

SPACE, SPACES AND SPACING 2020

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: THE MAKING OF SPACES (STATE AND POLICY)	
Chair:	<p>Kenneth Paul Tan teaches at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. His books include <i>Singapore: Identity, Brand, Power</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2018), <i>Governing Global-City Singapore</i> (Routledge, 2017), <i>Cinema and Television in Singapore</i> (Brill, 2008), and <i>Renaissance Singapore? Economy, Culture, and Politics</i> (NUS Press, 2007). He is a member of the National Arts Council's Arts Advisory Panel and the National Museum of Singapore's Advisory Board. He chairs the Board of Directors of theatre company The Necessary Stage. He was the founding chair of the Asian Film Archive's Board of Directors from 2005 to 2017. He served on the committee of Our Singapore Conversation in 2012.</p>
Speakers:	<p>Alvin Tan is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage. He has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and in 1998, was conferred the Young Artist Award for theatre. In 2010, Alvin was conferred the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, in recognition of his significant contribution to the arts. In 2014, Alvin was conferred the Cultural Medallion for his artistic excellence and contribution to Singapore's arts and cultural landscape.</p> <p>Arun Mahizhnan is Special Research Adviser at the Institute of Policy Studies at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in the National University of Singapore. He undertakes selected special projects. His past research interests included arts, culture and media. He was, until recently, an Adjunct Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information at the Nanyang Technological University. Mr Arun has long been involved in the Singapore arts world. He is currently the Chairman of the Intercultural Theatre Institute, a leading tertiary theatre training institution. He was Chairman of the Singapore Festival of Arts as well as the first ever Indian Cultural Festival. He has been a Board Member, Committee Member or Advisor to various arts, heritage and media organisations including the Substation, National Arts Council, National Library Board, National Book Development Council, Media Development Authority, Infocomm Development Authority and the Indian Heritage Centre.</p> <p>Audrey Yue is Professor of Media, Culture and Critical Theory, Head of the Department of Communications and New Media, Convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme and Director of the Cultural Research Centre at the National University of Singapore. She researches on transnational Chinese media cultures, cultural policy and development, and queer Asian studies. She is author, co-author and co-editor of 8 scholarly books and more than 100 refereed journal articles, book chapters and industry reports. This paper draws from her Australian Research Council funded projects on urban screens and transnational publics (DP17010279; LP0989302).</p> <p>Audrey Wong was Artistic Co-director of The Substation from 2000 till early 2010- the first woman to be appointed to this role in the arts centre. She was Co-Director with Lee Weng Choy. She served as the first Nominated Member of Parliament for the Arts in Singapore from 2009-2011. She is currently Head, School of Creative Industries and</p>

	<p>Programme Leader of the MA Arts and Cultural Leadership programme at LASALLE College of the Arts. Among her contributions to the arts, she also kickstarted the Moving Images film programme at The Substation back in 1997 when she was a programme executive there. It was Singapore’s first year-round film programme supporting local filmmakers. She has served and continues to serve on various institutional boards and committees including with the Singapore Art Museum, National Arts Council and Singapore International Foundation. She was on the Arts and Culture Strategic Review Committee (2010 – 2012) and is currently a board member of Nine Years Theatre.</p>
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KEYNOTE: AIR-CONDITIONED NATION, REVISITED

Speaker	<p>Cherian George has written about Singapore politics for 30 years. His book, Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation (2000), capped his career as a Straits Times journalist in the 1990s. His other five books include Singapore, Incomplete (2017). Since 2014, George has been based in Hong Kong, where he is professor of media studies and associate dean for research at the Hong Kong Baptist University School of Communication. He studies media freedom, censorship, and hate propaganda. His current project is a graphic non-fiction book on cartoon censorship around the world, Red Lines, with artist Sonny Liew (MIT Press, 2021).</p>
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PANEL 2.1: ARTICULATING ART PRACTICES (ARTS SPACES AS SPACES OF DISCOURSE)

