



SINGAPORE  
FRINGE  
FESTIVAL

16

27

January

2019



STILL  
WATERS

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# M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2019: STILL WATERS

WORKS

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Sean Cham (Singapore)

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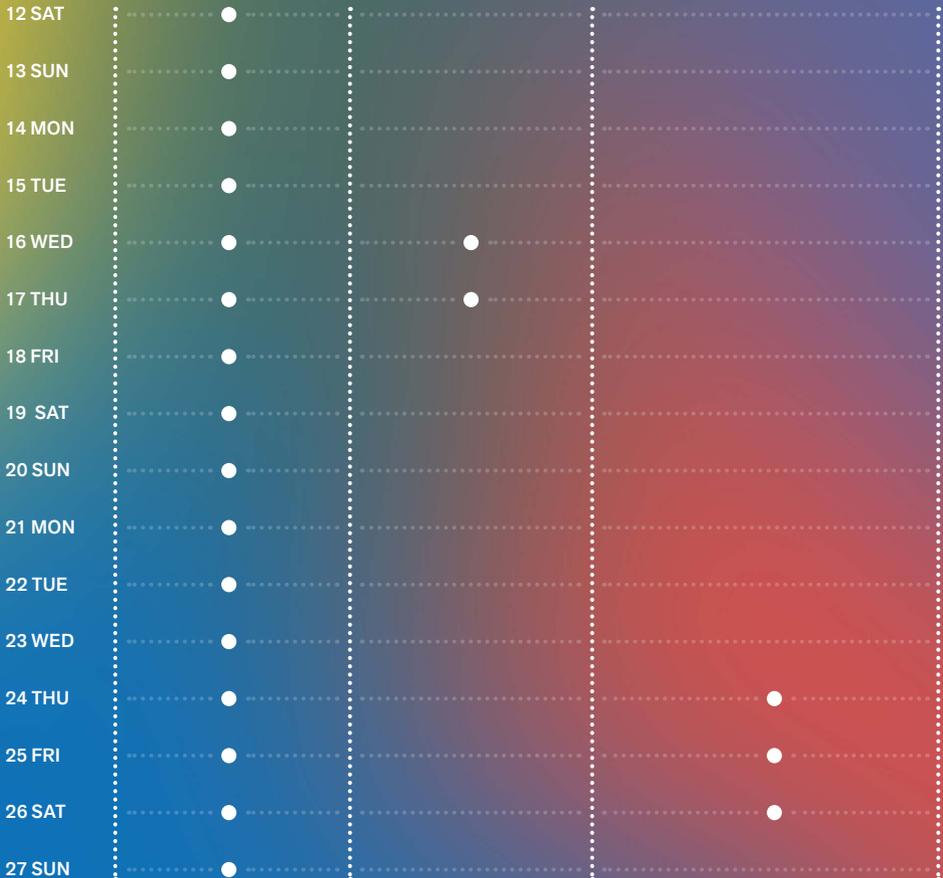
VENUE

Selected JCDecaux  
bus shelters

Esplanade  
Theatre Studio

NAFA  
Studio Theatre

From 26 Dec 2018

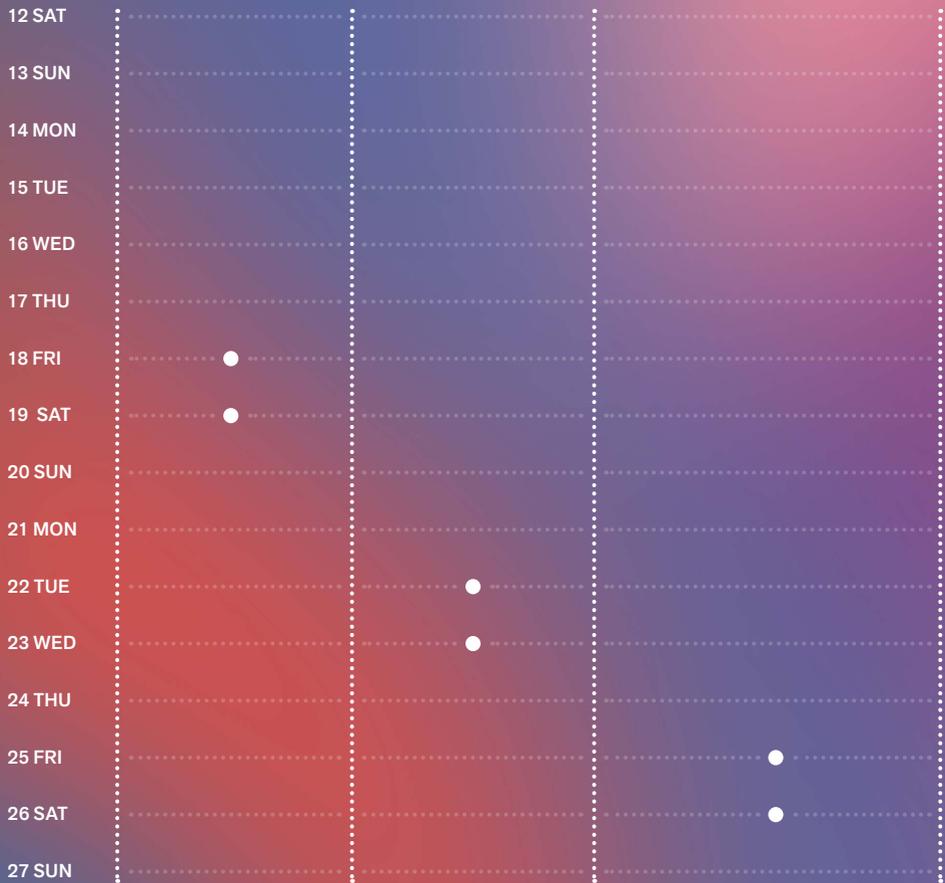


\* Refer to Fringe Maps for more information

# M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2019: STILL WATERS

<b>WORKS</b>	<i>A Fortunate Man</i> New Perspectives (UK)	<i>Above the Mealy-Mouthed Sea</i> Unholy Mess (UK)	<i>Q&amp;A (the 36 questions)</i> Rachel Erdos and Dancers (Israel)
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<b>VENUE</b>	Esplanade Theatre Studio	Esplanade Theatre Studio	Esplanade Theatre Studio
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\* Refer to Fringe Maps for more information

