



Making Space, Body As Woman

30 October – 3 November 2013

Making Space, Body As Woman
A performance art event organised and curated by Daniela Beltrani
A Parallel Event of



30 October – 3 November 2013

SCWO Centre, 96 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187967

Artists:

Arahamaiani (Indonesia)
Andrée Weschler (Singapore/France)
Chand Chandramohan (Singapore)
Cristiana De Marchi (Italy/Lebanon/U.A.E.)
Daniela Beltrani (Singapore/Italy)
Jacquelyn Soo (Singapore)
Lina Adam (Singapore)
Lisa Bauer (Germany/Taiwan)
Malvina Tan (Singapore)
Natasha Wei (Singapore)
Willis Turner Henry (Singapore/Indonesia)
Yeh Tzu-chi (Taiwan)

Programme:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------|---|
| 30 October 2013 | 10:00-18:00 | Performance art workshop by Arahamaiani |
| 31 October 2013 | 19:00-22:00 | Performances |
| 1 November 2013 | 19:00-22:00 | Performances |
| 2 November 2013 | 18:00-22:00 | Performances |
| 3 November 2013 | 14:00-18:00 | Forum: Anatomising Performance |

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Curatorial process of Making Space, Body as Woman

by Daniela Beltrani

Intention

Making Space, Body as Woman intended to propose a platform for the exchange and discourse in performance art amongst emerging and established performance artists based in Southeast and East Asia.

With such precursors as *Womanifesto* initiated in Thailand in 1997 and inspired by a more recent exchange programme for female artists based in Southeast Asia, which took place at the end of September 2012 in Yangon, Myanmar, *Making Space, Body as Woman* focused solely on female artists.

Ultimately, far from being a presentation of the best performances, *Making Space, Body as Woman's* primary concern was to create an environment conducive to the exploration of performance art practices relevant to the body and consciousness of the female psyche in Asia. As such, presence of both emerging and established artists offered the opportunity of uncovering the personal and artistic achievements and challenges of practitioners at different stages of their career, whilst exploring notions of art and life within the female perspective.

Escaping the tempting label of feminist event and therefore the risk of being received as a mere reaction to a male-dominated environment, whereby its focus may have risked shifting onto an antagonistic position, *Making Space, Body as Woman* intended to literally offer a physical and metaphysical space for female performance artists to express their concerns and share the richness of their superimposing experience as women and as performance artists from their specific ever changing social, cultural and political climate.

Premise

When in February 2013 the moment came for me to find a name for this event, the image of a woman pushing through an indistinct mass of bodies naturally came up to me. I could see her so clearly struggling to find her own space, her arms waving and digging into the anonymous bodies closing in on her, but I could also see her victorious at the end, standing unabashed.

That's when *Making Space, Body as Woman* started taking shape, even though its conception dated back to the previous year.

In September 2012 I had taken part in an inspiring and empowering Southeast Asian contemporary art exchange programme by the title *The Gender under Reflections*, which took place in Yangon, Myanmar, and was organised by Nora of New Zero Art Space. The event was multifaceted, as it included a multidisciplinary art exhibition, a forum and performance art presentations.

I decided then to organise a platform more focused on performance art to offer female artists from or based in Asia a space where they could present their work, reflect on their practice and confront themselves in an ontologically equal and potentially dialectical environment.

In many parts of the world, beyond cultural and other barriers, being born female automatically entails a set of expectations and attitudes that may shape the woman's future life, either in unwanted compliance or in unsupported opposition. From the unlimited powers of the pater familias in republican Rome to the Sparta

of ancient times, where sickly baby girls were thrown off the mount Taygetus to the worsening of female infanticide exacerbated by the One Child Policy of 1979 in China to the persistent and widespread economic inequality on the labour front even in the Western world, the weaker sex seems trapped in a crippling dichotomy of Madonna/whore, where alternatives may be sought at a great personal price.