Chair:	<p>Kathleen Ditzig is a Singaporean researcher and curator. Ditzig's art historical research on Southeast Asia has been published in Southeast of Now (NUS Press, 2017), as well as presented at international academic conferences and platforms. Her writing has been published in three different languages and on platforms by Artforum, Art Agenda and Flash Art.</p>
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Speakers:	<p>Jason Wee is an artist & a writer. He founded and runs Grey Projects, now in its twelfth year. His books include the poetry collection An Epic of Durable Departures, and SQ21: Singapore Queers in the Twenty-First Century. His art is most recently seen at Sydney Contemporary, NTU-ADM Galleries and at the Singapore Biennale, and at the upcoming Asia Society Triennial. Curated exhibitions include Stories We Tell To Scare Ourselves With (MOCA Taipei 2019), and Singapur Unheimlich (ifa berlin and stuttgart 2015).</p> <p>Karin G. Oen is Deputy Director, Curatorial Programmes of NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore. Dr Oen holds a PhD in History, Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an MA in Modern Art History, Connoisseurship and Art-Market History from Christie’s Education and a B.A. in Urban Studies, with an Art History minor, from Stanford University. She was most recently the Associate Curator of contemporary art at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. As the Asian Art Museum’s first full-time curator of contemporary art, Dr Oen has been a pivotal figure in the growth of the museum’s contemporary collection —</p>
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especially in new media and works by Asian diaspora artists, as well as in ceramics by modern masters.

Raka Maitra is a classically trained Odissi dancer. A disciple of Odissi dancer Madhavi Mudgal at the classical music and dance institution Gandhrva Mahavidyalay in New Delhi, India, Raka was awarded the Shringarmani, a national level award for Odissi. She has also undergone intensive studies in Serraikeella Chhau under Sashadhar Acharya at Triveni Kala Sangam in New Delhi, India. Through her 26-year practice, Raka has explored the notion of 'Asian Culture' through contemporary dance, the basis of her movement is both martial arts and classical Indian dance. As described by dance scholar Dr. Stephanie Burrige, "with great courage and perhaps audacity, Raka has stepped outside safe boundaries and blurred the lines of tradition." As Dance Europe stated, "Maitra is without doubt a dancer of the 21st century." In 2007, Raka founded Chowk Productions, the company produces contemporary and classical dance works, as well as offers dance classes and research opportunities. Chowk has performed at festivals around the world including The Kennedy Centre, in Washington DC, USA, (2017), Fest'Hiver in Avignon, France (2016), and multiple engagements at Ten Days on the Island, Tasmania. Raka Maitra is currently the Co-Artistic Director of The Substation.

Woon Tien Wei is an artist/curator. His work focuses on cultural policies, collectivity in art, social movements, community engagement, land contestation, urban legends, and social movements. Tien founded/co-founded multiple arts initiatives including Danger Museum (1998), p-10 (2004) and Awaken the Dragon Festival (2013). In 2007, he co-founded Post Museum, an independent cultural and social space in Singapore. Tien's projects have been featured in the Jakarta Biennale (2015), Unearthed at the Singapore Art Museum (2014), and documenta 11 (2002). He is a regular participant in regional talks and conferences including the 'International Conference of Sustainable Art: Creative Collaboration as Catalyst for Change,' Bamboo Curtain and Treasure Hill Artist Village, Taipei, Taiwan (2018), and CIMAM 2017 Annual Conference, Singapore. Tien received a Doctorate of Creative Arts from Curtin University in 2012. Woon Tien Wei is currently the Co-Artistic Director of The Substation.

Seelan Palay is a visual artist from Singapore whose practice focuses on the concerns and complex conditions found in our present-day, globalized society. Having studied Fine Art at LASALLE College of the Arts, he works with mixed media, installation, performance, film and sound. In 2018, he founded the independent art space, Coda Culture.