# M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2019: STILL WATERS

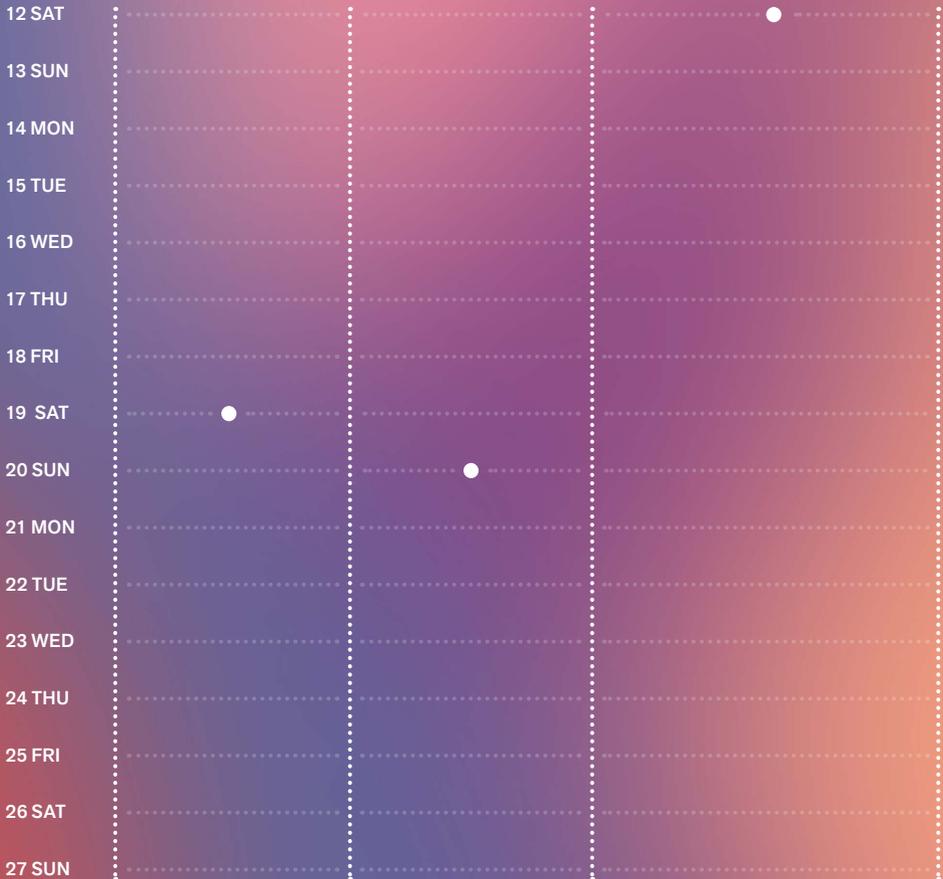
WORKS	<i>precise purpose of being broken</i> Koh Wan Ching (Singapore)	<i>Kaspar</i> Edith Podesta & Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Australia   Singapore)	<i>Ayer Hitam: A Black History of Singapore</i> Sharon Frese, Irfan Kasban & Ng Yi-Sheng (Singapore   UK)	<i>Catamite</i> Loo Zihan (Singapore)
VENUE	Esplanade Annexe Studio	NAFA Studio Theatre	Black Box, Centre 42	Black Box, Centre 42
12 SAT				
13 SUN				
14 MON				
15 TUE				
16 WED				
17 THU		●	●	
18 FRI		●	●	
19 SAT		●	●	
20 SUN		●	●	
21 MON				
22 TUE				
23 WED				
24 THU	●			
25 FRI	●			●
26 SAT	●			●
27 SUN				●

\* Refer to Fringe Maps for more information

# M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2019: STILL WATERS

<b>WORKS</b>	<i>yesterday it rained salt</i> Bhumi Collective (Singapore)	<i>The Adventures of Abhijeet</i> Patch and Punnet (Singapore)	<i>Estrangement and Reconciliation: A Talk with Suzann Victor</i> Suzann Victor & Sean Tobin (Australia   Singapore)
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<b>VENUE</b>	Esplanade Annexe Studio	Esplanade Annexe Studio	Moving Image Gallery, SAM at 8Q
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\* Refer to Fringe Maps for more information

“THE FESTIVAL HAS  
PROVEN TO BE AN EXCITING,  
DYNAMIC AND  
FERTILE SPACE FOR  
MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE,  
DEBATE, REFLECTION  
AND IMAGINATION  
OF HISTORIES.”

We are excited to present to you our 2019 line-up for **Still Waters**, our 15th instalment of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

We continue with our series of festival programmes built around iconic Singaporean art works by leading local artists that hold resonance to this day.

The concepts in Suzann Victor's seminal work *Still Waters* (*Between estrangement and reconciliation*) are subtle, layered, nuanced, and perhaps even elusive for some. The selection of Victor's work as our focus has set greater challenges than ever before to artists participating in our festival, due to the intricacies of its provocation. It would have been easy to assume that a festival inspired by *Still Waters* was going to concern itself only with censorship, a key trigger for Suzann's site-responsive performance. However, we have been able to build a programme that picks up on many of the vital ideas in Suzann's work, which we trust will inspire great conversations for the arts community and our audiences.

#m1sff2019

#stillwaters

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We are thrilled to be able to share with you a host of fresh and original works exploring estrangement, brokenness and trauma. Works that explore history, myth, memory, and the different ways we can construct and deconstruct it. Works that delve into oppression, the resolve to break free and find renewal and strength beyond it, as we reclaim what is important to us. In an era where we

# FRINGE FOREWORD

SEAN TOBIN  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL

are at risk of being more divided than ever globally, we continue to hope that art can help build bonds between us, regardless of our distinctly different identities and dispositions.

Our programme includes international works that have received critical acclaim; namely *JOGGING: Theatre in Progress*, one of our Fringe Highlights, by the remarkable powerhouse performer, Hanane Hajj Ali. It is a fiercely political work that confronts us with questions about cycles of destruction and reconstruction. It is not only the text and virtuosic performance that make this work important, but the context and manner in which Hanane has been sharing this work in her homeland, Lebanon, where she is unable to tell her story in public spaces without restraint. This thankfully has not stopped her from performing it in alternative spaces more than 70 times all around Lebanon, and even in Edinburgh and Berlin.

As a Singaporean festival, it is especially vital that our local work stands strong in the heavy current of themes. New local works such as *Ayer Hitam: A Black History of Singapore*, *Catamite* and our second Fringe Highlight, *ANGKAT: A Definitive, Alternative, Reclaimed Narrative of a Native* bring a fresh gaze upon our own Singapore history, particularly given the backdrop of Singapore's bicentennial commemorations in 2019, as a nation still working through its post-colonial baggage. We are also really looking forward to flooding the streets with Sean Cham's photographic exhibition *This is Where*, our third Fringe Highlight at JCDcaux bus shelters islandwide.

Do be sure to join us also for *Estrangement and Reconciliation: A Talk with Suzann Victor* as well, to get into the head and heart of Suzann herself.

We look forward to engaging the Singapore community with the Fringe this January. Time and again, the festival has proven to be an exciting, dynamic and fertile space for meaningful dialogue, debate, reflection and imagination. In recent years, as some of you may be aware, we have had to endure attacks by different camps for allegedly being too liberal and/or too conservative. Regardless of the stripes you wear, we invite you to immerse yourselves in the offerings for **Still Waters**, which we hope will be a powerful yet peaceful instalment that continues to probe and question our preconceptions about the world we live in.

#m1sff2019

#stillwaters

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[linkedin.com/company/m1sff](https://linkedin.com/company/m1sff)

MESSAGE  
FROM  
M1 LIMITED

IVAN LIM  
DIRECTOR  
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS  
M1 LIMITED

“EMPTY YOUR MIND,  
BE FORMLESS.  
SHAPELESS,  
LIKE WATER.”

