural Life and Wider Society**

How can we reimagine spaces for inclusivity? What actions can be taken to make them a reality? Three players in the arts ecosystem—the artists, the non-profit organisation and the museum—will explore these questions as they share about their respective journeys. From Project Art Works' (UK) programmes, which showcase and celebrate the contributions of neurodivergent artists; to ART:DIS' arts programming and advocacy, which empower persons with disabilities; to Singapore Art Museum's (SAM) collaborative approaches to art, which enable the co-production of meaning, discover how everyone in the community can play a part in driving social change.

*Tim Corrigan (Creative Director, Project Art Works) and Katie Taylor (Creative Programme Manager, Project Art Works), Angela Tan (Executive Director, ART:DIS), and Dr Lim Chye Hong (Head of Education, Programmes and Access, Singapore Art Museum)*

**Free | Registration required**

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13:00 - 15:45

## **Solar Printing Drop-in Workshop**

Get to know PAW's approach, methodologies and practice through the simple photographic process of solar printing. Participants will be invited to make their own portraits to incorporate into an evolving installation that records traces of people who have been in the space. Learn about the considerations involved in working with artists with complex support needs, including the design of immersive environments and processes used.

**Free | Open to all ages, Children must be accompanied by an adult**

**13:00 - 15:45, 17:30 - 19:00**

## **Film Screening of Kin**

Growing up Mell wished her autistic brother could speak - now, in adulthood, she realises you don't have to talk to explain what you need. Kin is a coming of age story between two sisters (Mell and Janine) and their neurodivergent and autistic brother (Carl), exploring sibling relationships, family duty and care.

Since its founding, PAW has used film both as a tool for self-reflection and in public-facing productions that enable neurodivergent artists to represent themselves on their own terms. The organisation's film archive contains a broad range of material, from intimate footage of studio practice to interviews with artists and recordings of their lived experiences. At this screening, catch a preview of PAW's new film, Kin, which documents the life of PAW studio artist Carl Sexton and his sisters, who are part of his care team.

**Free | 16 Minutes on loop**

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**20.02.23 - 21.02.23**

 **ART:DIS Bukit Merah**

**WORKSHOP BY  
PROJECT ART WORKS**

**10:00 - 17:00**

### **Target participants:**

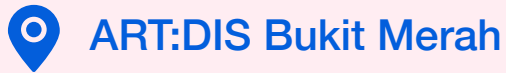
**Artists and arts workers who work with neurodiverse communities in Visual Arts**

Over the course of this two-day workshop, participants will work alongside each other in an evolving environment created collaboratively with others in the space. Starting from the principle of personalised mark-making as an authentic record of an individual's way of being, and finding ways to share and celebrate that, Project Art Works has developed a practice that enables the representation of neurodivergent people on their own terms.

Together, we will explore the environments, processes and values that underpin the unique and personalised collaborations at the centre of Project Art Works' studio practice and public-facing productions. Through participation in hands-on activities, reflective discussions and film screenings and presentations to share the archive of exhibitions and studio practice, participants will have the opportunity to expand thinking and develop practice around making visible people and lives which are often invisible.

### **Elements of the workshop:**

- Creating sensory environments
- Authentic mark making
- Expansive non-verbal communication
- Collaboration and facilitation
- Working with circles of support



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09:30 - 13:00

## **In-Conversation: Collaborative Access**

*Facilitated by Kyoko Suzuki, Claire Teo, and Peter Sau*

### **Target participants:**

Artists and arts workers primarily working in Performing Arts

Allyship is needed to sustainably support fully accessible works to the D/deaf and disabled. We need to empower them as artists to do their best artistic work—disability-led—to build a more exciting and diverse arts ecosystem. How can we collaborate as equal partners through more inclusive practices to offer disability-informed perspectives and distinctive expertise? How do we foster a genuine and conscious engagement and understanding of the toolbox necessary to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion? This session in two parts aims to address the intersections of cultural productions, arts education, and disability access through asset-based and purpose-driven creative work, arts programming, and stakeholder management.