PANEL 2.2: ARTICULATING ART PRACTICES (THE EMERGENCE OF THE INTERNET)

Chair	<p>Kenneth Tay writes and researches broadly on media and the spaces they produce. He is the author of <i>The Sea is All Highway: Singapore and the Logistical Media of the Global Surface</i> (Temporary Press, 2019). Previously, he worked as Assistant Curator at the NUS Museum where he initiated the project <i>Concrete Island</i> (2016). He holds a MA in Media Studies from The New School, New York.</p>
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Charles Lim Yi Yong studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design, London. A former competitive sailor, Lim's practice stems from his bodily engagement with the natural world, mediated and informed by field research and experimentation in various media. Since 2005 he has developed a body of work entitled SEA STATE that explores Singapore's political, biophysical and psychic contours through the visible and invisible lenses of the sea. Lim has participated in numerous institutional and international exhibitions, including Documenta 11, Manifesta, Shanghai Biennale, Sydney Biennale, Aichi Triennale, EVA international and the Singapore Biennale. In 2015 Charles represented Singapore in the Venice Biennale. His film works have travelled to Rotterdam, Beijing, Tribeca, The Lincoln Centre and notably won a "Special Mention" award at the Venice Film Festival. Charles is married to filmmaker Li Lin Wee and windsurfs and SUPs in his spare time.

Debbie Ding (DBBD.SG) is a visual artist and technologist who researches and explores technologies of perception through personal investigations and experimentation. Prototyping is used as a conceptual strategy for artistic production, iteratively exploring potential dead-ends and breakthroughs—as they would be encountered by amateur archaeologists, citizen scientists, and machines programmed to perform roles of cultural craftsmanship—in the pursuit of knowledge. DBBD received a BA in English Literature from the National University of Singapore and, as a recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate), an MA in Design Interactions from the Royal College of Art, London. She has had solo exhibitions at The Substation Gallery, Singapore (2010) and Galerie Steph, Singapore (2013). Notable group exhibitions include “President’s Young Talents” (Singapore Art Museum, 2018); “After the Fall” (National Museum of Singapore, 2017); Singapore Biennale (2016); Radio Malaya (NUS Museum, 2016); Unearthed (Singapore Art Museum, 2014); Engaging Perspectives: New Art from Singapore (NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, 2013); Primavera (Immanence, Paris, 2012). She currently lives and works in Singapore.

Johann Yamin works across video, internet, and installation; he is also involved with curatorial work, acts of support, and writing. His topics of interest include new media technology, optics, affect, cinema, video games, and media histories. He is a node within the entanglement, soft/WALL/studs. His projects and short films have been presented in Singapore and New York.

PANEL 3: SOCIALISING THE SPACE (ART AS PUBLIC DISCOURSE)

Chair:

Liew Kai Khiun is an Academic Researcher & Consultant in Popular Culture and Media Studies. He has been involved in conservation issues in Singapore for more than a decade and is also engaged in scholarly research on the relationship between new media and conservation in Singapore. He obtained his B.A (hons) and M.A. at the National University of Singapore and was awarded his doctorate from University College London. Kai Khiun was previously an Assistant Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at the Nanyang Technological University.

Speakers:	<p>Adrian Kuah is a recovering civil servant, professional interloper, and asker of inconvenient questions. He has the kind of CV that makes the typical Asian parent throw up their hands in despair, having spent two stints in the civil service, two in academia, an utterly forgettable time in corporate finance, and an equally unforgettable one in a start-up consultancy. He is now Director of the NUS Futures Office, which he set up in 2019 to explore the issues that might affect the future of higher education, to push the boundaries of how we might reimagine the “university”, and to daily flirt with career suicide.</p> <p>Farhan Idris is the co-convenor of the critical humanities forum Bras Basah Open. Farhan is trained as a philosopher. Currently, Farhan is working on projects on collective exhaustion in the arts, visuality in Hindu-Buddhist thought, and a critique of posthuman discourse in the arts.</p> <p>Hoe Su Fern is an arts researcher, educator, manager and advocate who traverses artistic disciplines and mediums. She is currently Assistant Professor and Programme Coordinator of Arts and Culture Management at Singapore Management University. She holds a PhD in Culture and Communication from The University of Melbourne. Her research areas include cultural policy, urban cultural economies, arts spaces and creative placemaking, which are deeply informed by her pursuit for practice-oriented and engaged arts research.</p> <p>Subhas Nair is a rap/hip-hop artist from Singapore who seeks to share perspectives of the world around him and engage with people from different walks of life through his music and lyricism. After releasing his debut album, Not A Public Assembly, in May 2018, he brought his work to multiple venues including panelling at the Singapore Writers' Festival, speaking at TEDx PnG, and performing at Other Tongues - a minority voices festival. Subhas believes active allyship is crucial in dismantling systems of oppression on all fronts and uses his writing as a tool to provoke dialogue and social change. Mans also wrote K. Muthusamy."</p>
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PRESENTATION: SUBLIMINAL SUBSTATION