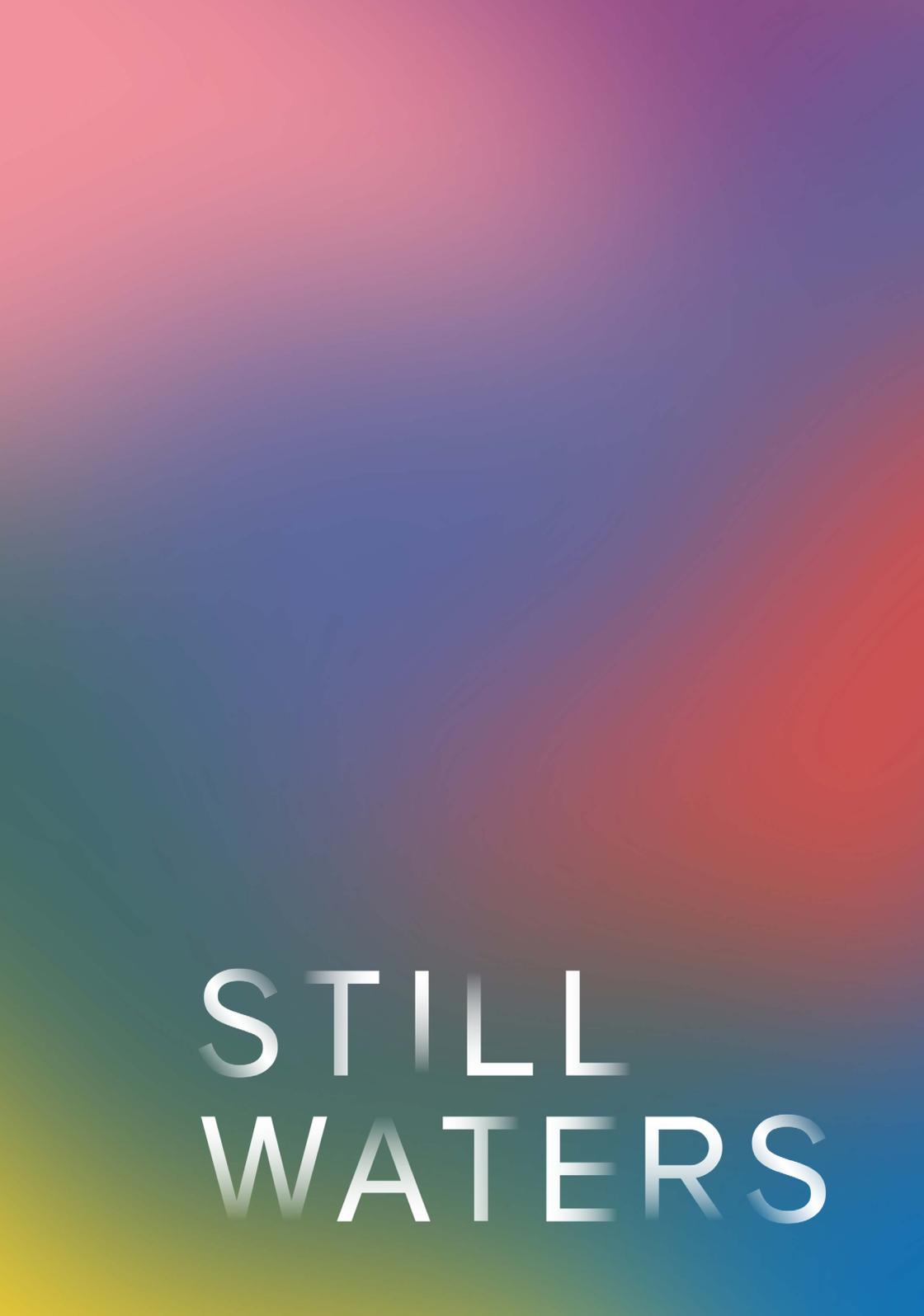
M1 is proud to present the 15th edition of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2019—an assemblage of breathtaking and thought-provoking works encapsulating this year's theme, **Still Waters**.

Water can be our greatest friend or foe. It sustains lives and calms our senses, and yet, it can quickly morph into a tsunami and cause massive destruction. It is our most critical resource, as well as our weakest link. We can simply turn on taps for pure drinking water, yet the long-term dependency on our neighbouring country for a sizeable chunk of our water supply continues to place us in a fragile position.

On a global scale, water is highly limited and its supply under severe stress in many parts of the world, so much so that we get extremely excited at a mere hint of existence of water in other planets, such as Mars.

Water can also be deeply personal. Rain can bring joy to a farmer, sadness to a broken-hearted girl or nostalgia to an aged person. As Bruce Lee once said, “Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend.”

Join us at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2019 from 16 to 27 January 2019. **Still Waters** promises to keep you submerged in suspense with 13 scintillating events from six countries. How do you stay afloat in troubled waters?



# STILL WATERS

## FRINGE 2019: STILL WATERS

# “WHAT HAPPENS TO ARTS WHEN IT IS CAREFULLY REGULATED AND ONLY LIVES IN DESIGNATED SPACES?”

For Fringe 2019, we have selected *Still Waters*, a seminal work by ground-breaking Australia-based Singaporean artist Suzann Victor. Shown widely on the international stage, Suzann has been actively pushing the envelope in the Singapore contemporary arts scene since the late 1980s. Her desire to make art accessible—even transcendental, whilst critiquing assumed structures of power and states of being, is evident in her work, which are always elegant, incisive, and thought-provoking.

Suzann Victor's site-responsive performance of *Still Waters* in 1998 was presented by the artist at the façade of the Singapore Art Museum. She had utilised the liminal space of a drain on the second storey of the Museum—a relic of its original colonial architecture, now bereft of its purpose, having been excluded by way of a retrofitted glass wall around the Museum to control its internal climate, sealing the works and people within its halls from the vagaries of external elements. Using customised glass dams, Suzann filled this in-between space with water that reached above the ankles, and her resolute presence within it sought to remind us of what the Museum perceived as a threat of danger outside its carefully protected space. Her movement in this drain surfaced questions

about the place of art and performance. The audience, positioned along the corridors within the Museum, found themselves with their backs to the hallowed galleries housing officially sanctioned art. Instead, they focused on Suzann's body interacting with the water within the glass encased drain; the audience became riveted witnesses of a proscribed art form trapped in a zone that is not state-endorsed.

*Still Waters* had particular resonance at the time, since Performance Art had suffered a de facto ban in Singapore since 1994, when 5th Passage, the art initiative Suzann directed, found itself along with other artists embroiled in a media-incited controversy due to a performance that was regarded by some—including the state—as contentious. The performance then led to Singapore's ban on the burgeoning art form. Government funding was proscribed for Performance Art until 2004. As such, Suzann's *Still Waters* was one of the first public pieces of Performance Art that grappled with the issues surrounding this interdict prior to the ban being officially lifted.

