

2019

# Arts & Culture

Research Symposium

*The Impact of the Arts on  
Spaces, People and Communities*



# PROGRAMME

8:30am - 9:00am

Registration and breakfast

9:00am - 9:15am

Welcome and housekeeping

## Opening Address

*Professor Chan Heng Chee, Chairman, NAC*

9:15am - 10:45am

## Research Sharing 1

Project ARTISAN: Fostering Aspiration and Resilience through Intergenerational Storytelling & Art-Based Narratives

*Dr Andy Ho, Assistant Professor, Psychology Programme, School of Social Sciences, NTU*

## Research Sharing 2

Arts & Culture Nodes in the Heartlands of Singapore: Exploring Strategies, Spatial Opportunities & Impacts

*Dr Zdravko Trivic, Assistant Professor, Architecture Department, School of Design and Environment, NUS*

## Research Sharing 3

*Both Sides, Now: Spaces of Connection, with Living and Dying*

*Dr Charlene Rajendran, Assistant Professor, Visual and Performing Arts (Drama) Academic Group, NIE-NTU*

10:45am - 11:15am

Tea break

11:15am - 11:25am

## CEO's Address

*Mrs Rosa Daniel, NAC*

11:25am - 12:25pm

# PROGRAMME

## Panel Discussion

The Impact of the Arts on Spaces, People and Communities

## Speakers

*Dr Belinda Yuen, Professorial Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, SUTD*

*Dr Michael Thaddeus Tan, Assistant Professor, School of Art, Design and Media, NTU*

*Dr Felicia Low, Director, Community Cultural Development*

*Ms Natalie Alexandra Tse, Executive Director, SAtheCollective*

## Facilitator

*Mr Kenneth Kwok, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning & Engagement Group), NAC*

12:25pm - 1:00pm

## Reflections on Proceedings

*Professor Kwok Kian Woon, Associate Provost (Student Life), President's Office, NTU*

## Sharing on NAC's Research Priorities

*Dr Sharon Chang, Chief Research Officer, NAC*

## Closing Remarks

*Mr Kenneth Kwok, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning & Engagement Group), NAC*

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Lunch and networking



**Dr Andy Ho**

*Assistant Professor  
Psychology Programme,  
School of Social Sciences,  
NTU*

## RESEARCH SHARING 1

**Andy Ho** is Assistant Professor of Psychology and Joint Honorary Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Nanyang Technological University. He is the Deputy Director of the Centre for Population Health Sciences and the Deputy Director of Research at The Palliative Care Centre for Excellence in Research and Education. Andy holds a double Doctorate from the University of Hong Kong and the University of Nottingham, specializing in Thanatology and Lifelong Education. His research and teaching focus on psychosocial gerontology, arts and creative ageing, palliative and bereavement care, holistic therapy and community empowerment.

Since joining NTU in November 2014, Andy has successfully completed the pioneering Evaluation Study of the National Advanced Care Programme in Singapore, and the first-ever Landscape

Study on The Arts for Ageing Well in Asia. He has also founded a number of innovative and internationally acclaimed psycho-socio-spiritual interventions including Mindful-Compassion Art Therapy for burnout prevention and resilience building among caregivers; Family Dignity Intervention for advancing holistic palliative care services; and Aspiration and Resilience Through Intergenerational Storytelling and Art-based Narratives (ARTISAN) for citizen empowerment and loneliness alleviation. Andy has authored over 70 top-tier journal articles, books, chapters and research reports; as well as presented in over 130 keynote, plenary and competitive conference presentations. He is the first Asian Recipient of the prestigious 2018 Academic Educator Award of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, whilst his scholarly contributions are recognised with distinction by professional bodies around the world.

## Project ARTISAN: Aspiration and Resilience Through Intergenerational Storytelling and Art-based Narratives

Loneliness is a major public health concern around the world, prevalent in both young and old. Created through a Participatory Action Research approach, ARTISAN is a 5-week, 15-hour group-based intervention that focuses on resilience building and loneliness alleviation through a structured holistic multimodal framework that integrates storytelling, art-making and heritage appreciation with museum spaces.