“The city was a place and image for men, but it was both place and image imagined to be of women. The mother, wife or homely sister are the signs of the interior, the sphere of emotion, intimacy and familiarity in contrast to the risk and fluidity of the street. The sexually-used women of ‘unfixed’ class and working-class women are figured in that latter realm of masculine freedom, licence and fantasy.”¹

Both in Singapore and during my various travels abroad I had met many artists who, in my opinion, could be interested in such a platform and contribute to the discourse I intended to encourage.

They are women who struggle, one way or another, with the obtuseness of a widespread patriarchal society and persevere in their artistic practice with great passion and professionalism.

Despite such preambles, ultimately, the ambition of *Making Space, Body as Woman* was humble: in a Singapore where complex performance art events – such as *Future Of the Imagination*,² *Fetterfield*,³ *R.I.T.E.S.*⁴ - are not frequent enough to help, I simply wanted to make a little space for the artists I had invited and, conversely, to encourage a wider public to the appreciation of performance art.

Upon reflection, I chose 22 artists, whom not only I had met personally but whose performance (at least once) I had experienced live, with a couple of exceptions. 19 replied positively. It was clear to me that the invitation was directed from a very intuitively personal perspective, both complementarily human and artistic, in terms of achievements and potentials of each artist invited. It was essential for me to make the selection based not merely on documentation, but on my direct contact with the artist and their practice.

Only Cristiana de Marchi, whom I never met and never saw perform, and Lina Adam, whom I know but whose performance I never experienced, escaped this curatorial frame of mind.

I was satisfied that I was taking a chance on Cristiana in the hope of creating a bridge between Singapore and the Middle East, particularly following the recent exhibition *Terms & Conditions* on artists with roots in the Arab world, held at the Singapore Art Museum between 28 June and 8 September 2013.⁵

1 Griselda Pollock, “Beholding Art History: Vision, Place and Power,” in *Vision and textuality*, ed. Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 43.

2 www.foi.sg

3 <http://biotechnics.org/3fetterfield.html>

4 <http://www.rootedintheephemeralspeak.com/news.html>

5 Savita Apte, ed. *Terms & Conditions*, exh. cat. Singapore Art Museum, Singapore 2013.

As for Lina, I had known her personally for some time. I knew she was co-founder of *Fetterfield* and also that she had stopped her practice in performance art not long after the birth of her first child, devoting herself to a full-time job and her family. Through a casual conversation I became aware of her interest in my event and I felt it would be a great opportunity for both of us if I invited her: for her to return to performance art after such a long hiatus and for me to see her live. Sadly, seven foreign artists were unable to raise enough funds to cover the airfare to Singapore and therefore only 12 artists were able to present, eight from Singapore and four from Indonesia, Taiwan, Germany/Taiwan, Dubai/Italy.

The decision to hold the entire event at the SCWO Centre, headquarters of the Singapore Council Women's Organisation, at 96 Waterloo Street, was particularly intentional, given the involvement of female performance artists. At the very heart of one of Singapore's most artistically and culturally thriving centres, near the Singapore Art Museum, the SCWO is an organisation whose goals are, amongst others, "to promote and improve the status of women in all fields, in particular education, economics, social welfare and community involvement, culture and sports," "to foster friendly relationships, goodwill and understanding amongst women, irrespective of race, colour or religion" and "to provide a forum of exchange and discussion on issues, particularly those relating to women."⁶

De quo

The programme was articulated around the two essential polarities of:

- engagement of the participating artists amongst themselves throughout the segments⁷ of the programme in order to widen understanding of cultural diversities and artistic practices and to establish solid human and artistic connections open to future endeavours and projects;
- engagement inclusive of the audience through participation to workshop and forum, and attendance of the evening presentations in a dynamic flow and exchange.

I had not proposed any theme to the artists at the time of the invite, following my intuition against it.

