

MEDIA RELEASE

M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2015: ART & LOSS

Singapore, 21 October 2014 – The M1 Singapore Fringe Festival returns for its 11th year!

For the first time in its history, the Festival will see a new Artistic Director at its helm. Theatre-maker and Educator **Sean Tobin** will take over the reins from previous Fringe co-Artistic Directors Alvin Tan and Haresh Sharma, bringing with him a fresh direction for the Festival.

The Festival will feature a total of 18 events from eight countries. Audiences can look forward to a diverse array of works curated around the theme of **Art and Loss**. The Festival runs from **14 to 25 January 2015** across several venues.

ART & LOSS

Loss is an intimately familiar concept that is an inevitable part of our human experience. It makes us acutely aware of the past and perhaps projects a future that we aspire towards. Loss also reminds us of the fragility of possession: of history, of memory, of relationships and makes us confront our beliefs, to compromise and compel us to accept transience in a materialistic age.

Art as a medium allows us—as creators and viewers—to straddle between what-was and what-is to open our horizons up to imagine what-could-be. While it can be used as a form of remembrance, Art is also catharsis in creation.

“We have all lost stuff. So let’s come together to laugh, blush, cry and cringe about it. Let’s retrace, regret and recreate.”

– Sean Tobin, Artistic Director

DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

In line with its twin-purpose of innovation and discussion, 2015’s Festival seeks to set up mechanisms that encourage the ongoing developments and refining of art-making practices of independent artists on the fringe.

With his new appointment, **Sean Tobin** is seeking to forge new relationships with emerging and established artists. He also aims to further engage the local arts community by bringing together and supporting local artists in the lead up to the Fringe.

FRINGE HIGHLIGHTS

The Festival will open on 14 January with three world premieres: ***With/Out*** by **Loo Zihan** (Singapore), ***The Duchamp Syndrome*** by **Por Piedad Teatro | El Trapo Teatro | The Play Company** (Mexico | USA) and ***How Loneliness Goes*** by **Nguan** (Singapore).

Specially commissioned by the Festival, ***With/Out*** is a reconstruction and reimagining of The Necessary Stage's *Completely With/Out Character*, staged in 1999 with the late Paddy Chew, the first person in Singapore to come out publicly about being HIV-positive. Through the use of multimedia and video documentation, **Loo Zihan** will investigate how concepts of "loss" and "absence" can be represented on stage.

Using stand-up routines, marionettes and an iRobot Roomba vacuum cleaner, ***The Duchamp Syndrome*** will explore an immigrant's version of the American Dream, loneliness and art through a child-like wonder, but most importantly, it is the story of our innate desire to make our mothers proud.

Another Fringe Highlight not to be missed is the exhibition ***How Loneliness Goes*** by Singaporean **Nguan**, who has earned a reputation as a "photographer's photographer". A series of images that adopt Singapore's distinct vernacular architecture as both scenery and supporting cast, it evokes a sense of modern isolation in one of the world's most densely populated countries.

Please refer to Annex A – Fringe Highlights for more information.

LIVE FRINGE

There will also be a number of Live Fringe events such as ***The Malay Man and His Chinese Father*** by **pongurl**, ***Under Pressure—Temporary Title*** by French theatre group **Groupe ACM** and ***White Rabbit, Red Rabbit*** by Iranian playwright **Nassim Soleimanpour**.

The Malay Man and His Chinese Father explores the relationship between a Malay man and his aging and decaying Chinese father in a two-part durational performance and physical theatre piece. **pongurl**, headed by **Noor Effendy Ibrahim**, aims to delve into the process of losing or of loss when something of great pleasure is gained, or sought after and achieved.

Under Pressure—Temporary Title is a metatheatrical piece that explores the arduous relationship between two theatre practitioners and their craft. Jubilant, expressive and cathartic, **Groupe ACM** pokes fun at their financial problems and resignations and asks—what can you create when you lose control? Usually performed in French, it will be performed in English and in a special extended version for its Asian premiere at the Festival.

White Rabbit Red Rabbit is a unique work written by **Nassim Soleimanpour**. Unable to leave his native Iran due to his refusal to perform national service, he created this piece to tour the world when he could not. Requiring neither a director nor rehearsals, each night will feature a different Singapore actor: **Benjamin Kheng**, **Lim Kay Siu**, **Pam Oei** and **Karen Tan**, who will be experiencing the world of ***White Rabbit Red Rabbit*** for the first time in their lives upon stepping on stage, and bring an allegorical menagerie of animals to the audience.