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14:30 – 17:00

## **In-Conversation: Creative Enabling Towards Disability-Led Practice**

*Facilitated by Gabrielle Mordy and Francis Poon*

### **Target participants:**

Artists and arts workers primarily working in Visual Arts

Supporting the professional development of artists with disabilities, specifically those with intellectual or learning disabilities may require additional creative facilitation and enabling. In commissioned work and curated exhibitions, how might we support them to express their own unique voice, and at the same time respond to the demands and creative briefs of commissioners, curators and producers?

Studio A provides its artists with a working studio space equipped with specialist materials and support staff. In a similar vein, ART:DIS provides its young artists in training with access to a ceramics studio where they are supported to create works independently. Gabrielle Mordy of Studio A will be sharing about public art projects undertaken by their artists, and their approaches in supporting them to lead the public art production process vis-à-vis the broader support the Studio A team provides. Francis Poon manages the ceramics studio programme for ART:DIS, and will share about how he supported a group of young artists-in-training to produce ceramic sculptures that were featured together with local artists in The Sculpture Society's annual exhibition in 2022.



**09:30 - 13:10**

## **Performing Arts 101**

*Dance introductory session facilitated by RAW Moves (Artistic Director Ricky Sim and Dance-Educator Matthew Goh), Maya Dance Theatre's Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (Artistic Director Kavitha Krishnan and Dance-Instructor Weng Jiaying), as well as Luqman B As'ad (Artistic Director of SHIFT, Dancer and Choreographer) with Timothy Lee (ART:DIS Performing Artist)*

*Music introductory session facilitated by Mei Tan (Music Instructor), Fran Ho (Vocalist and Musician), and Drum Prodigy (Founding Director Sivaranjini Das)*

### **Target participants:**

**Social service sector/SPED professionals working with PwD communities**

Performing Arts 101 is an experiential workshop for social sector and SPED practitioners who wish to explore performing arts programmes in their work with persons with disabilities. In this series of workshops, you'll be introduced to different dance genres, such as Contemporary Dance, Indian Dance, and Street Dance, together with music genres such as Drumming, Choral Singing, and Angklung. Hear from the artists on their approaches in facilitating inclusive learning, across different support levels, taking clients/students on their journey of self-discovery and social interaction.

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**14:00 – 17:40**

## **Visual Arts 101**

*Visual arts introductory session facilitated by Wesley Seah (Chinese Ink Artist), Francis Poon (Ceramic Artist), Joe Chien (Digital Illustrator), and Tan Beng Tian (Puppeteer and Theatre Practitioner)*

### **Target participants:**

**Social service sector/SPED professionals working with PwD communities**

Visual Arts 101 is an experiential workshop for social sector and SPED practitioners who wish to explore visual arts programmes in their work with persons with disabilities. You will be introduced to various visual arts mediums such as Chinese Calligraphy, Ceramics, Puppetry, and Stop Motion Animation. Hear from the artists on their approaches in facilitating inclusive learning, across different support levels, taking clients/students on their journey of self-discovery and social interaction.

# SPEAKERS

## Keynote and Panel

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### Alecia Neo



Alecia Neo is the co-founder of Brack, an art collective and platform for socially engaged art, and Ubah Rumah Residency on Nikoi Island, Bintan. She also runs Unseen Art Initiatives, an art platform for professional and emerging disabled artists and cultural workers. As an artist, Alecia's creative practice unfolds primarily through lens-based media, installation and participatory artworks. Ongoing projects include *Care Index*, an experimental platform that collects and features diverse practices of care performed by people from all walks of life. Conceived in late 2020, Care Index builds on a previous project titled *Between Earth and Sky*, which was developed in collaboration with movement artists Sharda Harrison, Ajuntha Anwari, and a group of caregivers in Singapore.

### Angela Tan



Angela Tan is the Executive Director of ART:DIS, and has been involved in managing multi-stakeholder community-based arts initiatives, cultural events and policy planning. Formerly with the National Arts Council (NAC) for over a decade, her key appointments include leading the Singapore Art Week, the Civic District Precinct Planning and the Public Art Trust. She was also involved in initiating key funding and capacity building programmes for the social sector as part of the Arts and Culture Strategic Review, including the WeCare Arts Fund and Arts training for social and healthcare practitioners with NCSS and AIC. Prior to the NAC, she was managing a commercial art gallery.