And finally, patience combined with months of reading and reflection had brought me to present them with a duplicitous proposal:

- for the forum, *Anatomising performance*, where the artists were invited to discuss, in front of and with the audience, the disparaged and highly personal processes that bring them to the seemingly final and certainly climacteric moment of the presentation of the work, live, in front of the audience. I hoped that through the various analyses of such process, the trinity of artist-artwork-audience and its internal dynamics would be dealt with to a challenging extent with a view to understand and appreciate performance art, beyond the sensationalistic news of "extreme" performances catching the media's

⁶ <http://www.scwo.org.sg/index.php/about-us/our-mission-a-goals>

⁷ Social, artistic, cultural activities, workshop, forum, presentations.

attention and ultimately misrepresenting the discipline as a whole; and

- for the presentation of the performances, *Per speculum et in aenigmate*, whereby all the artists - contrary to the familiar way of thematising the contents of the performances at the initial point of curation - were instead invited to present a performance that was inspired by the specific action of looking at themselves in a mirror daily, ideally in the morning, for a duration of at least 5 minutes and for a minimum period of 14 days. Somehow, in a forceful manner, I intended to direct not the contents over which the artists retained absolute freedom, but the modality source where the original idea for the performance would have come from: the artist herself. In a world of possibilities, the suggested meditative form of literal self-reflection could bring about ideas as to how life can be transcended into art and it can also be open perhaps to a more authentic and connected engagement with the audience, not merely at an intellectual level, but at a much deeper, spiritual one. A stimulation that comes from our own direct experience will act on the recovery of the emotion from the well of memories and this, in turn, may be activated in such a way as to stimulate the audience to connect with it. Following my strong belief in the interconnectivity between art and life and even in the undeniable character of potential authenticity of performance art, which is never (mimetic) representation of reality as tradition shows us theatre and visual art disciplines to be, I proposed to the artist a challenge whose outcome would have only depended on the artist herself and the result could be a natural acceptance or resistance to such challenge.

Last words

In all, I am extremely satisfied that the event managed to take place under the aegis of the Singapore Biennale 2013, as parallel event. The theme for this year's biennale was *If the World Changed*, and considering the intentions of *Making Space, Body as Woman*, the change sought after can only come at a great price and through unsettling the status quo and centuries-old yet still existing prejudices, in order to get to a more fair and just society towards all its members. In my opinion, it is not violence or revolutions that can contribute to make a better world forcefully, but a combination of love, respect, tolerance, openness, patience, perseverance, understanding and dialogue.

December 2013

Workshop with Arahmaiani on Wednesday 30 October 2013

by Sabrina Koh



Photo Credit: Daniela Beltrani

With at least 30 years of experience in performance art, Arahmaiani took the workshop seriously and professionally. In a roomful of women, from curators to young performance artists to students from School of The Arts (SOTA), I was highly anticipating moments of sensuousness, vulnerability, inner strength, beauty or even, a sense of outrage. I was wrong.

I got to know Arahmaiani during one of the performance art events held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. I took part in a workshop she conducted: each of the participants had to stay physically connected to the next. Being the last one in line, I stood on the shoulders of Arahmaiani, feeling the bones beneath my feet. That was how I remembered her.

The workshop she conducted during *Making Space, Body as Woman* opened with the artist's presence; someone who is calm and collected, portraying the substance of a woman. After a round of individual profile introductions, Arahmaiani highlighted the extreme difference of female participants in the workshop from professional practitioners to beginners. This was a pleasurable tension, as all parties had a responsibility to perform-and-learn/learn-and-perform.

In preparation for the workshop the participants had been told to bring one object, if they so desired, to perform with. It could have been a familiar one or one they wished to discover.

Despite the number of female participants being capped at 20, there were 21 participants, seven performance artists form the event (Chand Chandramohan,

Daniela Beltrani, Jacquelyn Soo, Lisa Bauer, Malvina Tan, Natasha Wei, Yeh Tzu-chi), five women of different artistic backgrounds, two theatre practitioners and seven teenage SOTA students.

The workshop took place in the same space as the performances, two conference-type rooms, rented at SCWO centre, Singapore Council Women's Organisations.

Section 1

"There will be no theories involved in this workshop, but I would like you to directly experience performance art" a simple statement by Arahmaiani. "I would also like you think about self-expression via body and object, and the relation between them." Although clearly directed with a level of meditative quality, the context of 'woman-ness' was clearly missing.