Please refer to Annex B – Live Fringe for the full line up.

FRINGE GALLERY

Making its world premiere as a Festival Commission for the Fringe Gallery is Singaporean photographer **Tan Ngiap Heng's *Fade...***, an installation of a thousand iPhone images, representing his intimate, personal memories. Ngiap Heng's father suffered a stroke and has become more forgetful, prompting the creation of *Fade...*, where the images are suspended like a cloud, with visitors encouraged to take away images that they like.

Mambo Night for a King, another showcase under the Fringe Gallery, is an online exhibition featuring a series of videos of Singaporean non-artists doing Mambo moves and their highly visual text-based individualized scripts transformed from Lee Kuan Yew's *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story*. Through this, **Jason Wee** explores the imaginative stances, movements and positions possible despite the loss of our voice, despite our familiarity with and our mimicry of the strong voice of our social and political authorities.

Please refer to Annex C – Fringe Gallery for the full line up.

FRINGE ACTIVITY

For the first time at the Fringe, **The Necessary Stage's Alvin Tan** and **Haresh Sharma** will hold a **Devising Masterclass**, where they will share their distinctive creative process honed through the creation of numerous important works such as *Off Centre*, *Fundamentally Happy* and *Gemuk Girls*. Acclaimed actors **Karen Tan** and **Siti Khalijah Zainal** will also be present for a discussion about building their characters in *Model Citizens* and *Gemuk Girls*.

Reimagining Singapore Theatre, organized in collaboration with new Venue Partner **Centre 42**, will gather **The Necessary Stage**, **Loo Zihan**, **Pat Toh** and **Take Off Productions** to discuss the development and exposure of local work and artistry, and reimaginings towards their 2015 restagings.

The Presence and Power of the Playwright is inspired by Nassim Soleimanpour's *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, where the playwright *performs* with unprecedented power and presence, despite his physical absence from the performance. Join **Lim Kay Siu**, **Groupe ACM**, **Take Off Productions** and **The Necessary Stage** as we discuss the role of the playwright in the post-modern collaborative era of theatre creation.

Please refer to Annex D – Fringe Activities for the full line up.

The 11th M1 Singapore Fringe Festival will be on from 14 to 25 January 2015 at various venues. Tickets will be on sale from the 21st October from SISTIC. Tickets are priced \$19 and \$22, excluding ticketing charges. M1 staff and customers will also enjoy an exclusive 20% discount off all tickets till the end of the festival.

Join the Fringe as it aims to examine and excavate different interpretations of the relationship between Art and Loss.

Get Involved.

ABOUT THE NECESSARY STAGE

Formed in 1987 by our current Artistic Director Alvin Tan, The Necessary Stage (TNS) is a non-profit theatre company with charity status. Our mission is to create challenging, indigenous and innovative theatre that touches the heart and mind.

TNS is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant FY2014-FY2016, and is also the organiser of the annual M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

2015 sees TNS celebrating its 28th year of creating challenging, innovative and indigenous theatre that touches the heart and mind. Having presented more than 100 original plays in Singapore and abroad, TNS remains focused on breaking new ground in original local content and intercultural exploration.

For more information, visit www.necessary.org

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FAST FACTS

Date:	14 - 25 January 2015
Events:	18 events from eight countries
Fringe Highlights:	3 highlights
Live Fringe:	10 works (28 ticketed performances)
Fringe Gallery:	5 works
Fringe Activities:	1 Masterclass 2 Talks
Venues:	Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay National Museum of Singapore Centre 42 ION Art, ION Orchard Drama Centre Black Box
Official Website:	www.singaporefringe.com

TICKETING

Public Sales:	From 21 October 2014 to 25 January 2015
Ticket Prices:	\$22/ \$19 (Concessions for students, NSF and senior citizens) (Excluding SISTIC ticketing fee)
Fringe Perks:	Exclusive 20% off for M1 staff and customers

Buy your tickets now through SISTIC Website: www.sistic.com.sg, SISTIC Hotline: (65) 6348 5555 and SISTIC Authorised Agents islandwide.

For further details, please log on to www.singaporefringe.com from 21 October 2014.