In relation to her work *Still Waters* (*Between estrangement and reconciliation*), Suzann says,

*"I chose this space for its sense of journey, the passing of time and the remaking of histories [vis-à-vis Performance Art]. The shallow pool of blue water provided a site for the re-enactment of a loss of innocence embodied by a performance that operated simultaneously inside and outside the institution, mirroring the 'fugitive' status of the performing body in Singapore."<sup>1</sup>*

During the performance, submerged lengthwise in the water, Suzann distributed photographs, folded into sampans (small boats). She elongated her body sideways along the drain, dividing her body in two experiential states: one ear under the silence of water and the other taking in noise from outside the building; one half of her body in the cold waters, the other half exposed to the warm atmosphere. Her unusual presence provoked inquiry, not only in terms of her performance, of the space it is trapped within but also how this control could entrap creativity.

Discussing her work, Suzann continues,

*"Drains operate as a visible sign of the abject, discouraging any form of proximity by the stench they produce. As metaphorical repositories for society's overflowing 'unconscious', these longkangs<sup>2</sup> collect, siphon and direct the abject, the polluting, expired, decaying or the 'useless', into watery depths—the sea around the island. But the abject, like the unconscious, has a persistent way of imposing itself upon us. The very ubiquity of drains are a reminder of the impossibility of disappearance, the futility of evasion. There is no escape, only return."<sup>3</sup>*

**Still Waters** poses an urgent question to us: what happens to art when it is carefully regulated and only lives in designated spaces? While the cultural conditions may seem different on the surface, more than 20 years after the ban on Performance Art, the questions and tensions—important ones acknowledged in *Still Waters*—not only remain, but have become ever more pertinent. In the physical and cultural context of

Singapore at the time, Suzann's work was highly charged with very specific questions about the politics of art, the body and public space in Singapore. But it is such a rich work that might invite a diversity of other investigations and responses about the fugitive, the abject; about estrangement and reconciliation in society, and about "the remaking of histories".

We invite you to consider Suzann Victor's work and its many ideas, layers and symbols, and we are excited by the response from both local and international artists to our call for proposals for Fringe 2019: **Still Waters**. We believe that you will be inspired by **Still Waters**, and we look forward to sharing the artists' responses to our call.



<sup>1</sup> Victor, Suzann, 2008. "Abjection: Weapon of the Weak." PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney.

<sup>2</sup> Longkang: Malay word for 'drain'.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# THIS IS WHERE

26 December 2018–29 January 2019  
Selected JCDecaux bus stop shelters

Sean Cham  
(Singapore)

# JOGGING: THEATRE IN PROGRESS

16–17 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio

Hanane Hajj Ali  
(Lebanon | France)

# ANGKAT: A DEFINITIVE, ALTERNATIVE, RECLAIMED NARRATIVE OF A NATIVE

24–26 January 2019, 8pm  
26 January 2019, 3pm  
NAFA Studio Theatre

Nabilah Said &  
Noor Effendy Ibrahim  
(Singapore)

# THIS IS WHERE

SEAN CHAM  
(SINGAPORE)

26 December 2018–29 January 2019  
Selected JCDecaux bus shelters

*"It is all too common these days to see millennials taking selfies at heritage sites on the cusp of ruin. Photographer Sean Cham, however, has elevated the heritage selfie to an art."*

—Olivia Ho, *The Straits Times Life on Yesteryears* by Sean Cham

In the name of nation-building and development, buildings either quickly become obsolete and get facelifts, or are demolished to make way for new ones. The Singapore landscape keeps changing, and the only constant seems to be construction sites islandwide.

Through a satirical documentation of sites in Singapore, *This is Where* brings to light construction work and migrant workers (in all industries) who have been relegated to abject status—hidden behind noise panels and safety barriers.

*This is Where* anything is made possible, uniquely in Singapore.

Fringe Highlight  
Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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**Sean Cham** (b. 1994, Singapore) is an intermedia visual and performing artist. Sean's body of work ranges from photographic series to room installations. As a performer, he has been involved in film, stage and dance. Sean's visual works have been exhibited in Singapore and internationally.

[seancham.com](http://seancham.com)

Rating to be advised

Co-presented with:

JCDecaux

# JOGGING: THEATRE IN PROGRESS

HANANE HAJJ ALI  
(LEBANON | FRANCE)

16–17 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio  
80 min with no intermission  
Performed in Arabic with English surtitles

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

“... a radical challenge to the  
stereotypes and prejudices that  
afflict global perceptions of Arab women...”

—Cat Acherson, *The Skinny*

As Hanane, a Lebanese in her fifties, jogs through Beirut, she revisits dreams, desires, hopes, disillusionments, characters and roles—most of which reveal themselves to be contemporary Medeas with whom she shares some commonalities.

Her body experiences contradictory responses to this daily routine—stimulation by dopamine and adrenaline, alternating between destruction and construction. Their natural cycles within Hanane—woman, wife and mother—echo that of her city, one that destroys to build and builds to destroy.

Co-produced by: Heinrich Bol Stiftung Middle East,  
Embassy of Switzerland in Lebanon and  
British Council Lebanon

Fringe Highlight  
Asian Premiere

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Born in Lebanon, Hanane Hajj Ali is an actress, author, researcher, and cultural activist; a prominent figure in the cultural and artistic scene in the Arab region. Her artistic career started in 1978 as a founding member of the Hakawati Theater (Lebanese Theatre of Storytellers) and she has performed in prestigious theatres and festivals, completing several regional and international tours.

[facebook.com/hananehajjali](https://facebook.com/hananehajjali)

Winner of the Vertebra Prize for Best Actor  
at Summerhall/Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Rating to be advised  
Trailer: [bit.ly/M1SFFjogging](https://bit.ly/M1SFFjogging)

With the support of:



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The Lebanese  
Ministry Of Culture



ROBERT A. MATTA  
Association Arts & Culture

# ANGKAT: A DEFINITIVE, ALTERNATIVE, RECLAIMED NARRATIVE OF A NATIVE

NABILAH SAID &  
NOOR EFFENDY IBRAHIM  
(SINGAPORE)

24–26 January 2019, 8pm  
26 January 2019, 3pm  
NAFA Studio Theatre  
75 min with no intermission  
Performed in Malay with English surtitles

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

*ANGKAT: A Definitive, Alternative, Reclaimed Narrative of a Native* subverts genres and dramatic forms to tell the histories of a mother and daughter, and a re-imagining of a young Singapura trying to find her footing amidst the rough seas.

Salma, an aspiring singer, is an adopted child whose struggle with identity is played out on a national stage. Mak, a former islander, tries to process the loss of her home, with a little help from some friends.

The play blends fantasy and fact, history and the imagined future, and the national, personal and magical, to explore and empower hidden narratives of the Singapore story.

Fringe Highlight  
Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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Photo credit: Courtesy of the artist

**Nabilah Said** is a playwright, arts writer and poet. Her plays have been presented in Singapore and London by Teater Ekamatra, The Necessary Stage and Bhumi Collective.