	<p>Ray Langenbach creates conceptual performances, convenes gatherings, writes on cultural theory, performance and queer culture. He has presented his work throughout Asia-Pacific, Europe and the United States, curating exhibitions and performance events in Malaysia, Singapore, Palestine, USA, & Germany. Langenbach’s writings on SE Asian performance, propaganda and visual culture and have appeared in journals and books. His video archive of SE Asian performance resides at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong, the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, and various museums. Formerly Professor of Live Art and Performance Studies, University of the Arts Helsinki, Langenbach is now Star Foundation Professor of Research, Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, where he is designing and supervising the new Artistic Research PhD program in Creative Arts.</p> <p>Lee Weng-Choy is an independent art critic and consultant based in Kuala Lumpur. He is also the president of the Singapore Section of the International Association of Art</p>
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	<p>Critics. Previously, Lee was Artistic Co-Director of The Substation in Singapore, and has taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Sotheby's Institute of Art — Singapore. He has done project work with various arts organisations, including Ilham Gallery and A+ Works of Art, both in Kuala Lumpur, and the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, and National Gallery Singapore. Lee writes on contemporary art and culture in Southeast Asia, and his essays have appeared in journals such as <i>Afterall</i>, and anthologies such as <i>Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art</i>, <i>Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture</i>, and <i>Theory in Contemporary Art</i> since 1985. He is currently working on a collection of his essays on artists, to be titled, <i>The Address of Art and the Scale of Other Places</i>.</p>
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PANEL 4: COMPLEXITIES AND CONTRADICTIONS (FIGURE AND GROUND)

Chair:	<p>Alan Oei is an artist-curator whose work and projects examine the intersection of art history and politics. As an artist, his work has been shown in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia and the USA. He was also the former artistic director of Singapore's first independent contemporary arts centre, The Substation.</p>
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Speakers:	<p>Kok Heng Leun is the Artistic Director of socially-engaged theatre company Drama Box, and a prominent figure in the Singapore arts scene, having built his career as a theatre director, playwright, dramaturg and educator. He is known for engaging the community on various issues through the arts, championing civic discourse across different segments of society. His explorations with multi-disciplinary engaged arts has produced works like <i>Project Mending Sky</i>, a series on environmental issues, <i>Both Sides, Now</i>, a project that seeks to normalise end-of-life conversations and <i>It Won't Be Too Long</i>, which touched on the dynamics of space in Singapore.</p> <p>Tay Kheng Soon is from the first locally trained architects graduating in 1963 from the Singapore Polytechnic School of Building and Architecture. The architecture school was later relocated to NUS. As such, he is acutely concerned that architecture and living environment must be rooted in climate, culture while modernising and humanising people and place. He was founding Chairman of the Substation, the experimental centre of the arts community. He was Chairman of SPUR, Singapore Planning and Urban Research Group in the 70's and later president of SIA receiving its Gold Medal in 2010. His design research extends beyond architectural scale to urban planning and finally to the global scale. His YouTube videos include: <i>The Maximally Deployable Modular City of the 21st Century, Singapore Version 2.0</i>, and <i>Singapore Version 2.0 Aging in Place</i>. He is a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science and a member of the World Ekistics Society. He was invited to be a member of ADS, the Asian Dialogue Society of Asian Intellectuals for his contribution in conceptualising Rubanisation. Currently, he is convenor of FOSG, the Future of Singapore Group's year-long (2017) series of forums to culminate in <i>The People's Plan for Singapore</i>. In the large resource panel of experts, he moderates discussions on the spatial planning of Singapore.</p>
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