### Dr Azariah Tan



Dr Azariah Tan is a well-known pianist and pedagogue in Singapore. As an educator, he conducts lecture-recitals at local and international conferences as a guest artist. He has taught on the piano faculty of Bluelake Fine Arts Camp in Muskegon, Michigan and regularly holds masterclasses at music institutions. A recipient of many awards and fellowships, Azariah has been extensively featured on international TV, radio and in print, as well as national news media, including internet video coverage and the Voice of America. In 2014, he was named Honoree at the Ten Outstanding Young People (TOYP) Singapore, as well as a finalist in 2017 for the Singapore Youth Award, the nation's highest youth accolade, in recognition of the inspirational role he exemplifies. Azariah currently serves on the board of ART:DIS Singapore.

### Dr Balbir Singh



Dr Balbir Singh was Down Syndrome Association (Singapore) Founding Chair in 1996, and presently an Advisor. He has been Director/Trustee of Special Needs Trust Company, Singapore and serves on the Admin Committee. He co-chaired the working group for Better Access to Healthcare For Person With Disabilities; and serves as an Advisor to the Developmental Disability Medical Clinic. He is a Champion for United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with NCSS and a member of Singapore Medical Association, PWID/MCA Working Group. With tremendous family support, Balbir has devoted much of his past 40 years, since Jaspreet's birth; pioneering and advocating for a better quality of life for the intellectually challenged, particularly people with Down syndrome. He is a Past President and Trustee of the Down Syndrome International, World Down Syndrome Day Committee, a Founding Member of the Asia-Pacific Down Syndrome Federation, and has served as a Board Member of the National Council for Social Service (NCSS), MINDS and the Disabled People's Association, Singapore.

## Claire Teo



Claire Teo is the first visually impaired person to graduate from a professional theatre course in Singapore. An actor, director, singer, audio description advisor, lyricist, scriptwriter and advocate, she has led, conceptualised and directed two inclusive art projects including Move For?ward as part of the Light to Night festival 2022 at the National Gallery Singapore. She teaches speech and drama at the Movement for Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS), Lighthouse School (for the visually impaired and Deaf) and is directing the 'Engaging Communities' performance project at LASALLE. Currently the Programme Executive at Methodist Welfare Services, Claire creates and facilitates programmes for youths at risk and families going through divorce. She was also a recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards (UBS Promise) conferred by President Halimah Yacob.

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## Eric Chua



Mr Eric Chua is Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Social and Family Development, and a member of the ART:DIS Board of Directors. Mr Chua was previously a lifesaver in the Singapore Civil Defence Force for 17 years before being elected to Parliament in July 2020. Mr Chua is passionate about working with and empowering people, and advocates strongly for social mobility.

Most recently, Mr Chua was the co-chair of the 27-member Enabling Masterplan 2030 Steering Committee, that sets out the vision for Singapore as an inclusive society in 2030. He was also the Head of an inter-agency delegation for Singapore's first Constructive Dialogue with the United Nations committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where Singapore shared our continued commitment in our journey towards an inclusive society.

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## Evelyn Ang



Evelyn Ang is passionate about teaching young children and people with additional needs through art and exploration. A strong believer in student empowerment, she enables her students to unleash their imagination using a playful and interactive process of engagement, execution, and expansion by concentrating on the process, rather than the output. She has worked in the education sector for 17 years with two years in early childhood, and 15 years with students with additional needs in both general and special education schools. Currently, she is leading the art department at AWWA School @ Napiri in bringing innovative and ground-breaking approaches to the way visual arts are being offered.

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## Gabrielle Mordy



Gabrielle Mordy is the CEO and Artistic Director of Studio A, a supported studio based in Sydney Australia that tackles the barriers artists with intellectual disability face in accessing conventional education, professional development pathways and opportunities needed to be successful and renowned visual artists. She is a trained visual artist and anthropologist who has undertaken national and international research investigating how neurodiverse artists can access professional development opportunities. Gabrielle is passionate about the importance of fostering a cultural life that embraces diverse voices and perspectives.