**Noor Effendy Ibrahim** is a Singapore-based arts practitioner and was the Artistic Director of The Substation (2010–2015) and Teater Ekamatra (2001–2006). He formed the interdisciplinary performance collective akulah BIMBO SAKTI in 2016.

*ANGKAT* was incubated by Centre 42's Boiler Room Cycle 2015 and further developed during an artist residency with Teater Ekamatra in 2016/2017.

[nabilahsaid.com](http://nabilahsaid.com) | [akulahbimbosakti.com](http://akulahbimbosakti.com)

Advisory (Some Mature Content)

Venue support by:



# A FORTUNATE MAN

18–19 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio

New Perspectives  
(UK)

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# ABOVE THE MEALY- MOUTHED SEA

22–23 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio

Unholy Mess  
(UK)

# Q&A (THE 36 QUESTIONS)

25–26 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio

Rachel Erdos and Dancers  
(Israel)

# precise purpose of being broken

24–26 January 2019, 8pm  
26 January 2019, 3pm  
Esplanade Annexe Studio

Koh Wan Ching  
(Singapore)

# KASPAR

17–19 January 2019, 8pm  
19–20 January 2019, 3pm  
NAFA Studio Theatre

Edith Podesta & Nanyang  
Academy of Fine Arts  
(Australia | Singapore)

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# AYER HITAM: A BLACK HISTORY OF SINGAPORE

17–19 January 2019, 8pm  
19–20 January 2019, 3pm  
Black Box, Centre 42

Sharon Frese, Irfan Kasban  
& Ng Yi-Sheng  
(Singapore | UK)

# CATAMITE

25 January 2019, 7pm & 9pm  
26 January 2019, 1pm, 3pm,  
7pm & 9pm  
27 January 2019, 1pm & 3pm  
Black Box, Centre 42

Loo Zihan  
(Singapore)

# A FORTUNATE MAN

Asian  
Premiere

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NEW PERSPECTIVES  
(UK)

18–19 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio  
60 min with no intermission

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

*"beautiful, clever and caring."*

—*The Stage* ★★★★★

*"radical...stimulating...compelling."*

—*The List* ★★★★★

50 years ago, the visionary writer John Berger and photographer Jean Mohr published *A Fortunate Man*, which followed the daily life of English country general practitioner John Sassall, witnessing his compassion, and meditating on the role of a doctor.

15 years after the book's publication, Sassall took his own life. Taking this tragic event as a starting point, New Perspectives teams up with acclaimed theatre maker Michael Pinchbeck to create an expressionistic explosion of the book—a powerful interrogation about the passions and pressures of being a doctor in the modern world.



New Perspectives are the leading touring theatre company of the UK's East Midlands region, specialising in taking new work with an international flavour to a range of unconventional spaces.

[newperspectives.co.uk](http://newperspectives.co.uk)

Rating to be advised

# ABOVE THE MEALY- MOUTHED SEA

UNHOLY MESS  
(UK)

22–23 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio  
60 min with no intermission

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

*"...a voyage for the senses  
and expertly evokes picture  
postcards of familiarity—  
alert to the joy of fish and chips  
but with a salty sting in the air."*

—Sally Jack, *Sabotage Reviews*

*"And then the fisherman says...  
and then the fish... the fi—"*

A woman stands at a microphone.  
She can't remember the punchline.

Fusing poetry and song, award-winning UK  
theatre company Unholy Mess presents a funny,  
strange and poignant play about growing up and  
the legacy of abuse.

Performance poet Jemima Foxtrot takes you on  
a powerful journey exploring memory, childhood  
and what happens when we can't quite get to  
the punchline.

Asian  
Premiere

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Photo credit: Camilla Greenwell

**Unholy Mess** is an award-winning London-based theatre company touring internationally. Using performance poetry and live singing, they create bold new work about important stories of human experience that are overlooked.

[unholymesstheatre.com](http://unholymesstheatre.com)

Advisory 16 (Some Mature Content and Coarse Language)  
Trailer: [bit.ly/M1SFFsea](http://bit.ly/M1SFFsea)

# Q&A (THE 36 QUESTIONS)

RACHEL ERDOS AND DANCERS  
(ISRAEL)

25–26 January 2019, 8pm  
Esplanade Theatre Studio  
50 min with no intermission

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

*"...the fullest, deepest, most interesting she  
has created to date, she is  
searching for an appropriate  
response to relationships between  
two strangers..."*

—Ruth Eschell, *Haaretz*  
(translated from Hebrew)

Can 36 questions make you fall in love with  
a stranger? Would you like to be famous?  
What is your most terrible memory?

In 1977, psychologist Arthur Aron and a  
group of colleagues published the article  
*The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal  
Closeness*. Pairs of strangers were to ask each  
other a series of 36 questions—initially playful,  
then increasingly intimate.

The belief is that placing strangers in positions of  
vulnerability fosters openness to another person,  
leading to them falling in love.

Join us for this special experience that reveals  
personalities, lives and memories.

Asian  
Premiere

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Photo credit: Dan Ben Ari

**Rachel Erdos and Dancers** is led and directed by Rachel Erdos, an award-winning independent British-Israeli choreographer. In 2015, Rachel was awarded the prize for Independent Choreographer of the Year by the Ministry of Culture in Israel.

[rachelerdos.com](http://rachelerdos.com)

Advisory (Some Mature Content)  
Trailer: [bit.ly/MISFFquestions](http://bit.ly/MISFFquestions)

With the support of:



# precise purpose of being broken

KOH WAN CHING  
(SINGAPORE)

24–26 January 2019, 8pm  
26 January 2019, 3pm  
Esplanade Annexe Studio  
80 min with no intermission  
Performed in English, Malay,  
Tamil and Hokkien

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

*precise purpose of being broken* is adapted from a collage of texts by Hareesh Sharma. Each of these texts floats in a particular and specific universe: open, disembodied, yet inexplicably connected.

This multi-lingual work features characters that are as broken as they are illuminated and as doomed as they are hopeful. They revisit faded landscapes of their collective memory and lose their footing on grounds that seem to provide potent signs of recognition.

Directed by Koh Wan Ching, this new presentation is devised and performed by Chelsea Crothers, Chng Xin Xuan, Grace Kalaiselvi, Lina Yu and Wendi Wee Hian, with designers Jason Ng and Vivian Wang.



Photo credit: Tuckys Photography,  
Courtesy of Esplanade—Theatres on the Bay

**Koh Wan Ching** is a graduate of the SIT Conservatory Program for international theatre artists, and has worked with companies including Drama Box, Hatch Theatrics, Nine Years Theatre and The Necessary Stage. *precise purpose of being broken* gathers this team of theatre makers from diverse backgrounds that share a common interest in collaborative performance making. They explore process-based and research-based ways of making work that explores the relationship between dance and theatre, text and movement.