A waitlist randomized control trial was conducted to assess ARTISAN's efficacy. 34 youth and senior dyads (N=68) were randomly paired and assigned to an intervention group or waitlist-control group. Outcome measures included self-reported loneliness, resilience, national identity, quality-of-life, life satisfaction, and social support.

Findings from linear mixed effect models revealed that ARTISAN significantly improved life satisfaction, quality-of-life, national identity and national heritage among intervention group youths compared to waitlist-control. These outcomes were maintained at five-week post-intervention, with additional significant reduction in loneliness and enhanced perceived emotional support. Similar findings were observed among intervention group seniors with additional significant increase in resilience at five-week post-intervention.

This original and pioneering study fills a critical gap in knowledge and practice between the arts, heritage and holistic wellness, paving the way for further research to enhance societal wellbeing, social cohesion, and citizen empowerment.



**Dr Zdravko Trivic**

Assistant Professor  
Architecture Department,  
School of Design and  
Environment, NUS

## RESEARCH SHARING 2

**Zdravko Trivic** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture in the School of Design & Environment of the National University of Singapore (NUS). He works closely with the Centre for Ageing Research in the Environment, Centre for Sustainable Asian Cities and Designing Resilience in Asia in NUS. His research interests include multi-sensorial urbanism, health-supportive and ageing-friendly urban space and neighbourhood design, placemaking, arts and public space and community participation. He co-authored the book "Re-framing Urban Space" (2016) and received two outstanding paper awards at the International Union of Architects (UIA) 2017 Seoul World Architects Congress.

### **Arts & Culture Nodes in the Heartlands of Singapore: Exploring Strategies, Spatial Opportunities & Impacts**

This project investigates the means, approaches and strategies for the activation of heartland spaces through arts and culture. It delves into how local neighbourhoods can bring about spatial opportunities for bringing arts and culture activities into everyday life and how it can be subsequently spread beyond formal venues and be interwoven into the different aspects of community life.

The impact of NAC's arts and culture nodes strategy is also being evaluated together with the investigation of issues on social and spatial impact measurement of arts and culture initiatives. Inquiry into how the nodes strategy can be strengthened is being made, as well as the generation of insights into what constitutes a successful arts and culture project initiative in the heartlands. The key outcome is to nurture a successful arts and culture ecology in the heartlands via the evaluation, selection and activation of neighbourhood spaces for community arts and placemaking.



**Dr Charlene Rajendran**

Assistant Professor  
Visual and Performing Arts  
(Drama) Academic Group,  
NIE-NTU

## RESEARCH SHARING 3

**Charlene Rajendran** is a theatre educator, dramaturg and researcher whose interests are contemporary performance, dramaturgy, play-based pedagogies and arts leadership.

### **Both Sides, Now: Spaces of Connection, with Living and Dying**

*Both Sides, Now*, an interdisciplinary arts based community engagement event produced by Drama Box and ArtsWok Collaborative, is a project that engages with end-of-life issues in Singapore. The work, first commissioned and presented in 2013 by the Lien Foundation and Ang Chin Moh Foundation, is now in its third phase. It is led by Artistic Director Kok Heng Leun and created by a team of artists from varied disciplines who combine diverse approaches to creating conducive spaces for conversations about death and dying – thus engaging participants in thinking about an often avoided and difficult issue. Located primarily

in spaces that are situated near public housing areas, and thereby accessible to audiences unlikely to attend conventional theatre performances or visit art galleries, the project consciously sets out to intervene in everyday life, even as it seeks to position this sensitive topic as commonplace, and thus important for all to connect with.

Working with a 'listening aesthetic' and 'call and response' framework, the project engages in sharing stories and developing dialogue. This paper considers research conducted on phase two of the project, *Both Sides, Now: Living with Dying* (2014), identifying key working principles and why these constitute a significant contribution. It also raises questions about how to evaluate and gauge the efficacy of the work, and the need for longitudinal research to critically assess deep impact.