## Kelvin Koh



Kelvin Koh spent 28 years in the public service, serving in several Ministries, agencies and the United Nations in the areas of strategic planning, education, strategic communications and human capital development and was the Deputy Executive Director of the Singapore Discovery Centre before joining MINDS in Oct 2019. A certified Organisation Development and Change Management practitioner, Kelvin lends his time to the public service to support their organisation development needs. He also currently volunteers as School Management Committee Chairman for two Government-aided schools and is also a member of National Library Board's Services and Engagement Committee. Besides championing for the underserved, Kelvin also advocates for strengthening marriages, families, and youth.

## Kyoko Suzuki



Kyoko Suzuki is the Arts Executive Producer and Deputy Director at BiG-i International Communication Centre for Persons with Disabilities, and a member of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Agency for Cultural Affairs' Committee on the Promotion of Cultural and Artistic Activities of Persons with Disabilities for the Osaka and Shiga Prefectures. Through planning, production and management of arts and cultural activities, she has been working towards the realisation of a symbiotic society that accepts people with disabilities and other diverse people. She is also the author of *Towards An Inclusive Theatre* (Village Press).

## Maureen Goh



Maureen Goh was the Executive Director of ART:DIS from 2016 to 2022, formerly known as Very Special Arts Singapore. She had begun her career as a teacher and went on to do administrative and management functions. She loves to innovate and try new ideas. Her passion to work with persons with disabilities was ignited when an initiative allowed her to witness how art could inculcate patience, kindness and inclusion of people with different abilities and level playing fields. Through art, several participants found purpose, meaning and possible careers. Joining ART:DIS was a natural progression in her journey of confirming the therapeutic, social and rehabilitative qualities of the arts for persons with disabilities.

## Project Art Works



Tim Corrigan

Project Art Works is a collective of neurodivergent artists, activists and carers. Their work intersects art and care, and their programmes range from studio-based practice to awareness raising in the cultural and care sectors. They disseminate their work through projects, exhibitions, collaborations and films. Project Art Works were joint winners of the Film London Jarman Award 2020, shortlisted for the Turner Prize 2021, and were one of 15 international collectives that presented at DOCUMENTA 15, 2022.

Tim Corrigan is an artist filmmaker and Creative Director at Project Art Works. He has extensive experience of video production, both as a cameraman and editor. Tim has worked in partnership with Artist Director and CEO of Project Art Works, Kate Adams, since the organisation's foundation over 20 years ago, and is fundamental to the leadership team. Through his creative practice as a filmmaker, Tim has shaped Project Art Works' use of moving image: film is used both as a way of establishing an environment within a creative context and to support activism and advocacy by enabling neurodivergent people to reposition themselves and the way they are seen in society.



Katie Taylor

Katie Taylor is the Creative Programme Manager at Project Art Works, with responsibility for developing the on-site studio programme in Hastings in ways that best support the neurodivergent artist/makers the organisation works with and their circles of support. Katie has worked at national organisations including The Design Museum, Royal Museums Greenwich and Speakers Trust, focusing on innovation, development and inclusion projects. Her practice encompasses performance, devising, writing, facilitation and project management.



## Ranae Lee-Nasir



Ranae Lee-Nasir is a Singapore-based female visual arts educator with a Master of Education (Special Education) and a Bachelor's degree in Printmaking (Fine Arts). Since 2000, Ranae has been facilitating on-site workshops on visual arts making and art appreciation for participants from early childhood to adulthood within the mainstream and special needs community. The pandemic brought about new pedagogical practices that allowed Ranae to share her craft on international platforms such as Arts for All (Thailand) and InSEA World Forum and Asia Webinar. For over three years, she has been an adjunct-lecturer with the Centre of Lifelong Education (NAFA), the School of Humanities and Social Science (Ngee Ann Polytechnic) and SR Nathan School of Human Development (Singapore University of Social Sciences). She has also trained teachers through masterclasses and workshops with STAR Academy, sharing her experience and discussing best practices.