*First presented by Esplanade—Theatres on the Bay as a work-in-progress for The Studios: RAW in 2017.*

Advisory 16 (Some Mature Content)  
Trailer: [bit.ly/M1SFFprecise](http://bit.ly/M1SFFprecise)

With the support of:

BINJAItree

# KASPAR

EDITH PODESTA &  
NANYANG ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS  
(AUSTRALIA | SINGAPORE)

17–19 January 2019, 8pm  
19–20 January 2019, 3pm  
NAFA Studio Theatre  
90 min with no intermission

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

*"B\*tch itself, commissioned by the  
M1 Singapore Fringe Festival,  
has the potential to become a  
legendary work of theatre.  
It is a simple story with a complex heart."*

—The Straits Times Life on  
*BITCH: The Origin of the Female  
Species* by Edith Podesta

*"I want to be someone like somebody  
else was once."*

These words echo in Kaspar's mouth,  
as he drowns in his estranged reality.

Acclaimed as one of "the plays of the decade",  
and as significant as Samuel Beckett's *Waiting  
for Godot*, Edith Podesta directs the NAFA BA  
(Hons) Theatre Arts students in Peter Handke's  
*Kaspar*, where an innocent youth contends with  
a world intent on regulating every action  
and thought.

When finally *Kaspar* is drained of all language,  
he has to confront the greatest terror of his young  
existence: his humanity.

Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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Edith Podesta is an award-winning theatre-maker, actor,  
and performance lecturer. Her production of *BITCH:  
The Origin of the Female Species* won Production of the  
Year and Best Original Script at The Straits Times Life  
Theatre Awards in 2017.

[linkedin.com/in/edithpodesta](https://www.linkedin.com/in/edithpodesta)

Co-presented with:



# AYER HITAM: A BLACK HISTORY OF SINGAPORE

SHARON FRESE,  
IRFAN KASBAN & NG YI-SHENG  
(SINGAPORE | UK)

17–19 January 2019, 8pm  
19–20 January 2019, 3pm  
Black Box, Centre 42  
90 min with no intermission

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders

In this lecture performance, actress Sharon Frese explores the history and influence of the African diaspora in Singapore. She shares images and documents relating to slavery, colonialism, jazz and nationalist struggle, reaffirming the value of black culture in our shared heritage.

Both a history lesson and a theatrical ritual, *Ayer Hitam* commemorates the black men and women—enslaved, indentured and expatriate—who crossed the oceans into unknown territory. They draw strength from these tides, which Indian convicts called the “black water”—in Hindi “kala pani”, or in Malay “ayer hitam”.

Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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**Sharon Frese** is a British Afro-Caribbean theatre practitioner. In Singapore, she has performed with The Necessary Stage and Avant Theatre.

**Irfan Kasban** is an interdisciplinary artist who enjoys crafting multi-layered performances. He is currently an Associate Artist with Teater Ekamatra.

**Ng Yi-Sheng** is the youngest poet to win the Singapore Literature Prize. He is a playwright, a founding member of the spoken word troupe the Party Action People and co-organises IndigNation: Singapore's Pride Season.

Please note that this venue is not wheelchair accessible.

Rating to be advised

# CATAMITE

LOO ZIHAN  
(SINGAPORE)

Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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25 January 2019, 7pm & 9pm  
26 January 2019, 1pm, 3pm, 7pm & 9pm  
27 January 2019, 1pm & 3pm  
Black Box, Centre 42  
70 min with no intermission

\$27 | \$19\*

\*Concession for students,  
senior citizens, NSF and  
PWD cardholders



Photo credit: Tom Giebel

*“Our reality is what we remember it to be.”*

What relationship do we share with our possessions? How can we orient ourselves to these things differently?

This intimate interactive experience begins in the form of an artist lecture and dialogue where Zihan will share his experiences of staging his installation *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future* (2016).

Following this, the audience-participants will join Zihan in a series of participatory activities and conversation, to examine the fictional and factual, in a bid to meditate on the contingency of identity and being.

Loo Zihan is an artist working at the intersection of critical theory, performance, and the moving-image. His work emphasises the malleability of memory through various representational strategies. He was awarded the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council of Singapore in 2015.

[loozihan.com](http://loozihan.com)

*Catamite was developed in residence at Centre 42.*

Due to the nature of this work, only 20 audience-participants will be admitted per show.

Please note that this venue is not wheelchair accessible.

Rating to be advised

# YESTERDAY IT RAINED

## SALT

19 January 2019, 2pm & 4pm  
Esplanade Annexe Studio

Bhumi Collective  
(Singapore)

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# THE ADVENTURES OF ABHIJEET

20 January 2019, 2pm & 4pm  
Esplanade Annexe Studio

Patch and Punnet  
(Singapore)

# YESTERDAY IT RAINED SALT

BHUMI COLLECTIVE  
(SINGAPORE)

19 January 2019, 2pm & 4pm  
Esplanade Annexe Studio  
60 min with no intermission  
Performed in Malay and English  
with English surtitles

\$15

*Goodbyes are rarely good.  
And memories can be tricky things.*

Azman returns to his island home only to be greeted by new sights and vanishing landmarks. Nothing seems familiar, until it starts to rain.

Written by Nabilah Said and choreographed by Norhaizad Adam, *yesterday it rained salt* combines text, dance and performance to explore the violence of departure and return, the comfort one can find in memory and rituals, and the relationships that men have.

Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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**Bhumi Collective** is the point of convergence for artists making art in a borderless world, believing in the lesser seen, lesser heard and the lesser talked about, at our heart.

[bhumicollective.com](http://bhumicollective.com)

*An early iteration of yesterday it rained salt was presented at Bunker Theatre in London, UK, in October 2017.*

Rating to be advised

# THE ADVENTURES OF ABHIJEET

PATCH AND PUNNET  
(SINGAPORE)

20 January 2019, 2pm & 4pm  
Esplanade Annexe Studio  
60 min with no intermission

\$15

*"If 2042 is anything to go by,  
the strawberry generation is  
probably a punnet full of sobriety, tenacity,  
and a whole lot of love."*

—*The Scrim Team* on 2042  
by Patch and Punnet

Abhijeet's beloved daughter is dying from a mysterious illness.

His desperation lures him to the magical paradise of Singaland, where he toils daily under the scorching sun, to earn gold coins to pay for a cure for her. However, an unfortunate incident leaves him injured and unable to work.

Desperate and alone, Jeet meets Gloria, another vagabond also in need of help. They set off together to find Singaland's mythical dragon, reputed to grant you every wish.

And so begins Abhijeet's adventure and quest for equality!

Fringe Commission  
World Premiere

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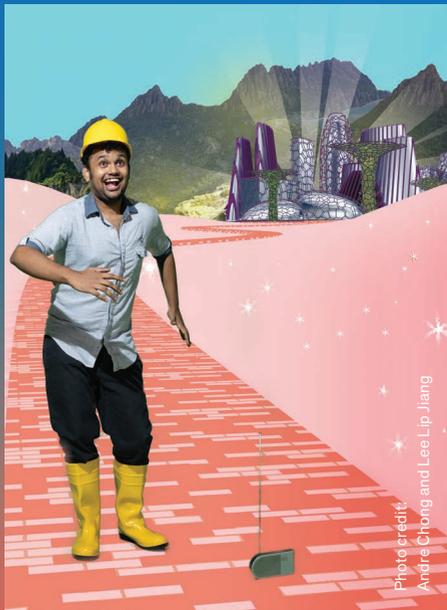


Photo credit:  
Andre Chong and Lee Lip Jiang

**Patch and Punnet** is a tight-knit team of young theatre-makers who work collaboratively to devise original works from the soul. They want to tickle, tease and treat their audiences with irreverent, provocative and playful work. Not taking themselves too seriously, they hope to create a welcoming theatre scene that inspires creativity, conversation and change.