**Dr Belinda Yuen**

*Professorial Fellow  
Lee Kuan Yew Centre  
for Innovative Cities, SUTD*

## PANEL DISCUSSION

**Belinda Yuen** is a Professorial Fellow and qualified urban planner at the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities. Apart from master planning practice, Belinda has extensive research and publication in spatial planning and urban policy analysis, most recently, on planning liveable, sustainable cities.

She has been elected to be President, Singapore Institute of Planners (2005-08), and Vice-President, Commonwealth Association of Planners (Southeast Asia) (2006-08; 2010-12; 2014-16). Belinda has worked with the university, public, private as well as international development organisations including Asian Development Bank, United Nations and The World Bank.



**Dr Michael  
Thaddeus Tan**

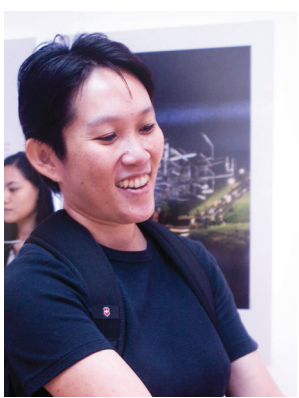
*Assistant Professor  
School of Art, Design  
and Media, NTU*

## PANEL DISCUSSION

**Michael Thaddeus Tan** explores the role of art and design in fostering an inclusive and supportive society by developing creative strategies that address health and well-being inequality and human development.

He has taught in the areas of 4D Foundation Studies and Visual Communication at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. He is also a programme faculty in the MSc in Applied Gerontology at NTU where he has developed and teaches an interdisciplinary course in Art, Ageing and Wellbeing.

His professional and public service included serving as an art advisory committee member at Ng Teng Fong Hospital and being an assessor for the Singapore International Programme by the Singapore International Foundation.



**Dr Felicia Low**

*Director  
Community Cultural  
Development*

### PANEL DISCUSSION

**Felicia Low**, a graduate of Goldsmith's College has been a practicing visual artist since 1999. Her projects have mostly been site-specific, performative and community-specific as she works collaboratively with different sectors of society. A Lee Kong Chian scholar of the National University of Singapore, Felicia obtained a PhD in Cultural Studies in Asia in 2015. Her research focused on the politics of participatory visual art practices with subaltern communities in Singapore. Felicia has also developed research and written a pedagogical guide on Person-centred Arts Practices with Communities.

Felicia is the founding director of a not-for-profit organisation, Community Cultural Development (Singapore), which aims to provide a critical discursive platform for artistic practices that engage with communities in the region. She was the recipient of the Outstanding Youth In Education Award 2005 and was selected for the President's Young Talent Show 2009 organized by the Singapore Art Museum. Felicia was also the recipient of the Teaching Merit Award 2019 from the Singapore University of Social Sciences, where she is an associate lecturer (BA in Art Education & Psychology/Arts Management).



**Ms Natalie  
Alexandra Tse**

*Executive Director  
SAtheCollective*

### PANEL DISCUSSION

**Natalie Alexandra** is a Guzheng performer, and a current PhD scholar at the National Institute of Education Singapore, where she is investigating the creative agencies of babies and their relationships with the adults in a performance setting. She believes that the Arts has the ability to develop children's empathy for diverse cultures. A young mother to Baby Dodo, she works together with Baby Dodo to create age appropriate performances for children. Believing strongly that the very young are beings with their own identities, rather than becoming waiting to be sculpted, Natalie hopes to share her experiences as an artist and mother with other parents and their little ones.

Natalie founded "Little Creatures by SA" in 2016, an initiative dedicated to the creation of a space for children in the early years to play and learn through sounds, sonic objects and ideas. With the firm belief that children derive meaningful experiences, construct interpersonal relationships, and manifest their creativity through play, Little Creatures produces performances and workshops that involve the young and the young at heart in immersive manners.



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# NOTES

## OTHER INFORMATION



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