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## Roger Lee



Roger Lee is a management consultant and is the parent of Timothy Lee who is a person with Down Syndrome. Roger and his wife Joyce have been caregivers to Timothy for the past 23 years and over the years have nurtured his potential in the arts. Timothy has excelled in areas such as dancing, music and acting. Most recently Timothy completed his acting engagement in the Mediacorp drama series “Kin” and performed in DANCE DRAMA: “Breakthrough Journey” in Tokyo. Roger and Joyce believe that youths with special needs are not guided by special parents, they make parents exceptionally special.

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## Ron Loh



Ron Loh is the Assistant Chief Executive of SG Enable, the focal agency for disability and inclusion in Singapore. He spearheads efforts to drive change and foster sustainable innovation within the disability sector. As Assistant Chief Executive, he also oversees divisions involved in planning, strategy and innovation, independent living and caregiver support, disability service coordination and advice, and service administration. Before he joined SG Enable, he was with the Defence Science and Technology Agency and volunteered with Engineering Good and National Youth Council.

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## Sky Shen



Singer-songwriter Sky Shen puts his feelings and stories into songs. The musician has performed and written music for the past decade, and released his debut EP, “Wheel You Love Me?” late last year. It contains songs in English and Mandarin, and is accompanied by four music videos. Sky engages the online community through regular live-streams on Twitch.tv. He is also active in the social service and disability advocacy fields as a staff, freelance content creator, emcee, and speaker-educator.

## Roundtable

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### Haresh Sharma



Haresh Sharma is the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage. He has written more than 120 plays which have been staged in over 20 cities. His play, *Off Centre*, was the first Singapore play selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for GCE N- and O-Levels. In 2014, he was conferred the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015. He was a recipient of the National University of Singapore's FASS Distinguished Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award 2021.

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### Dr Philip Tan



Dr Philip Tan is an internationally renowned Creative Director, Composer, and Educator with over 30 years of experience. Philip's passion for multimedia storytelling has been exhibited in over 30 countries, where he has created works with new formats, technologies and concepts. Philip's distinctive creative strategy entails inclusive collaborations with community members of all ages and with varying learning needs—in order to co-create sensational multidisciplinary performances that radiate brilliance, innovation, and energy. Among the prominent events he oversaw, highlights include the ASEAN Best 2018, the Opening of the Singapore National Stadium in 2015, the Opening and Closing of ASEAN Paragames 2015, the SEA Games handover and the Opening of Gardens by the Bay in 2013. He was awarded the 2017 Top 50 Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize, the Life Theatre Music Award (five-time winner), the 2007 Young Artist Award, and 2021 SkillsFuture Fellowships from the President of Singapore.

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### Verena Tay



Since 1986, Verena Tay ([www.verenatay.com](http://www.verenatay.com)) has acted, directed and written for local English language theatre. An Associate Artist with The Substation (2002–09), she has followed her passion over the years as a writer, editor and oral storyteller. She has published four volumes of plays and two collections of short stories, plus edited twelve story anthologies, including the bestselling *Balik Kampung* series published by Math Paper Press. Currently, she is completing her PhD studies in Creative Writing with Swansea University.

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### Grace Ng



Born deaf and reliant on hearing aids and lip-reading, Grace Ng loves to read manga, take photos and watch movies. Inspired by Deaf actress Marlee Matlin, Grace began to explore opportunities in acting through online courses and further enrolled into ART:DIS's theatre training programme where she can use Singapore Sign Language (SgSL) for artistic expression. This opened up an opportunity for her to write and perform *Between Us* for Singapore Writers Festival 2020. She plans to pursue further studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (UK) in BA Performance in British Sign Language and English.

## Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon



Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon is a Disability Inclusion Advocate and performing artist with Down Syndrome. She has worked as a teacher's aide in a kindergarten for 16 years and is a passionate advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities. Jaspreet has spoken at the United Nations in New York on World Down Syndrome Day in 2014, Having a Say Conference 2018 in Australia, and the We Are Able 2018 seminar where she shared about empowerment and the importance of mutual respect. Jaspreet is also an ardent advocate for inclusive healthcare for PWDs, employment, independent living and the arts. She is a dancer and teacher for the Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC) and has performed in many notable performances. Jaspreet was a recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards (UBS Promise) on 1 Dec 2022. She received it from President Halimah Yacob.

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## Wan Wai Yee



Wan Wai Yee is a talented and experienced singer who has been performing for private events since 1995. Her repertoire consists of popular music and Broadway musical songs, and she has also done musicals, voiceovers and numerous concerts under The Purple Symphony. In 2019, she underwent her first vocal examination in Musical Theatre Grade 5, conferred by the London College of Music, and earned a distinction. She is currently strengthening her vocal techniques under a scholarship from the Purple Symphony Award Training Program and is exploring storytelling and acting with ART:DIS. Together with fellow visually impaired musician, Ivni Yaakub, they co-created a busking band, StrawberryStory. From the streets to ballrooms, at parties and on stages across Singapore, they delight audiences with their rendition of popular music whilst raising awareness of their artistry.”

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## Peter Sau



Peter Sau is an artist-educator, director and performer. He holds a Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting) and a Master of Arts in Advanced Theatre Practice from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (UK). In 2017, he founded Project Tandem and worked with D/ deaf and disabled artists to provide mentorship and performance-making collaborations. In 2020, he joined ART:DIS as Head of Artistic Development, Performing Arts where he expanded the pool of performing arts programmes, and established key theatre training programmes such as BEYOND DIS:PLAY.

## Workshop

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### Tan Beng Tian



Tan Beng Tian is a disciple of the late renowned traditional hand puppet master Li Bofen and is a recipient of the JCCI Singapore Foundation Culture Award in 2005. Major companies she has worked with in her twenty-seven-year-old career are Checkpoint Theatre, Drama Box, Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, The Finger Players, The Necessary Stage, The Theatre Practice, Toy Factory Productions, Wild Rice and Zuni Icosahedron (Hong Kong). As a multifaceted independent theatre practitioner, Beng Tian has been actively promoting theatre making and passing on her puppetry knowledge through Masterclass Workshops and talks.

### Fran Ho



With more than 35 years of music teaching experience, Fran Ho specialises in chorus training, preschool education group classes and creative improvisation guidance, and is active in international chorus festivals with footprints all over Europe and Asia. In Singapore, she actively participates in the music production and performance of various community choirs. She served as the music director of “Karaoke Court” (2015), the chief conductor of the Gardens by the Bay Christmas Carol (2018), and also conducted the “Equaver” choir and the Chordinate Singers Choir led by Mr. Feng Shi Ze to participate in the INTERKULTUR International Virtual Choir Competition (2020), winning third place. Presently, Fran is a conductor at several local primary school choirs and community choirs, and a vocal instructor for St. Nicholas Alumni Choir, Quaver, Xiyao Choir, ART:DIS and the French Boys and Girls Choir.

### Francis Poon



Francis Poon is a multi-disciplinary artist and curator who has exhibited in Singapore and Hong Kong, and is also an art educator for disabled people. Francis is the founder of OCCASIANS LLP (2011) and AN OTHER-SPACE LLP (2019). The former a collective of artists using different mediums and the latter “a collective of artists curating for artists in alternative spaces.” His ceramic works are currently retailing at The Clueless Goat Speciality Coffee House, Eat and Sip Tableware Curators, The Elephant Room, Analogue Initiative, and ‘Hay, Gelato’. He graduated from NAFA Singapore with a Diploma in Fine Art (Ceramics) in 2007.

### Joe Chien



Joe Chien is a freelance artist and teacher. He graduated with a BFA in Production Art and Animation from DigiPen Institute of Technology, Being neurodivergent himself, Joe found his calling working with students with special educational needs. He has spent 7 years as a SPED teacher and has 5 years of art and digital media teaching experience with both mainstream schools and persons with disabilities.