[instagram.com/patchandpunnet](https://www.instagram.com/patchandpunnet)

Rating to be advised

**ESTRANGEMENT  
AND RECONCILIATION:  
A TALK WITH  
SUZANN VICTOR**

12 January 2019, 3pm  
Moving Image Gallery,  
SAM at 8Q

Suzann Victor & Sean Tobin  
(Australia | Singapore)

# ESTRANGEMENT AND RECONCILIATION: A TALK WITH SUZANN VICTOR

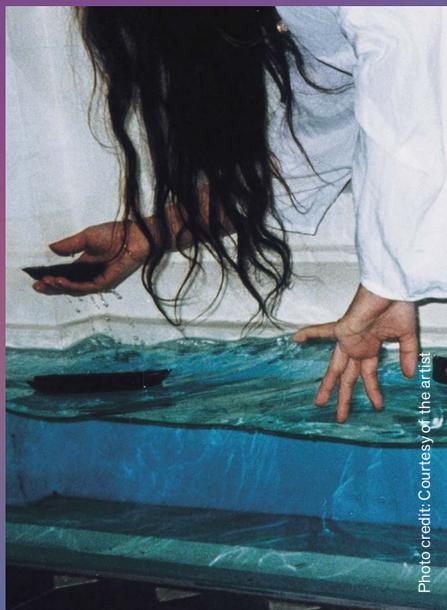
SUZANN VICTOR  
& SEAN TOBIN  
(AUSTRALIA | SINGAPORE)

12 January 2019, 3pm  
Moving Image Gallery, SAM at 8Q  
90 min with no intermission

Admission is free

Join us for a conversation with Suzann Victor to discuss her artistic practice, with a particular focus on *Still Waters* and the concerns and contentions behind and beyond it.

Artistic Director of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival Sean Tobin will have a candid discussion with Suzann about her work from her early days as a young artist, leading 5th Passage, an important but now defunct Singapore arts collective from the early 1990s. They will also explore the aesthetics and politics of body and space, and the contentions and negotiations of art-making in Singapore and around the world.



Shown widely on the international circuit, **Suzann Victor** is best known for the compelling forms with which her public artworks and installations investigate, present and challenge ideas of disembodiment, the post-colonial and the environmental in response to space, context and architecture.

[suzannvictor.com](http://suzannvictor.com)

Entry is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Venue Partner:

**sam**  
singaporeartmuseum  
CONTEMPORARY ART IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

# Off Centre

"...marks a new maturity in Singapore theatre, addressing an audience prepared to be challenged."

Hannah Pandian,  
The Straits Times Life

"...a major triumph."

Mayo Martin, TODAY Online

Written by Haresh Sharma

Directed by Alvin Tan

7–17 February 2019

Victoria Theatre

Wednesday to Saturday:

8.00pm

Saturday and Sunday:

3.00pm

Tickets at

**\$45 and \$36**

Excluding SISTIC ticketing fee.

**Students, senior citizens and NSF:**

**20% discount off any tier.**

Tickets go on sale from 24 October at

SISTIC Website: [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg),

SISTIC Mobile App,

SISTIC Hotline: 6348 5555 and

SISTIC Authorised Agents islandwide.

The Necessary Stage's critically acclaimed play, **Off Centre**, returns 26 years after its premiere in 1993. Written by Haresh Sharma and directed by Alvin Tan, **Off Centre** is a landmark play in the history of Singapore theatre, best remembered for presenting an honest and unflinching look at mental illness and the stigma surrounding it.

**Off Centre** follows the unlikely friendship between Saloma and Vinod, and traces their journeys as they deal with their personal conflicts as well as social prejudices against mental health conditions.

Selected in 2007 by the Ministry of Education as the first Singaporean play to be offered as a GCE 'O' and 'N' Level literature text, **Off Centre** is once again back on the syllabus since 2018.

This brand new staging features Abdulattif Abdullah and Sakinah Dollah, who will reprise their original roles as Vinod and Saloma respectively, as well as Aidli Mosbit as Mak.

Presented by:

Supported by:

Advisory 16 (Mature Content)



a.r.t.s.fund

# TICKETING INFORMATION

Buy your tickets now through:  
SISTIC Website: [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg)  
SISTIC Mobile App  
SISTIC Hotline: (65) 6348 5555 and  
SISTIC Authorised Agents islandwide.

For discounts, please refer to  
**Fringe Perks** below.

## FRINGE PERKS

### **M1 Staff & Customers**

All M1 staff and customers can enjoy  
an exclusive **20% off \$27 tickets**.

Simply present the M1 logo on your mobile  
device or bill when booking your tickets at  
SISTIC Authorised Agents. Random verification  
checks may be carried out at the theatre.

## CONCESSIONS

\$19 concession tickets are available to local  
and international students, NSFs, senior citizens  
and PWD card holders.

Valid passes must be presented upon purchase  
or collection of tickets. Random verification  
checks may be carried out at the theatre.

# SCHOOL BOOKINGS

### **Early Bird School Bookings**

School bookings confirmed before  
1 December 2018 are eligible for the special  
Early Bird School Booking price of \$16 per ticket  
(excluding ticketing charges).

### **NAC-AEP Tote Board Arts Grant**

Programmes endorsed by NAC-AEP's Tote  
Board Arts Grant are eligible for a subsidy of  
up to 50% of the programme cost for eligible  
Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges, Centralised  
Institutes and ITEs, and up to 70% of the  
programme cost for Special Education schools.

### **Complimentary ticket for accompanying teacher**

For every 20 student tickets purchased for a single  
performance, we'll throw in a complimentary  
ticket for an accompanying teacher!

For school bookings or more information on  
M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2019: Still Waters,  
please contact us at [info@singaporefringe.com](mailto:info@singaporefringe.com)  
or **(65) 6440 8115**.

# ABOUT THE FRINGE

The M1 Singapore Fringe Festival is an annual festival of theatre, dance, music, visual arts and mixed media created and presented by Singaporeans and international artists. Themed differently each year, the Fringe aims to bring the best of contemporary, cutting-edge and socially engaged works to the Singapore audience.

For more information about the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, please contact us at:

The M1 Singapore Fringe Festival is set to be a creative centre, with the twin purpose of innovation and discussion, a platform for meaningful and provocative art to engage our increasingly connected and complex world.

Tel +65 6440 8115  
Email [info@singaporefringe.com](mailto:info@singaporefringe.com)  
Visit [www.singaporefringe.com](http://www.singaporefringe.com)

## FRINGE TEAM

True to the spirit of creating challenging, indigenous and innovative theatre that touches the heart and mind, the team from The Necessary Stage is the organising committee of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**  
Sean Tobin  
[sean@singaporefringe.com](mailto:sean@singaporefringe.com)

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**  
Melissa Lim  
[melissa@singaporefringe.com](mailto:melissa@singaporefringe.com)

**FESTIVAL MANAGER**  
Jezamine Tan  
[jezamine@singaporefringe.com](mailto:jezamine@singaporefringe.com)

**FESTIVAL COORDINATOR**  
Mish'aal Nasar  
[mish@singaporefringe.com](mailto:mish@singaporefringe.com)

**PRODUCTION  
COORDINATORS**  
Keira Lee & Fiona Lim

**LIGHTING COORDINATOR**  
Ignatius Tan

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**  
Natasha Fathin

# ABOUT THE NECESSARY STAGE

Formed in 1987 by current Artistic Director Alvin Tan, The Necessary Stage (TNS) is a non-profit theatre company with charity status. Its mission is to create challenging, indigenous and innovative theatre that touches the heart and mind. TNS is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020, and is also the organiser of the annual

M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. TNS also has the honour of being the only arts company in Singapore helmed by two Cultural Medallion recipients: Artistic Director Alvin Tan and Resident Playwright Haresh Sharma.

For more information, please visit [necessary.org](http://necessary.org) and [tnsarchives.com](http://tnsarchives.com).

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Alvin Tan

## RESIDENT PLAYWRIGHT

Haresh Sharma

## GENERAL MANAGER

Melissa Lim

## FESTIVAL MANAGER

Jezamine Tan

## FESTIVAL COORDINATOR

Mish'aal Nasar

## PRODUCTION MANAGER

Azy Alias

## PROJECT MANAGERS

Irma Suzanna Ruslan

Karmen Wong

## ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT

Choo Kok Cheng

## ACCOUNTANT

Two Point Pte Ltd

## SUPPORT OUR WORK

We are appealing for your support to fundraise for our future. All donations will qualify for a tax deduction as stipulated by IRAS. To find out more on how you can contribute, please visit [bit.ly/donatetoTNS](http://bit.ly/donatetoTNS).

*The Necessary Stage has made every effort to ensure that the contents of this programme booklet are correct and up-to-date at the time of printing. We cannot be held responsible for any consequences from subsequent errors or omissions.*

# ABOUT THE DESIGN CONCEPT

Suzann Victor's *Still Waters* inspired us to consider the form and formlessness inherently found in water. The art direction of 2019's Fringe uses coloured organic shapes that have been manipulated to bring out the soft, fluid characteristics of water. These traits make the shapes appear to change and react with the different performance images that it has been superimposed on, bringing to mind the resilience of the Singapore artistic community that has been adapting and growing alongside shifts in governmental policies. The shapes, when blurred and overlapped, draw on water's ability to create illusions and transform the familiar in a brand new light. This reinforces the role of the Fringe as a platform that challenges preconceived notions and perspectives, as well as offers an opportunity to re-interpret the world around us with a fresh eye.

# KUDOS

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IBIS SINGAPORE ON BENGCOLEN

Special Thanks

All the beautiful, fun-loving and fantastic Fringe Interns and volunteers who have helped to make this possible;

All others who have lent us their kind support in one form or another but whose names we were not able to include at the point of going to print.

# FRINGE MAPS



**▲**  
**Esplanade-Theatres on the Bay**  
 1 Esplanade Drive, Singapore 038981

- Theatre Studio, Level 4
- Annexe Studio, Entrance next to taxi stand along Raffles Avenue



**■**  
**Moving Image Gallery, SAM at 8Q**  
 8 Queen Street, Singapore 188535



**●**  
**Centre 42**  
 42 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187951



**●**  
**NAFA Studio Theatre**  
 Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Campus 3  
 151 Bencoolen Street, Singapore 189656

FRINGE 2020:  
MY COUNTRY  
AND MY PEOPLE

SEAN TOBIN  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
M1 SINGAPORE  
FRINGE FESTIVAL

“HOW DO WE  
MAKE ART THAT SPEAKS  
TO OUR TIMES  
AND OUR PEOPLE  
WITHOUT COMPROMISING  
OUR PERSONAL  
DIVERSE VOICES?”

What truly unites a people or a country? Can union only come at the expense of excluding others? How unified can a people really be? What is the cost and the process of this unification?

What does this union look like, and how much of it can be found in flags, anthems, pledges, national costumes or symbols? How much of it is embedded in shared trial and tragedy? How possible is it to find unity in collective triumph?

MY COUNTRY  
AND MY PEOPLE

8–19 JANUARY 2020  
GET INVOLVED.

Find out more about the curatorial brief, application process and download the application form at [bit.ly/m1sff2020](http://bit.ly/m1sff2020).

The deadline for applications is **Friday 1 March 2019, noon Singapore time.**

Anne Lee Tzu Pheng's iconic poem, "*My Country and My People*" (1976) invites us to consider the costs and cruelties of imperialism and colonisation, the compromises of national development and the sacrifices of economic ambition. The poem featured in her first collection of poetry, *Prospect of a Drowning* (1980), and was banned from performance on radio, with no official explanation given. More than four decades on, the themes in the poem continue to resonate in our world today—perhaps even more urgently than before.

How are artists engaging with a world that has often occupied itself with national identities and borders, but is finding that there are millions who have neither home nor security? More people than

# FRINGE 2020: MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE

SEAN TOBIN  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
M1 SINGAPORE  
FRINGE FESTIVAL

ever experience forced displacement. Even for many who are not suffering the plight of a refugee, they are struggling with loneliness and disembodiment as they no longer recognise the world around them.

In an era of Trump, Brexit, and other manifestations of social and political fissures, how are connection, security and solidarity found and protected in times of such upheaval, turmoil and erasure?

Art has often been central to the formation of a collective identity—and in fact, sometimes it has been engineered to do so. As artists, we often find ourselves co-opted into social engineering and propaganda. How do we do make art that speaks to our times and our people, without compromising our personal, diverse voices?

Collective identity has often found its roots in nature and geography too. But as Tzu Pheng points out in *“My Country and My People”*, many of us experience a sense of rootlessness, disconnected from the natural world; a world that is excessively developed and greedily consumed and destroyed. Many of us become acutely aware of our own disembodiment, as our homelands race ahead with productivity.

## MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE

8–19 JANUARY 2020  
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The deadline for applications is **Friday 1 March 2019, noon Singapore time.**

Even in the realms of language, we are locked in descriptions of the “developed world” and “underdeveloped world”. We struggle to hold onto a hope of equity amongst people and sustainability of the natural world. We struggle to reconcile traditions and progressions. We struggle to reconcile difference in our societies, as we continue to find ourselves divided by race, religion, tribes, political camps, gender and sexuality.

We invite you to consider Anne Lee Tzu Pheng’s iconic poem, and respond to our call for proposals for **Fringe 2020: My Country and My People**. We look forward to your responses to our call and to see the shaping up of a dynamic international programme that speaks sensitively, boldly and imaginatively to our times.



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