## Weng Jiaying



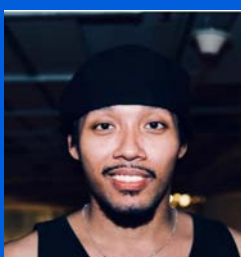
Weng Jiaying is a diversely abled artist and co-trainer of workshops and dance classes from the Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC), a community initiative of Maya Dance Theatre. She has worked with award winning choreographer Liz Lea from Australia and artistic director Kavitha Krishnan for DADC's production *Speaking with Hands* (2019) where she debuted a full length performance. Presently, Jiaying is learning Bharatanatyam and she aspires to present her own solo performance in the near future. She is also very keen to pursue her learning journey in dance through other dance forms, exchanges, international collaborations and performance opportunities. Jiaying is employed part time as administrative support in Apsara Asia Pte Ltd, a social enterprise that supports employment of diversely abled individuals.

## Kavitha Krishnan



A trained Bharatanatyam dancer, Kavitha Krishnan is the founder and artistic director of Maya Dance Theatre, a non-profit arts company creating works with social consciousness and sharing social stories through inter-disciplinary dance-theatre productions and multi-dimensional projects. Kavitha values dance as a medium for communication and building connections and strongly believes that Dance Heals and Empowers. In 2018, Kavitha formed Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC), a community initiative by MDT with six founding members with Down Syndrome, where diversely abled dancers co-exist with professionals and celebrate their differences. Kavitha is part of SIF's Arts for Good Fellowship 2021 and a finalist of Singapore's Silent Hero 2022.

## Luqman B As'ad



Luqman B As'ad is trained in Hip Hop, Popping, Locking, Breaking and House. His craft has been recognised in both the local and international freestyle scene. In more recent years, Luqman has expanded his craft into theatrical work. He has been exploring the vast possibilities of what movement can be outside of the street dance scene. Luqman plans to use his craft to continually explore the endless possibilities of how movement and intentions can be portrayed. By fusing genres and playing around within the grey areas in dance, he hopes to discover new vocabulary and approaches to movement.

## Matthew Goh



Matthew Goh graduated from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts with a Diploma in Dance with Distinction (Choreography) and attained Best Graduate Award in 2013. As a Founding Member of RAW Moves, he embodies a similar spirit of inquiry, questioning the definition of Dance and exploring the fringes of what it can encompass. As an educator, he believes in cultivating an inclusive learning environment for all ages. In 2020, he completed 'Working with Children with Disabilities in and through the Arts' course by Social Service Institute and National Arts Council; and is actively working with children and youths with diverse needs.

## Mei Tan



Mei Tan attained her Diploma in Music from LASALLE College of the Arts with the award from National Arts Council, Georgette Chen Scholarship and further attained her Bachelor of Music Performance with honours from the Kingston University Upon Thames, London where her studies was supported by the National Arts Council (NAC) Overseas Bursary. Active in performance, Mei currently plays in Braddell Heights Symphony Orchestra. She has also performed with the flute orchestra, chamber ensemble, percussion ensemble and gamelan ensemble in Singapore and overseas. Mei is also a music instructor for local schools and charities—having taught instruments such as angklungs, ethnic percussion on Chinese drums, Indian Dhol and Malay kompang; keyboard, Cajon, recorder, xylophones, ukulele, handbells and GarageBand (digital music creation on iPads)—and presently teaches at the United World College South East Asia (UWCSEA) as a music cover teacher.

## Ricky Sim



Ricky Sim holds a MFA (Dance) and has been a dancer, choreographer and educator for more than 30 years. To date, he has worked with professional companies, festivals, and interdisciplinary collaboration; both locally and internationally. Ricky is often invited as speaker and guest lecturer of dance and education at international forums and institutions. In 2011, Ricky founded RAW Moves, a contemporary dance company that focuses its establishment, connection and direction of work with the spirit of inquiry. Gaining a reputation as a Director/Choreographer who is collaborative and provocative, Ricky works closely with practitioners of diverse backgrounds in an integrative manner.

## Sivaranjini Das



Sivaranjini Das is the Founding Director of Drum Prodigy Singapore, which facilitates the use of rhythm-based tools for special needs in the community since 2007. She has 16 years of teaching experience working closely with special needs children and youth-at-risk. She uses drumming as a vehicle for empowerment and transformation, and provides individual and group percussion intervention to students with physical and intellectual disabilities such as Down Syndrome, ADHD, ASD, and children/youth-at-risk. Sivaranjini is a trained REMO HealthRHYTHMS Adolescent Protocol facilitator and HealthRHYTHMS Group Empowerment Drumming facilitator. She has a Diploma in Learning Disorders Management & Child Psychology, and is certified by the NTU-NIE Singapore in 'Essentials of Teaching and Learning'. Sivaranjini recently completed her Specialist Certificate in Teaching and Learning of Preschool Arts Education by SEED Institute.

## Timothy Lee



Timothy Lee is a performing artist with Down Syndrome. With ART:DIS, he trains in cajon, dance, acting and has performed in numerous grassroots and prestigious events. He was the first actor with a disability to be on national television, acting in Mediacorp's Channel 5 long-form drama, Kin. He performed in Something About Home, a commissioned performance by National Gallery Singapore for the Light to Night Festival 2020. In 2019, Timothy won the inaugural Goh Chok Tong Enable Award and he hopes to be a testimony to other young people with disabilities, to spark a light within himself and illuminate the world with joy.

## Wesley Seah



Wesley Seah is a Chinese ink artist and an experienced DiDsg guide who currently drives Business Development for DiDsg at the Office of Service-Learning, Ngee Ann Polytechnic. A series of medical consultations concluded that Wesley could have developed a rare condition of glaucoma at 35, which left him completely blind in his right eye and less than 40 per cent vision field left in his left eye. Despite that, he did not let his disabilities hold him back from pursuing his dreams. Thanks to the Ngee Ann Star Grant award, Wesley was able to continue and advance his training at LASALLE to expand his skills in Chinese Ink. His passion led him to develop his style using organic mediums and colour pigments for semi-abstract concepts and illustrative calligraphy. Wesley continues to create artworks which inspire not only the public majority, but also the disabled community to go beyond their limits.

## Team Acknowledgements

**ADF Working Committee:** Angela Tan, Peter Sau, Sabrina Zhang, Kang Joo Soon, Nur Azeera

**Project Managers:** Bernice Ong, Rae Mok

**Event Management Company:** Hydse

**Designers:** DET DESIGN

**Speech-to-text Interpretation:** Equal Dreams

**Singapore Sign Language Interpretation:** The Singapore Association for the Deaf

**Japanese-English Language Interpretation:** Yuri Sunaba, Yukie Juen

**Volunteers:** Teo Ying Qi, Martin Choo, Nikita Tayal

**And many more who have generously given their time to this event!**

## Performances

**Artistic Director:** Peter Sau

**Production Stage Manager:** Charlinda Pereira

**Assistant Stage Manager:** Saffy Ismail

**Lighting Designer:** Dorothy Png

**Creative Narration:** Su Paing Tun

**Creative Captioner:** Shai (Nur Shafiza)

**Visual Projection:** Courtney Mae Lim

### **DANCE DRAMA: Breakthrough Journey (FILM)**

**Dancers:** Luqman B As'ad, Ammar Ameenzy, Timothy Lee, Eileen Tong, Pang Yi Wei, Nur Arianty Binte Djonaede

**Choreographers:** Luqman B As'ad, Tang Sook Kuan

### **BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Wheel You Love Me? (LIVE)**

**Mentor:** Dr Philip Tan

**Singer and Songwriter:** Sky Shen

**Music Video Director:** Guan Jie

**Director of Photography:** Qiu Zhen Yu

### **BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Aspirations and Pathways (FILM)**

**Performers:** Wan Wai Yee, Claire Teo, Grace Ng, Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon, Yuki Neoh

### **BEYOND DIS:PLAY: Day I Met The Prince (LIVE)**

**Performers:** Timothy Lee, Ivni Yaakub, Choo Jun Wei

**Visual Artist:** Amelia Tan