Section 2

All the ladies were dispersed within the room, finding sufficient physical space to conduct body movements led by Arahmaiani. The toes, feet, knees, legs, waist, arms, shoulders, neck and head were brought through repetitions of slow stretching. Fifteen minutes passed. All the bodies were getting eager, but the participants were asked to find a comfortable position sitting down and close their eyes. The artist continued to lead the women into a state of consciousness/awareness with the help of a set of meditative bells. In the half an hour of meditation, a few of the younger participants began to fall asleep. Finally, the group was asked to focus on one point of the room and on their breathing.

"If you think performance art requires no preparation, you are mistaken. If the mind/idea is ready, but the body is not, accidents and injuries can happen. So, taking very good care of the physical body and having a clear mind are very important points for a performance artist. You can be more aware of the condition of your body before the performance" Arahmaiani emphasized her intent once again.

In retrospect, I have never prepared earnestly with exercises prior to performing. 'Mind over body' has been my belief. My collaborated, durational performance at Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre (*Questioning Room #3*) was designed to walk against a long flight of moving escalators. The body was intentionally put to the test of physical-against-emotional endurance. But then again, that was from a younger perspective few years back. With the years counting up, going through the stretching exercise may no longer be a choice, but a responsibility.

Section 3

Two groups were spontaneously formed, the adults versus the students. Both groups were told to work on an idea that will later be expressed through body and object/s. A voice echoed from the participants, innocently, "Why did we have to go through the meditative state?"

"It is important to find out for yourselves what works best for your own body before a performance." The question having been answered, the participants contemplated on the notion, while moving on to prepare for their performances. Arahmaiani was particular about the time spent on each section of the

workshop, and reminded everybody that fifteen minutes were all they had to conceptualise and perform. Each performance had to be supported with a rationalization, to provide the audience with a basic understanding of the work.

Section 4

Performances started.

Three coins were arranged in a triangular format on the floor. Artist Jacquelyn Soo went on the ground and started blowing very hard against the coins, hoping to flip or move them. Given the impossibility of the intent, Jacquelyn went onto placing coins into her mouth, chewing and mincing them. The idea was a straightforward and very local message: 'people are the force that drives money, even though we all need money to eat and to survive.'

Dione, from SOTA, apologized for having no prior experience in this art form, and then placed her hand phone in a gap on the floor. She moved on to place her parents' photograph on the floor, said 'goodnight' to it, took off her spectacles and went to sleep. The audience watched her toss and turn for the next five minutes or so. Intuitively, they woke her up when the alarm was set up accidentally on silent mode. The student realized the use of technology in a performance had specific implications and should be considered and pre-set accurately or it may result in a failure/success of the entire performance. Arahmaiani highlighted the potential of it being a site-specific work, which brought the younger audience to rethink about concept and re-contextualizing, thus the translation of performance art.

The range of works produced by 19 of the 21 participants was overwhelming. Explorations from material understanding to cultural context to religious to violence to conceptual to site-specificity to manufacturing experiences created a whole new meditative experience, where one had the non-physical space of observing, contemplating and rediscovering.

Section 5

After four hours of workshop, I decided to approach the younger participants from SOTA to capture their immediate responses.

"How do you know when to end your performance?" I asked in a very straight-laced manner, and was impressed by Kong Yin Ying's reply, "I think it has to do with intuition."

I continued with another fundamental question, "Do you think there is a difference between performing arts and performance art?" Technically yes, but the replies varied from within the group, and to a certain extent, they were justified well.

Walking away from the workshop site made me return to reality. And I thought the body of a woman has been even more blurred in today's everyday contemporary context. The workshop had provided a physical space for physical (women) bodies, but the emotional, mental and spiritual side of the women did not so clearly emerge from the performances.

This left me with the consideration: if the meditation did affect the outcome of the performance one way or another, how much did it reflect on the role of women in everyday's physical spaces?

Recollection of my first performance during the workshop

by Amrita Sridhar



Photo Credit: Daniela Beltrani

Unsure of what to look forward to, I entered the space. It looked normal but I would have never figured that it was where I would feel serene with myself. Being a quite body conscious individual, I was rather nervous to go through the exercises, wondering how I was going to be able to participate being so aware of my surroundings.

Through the first few meditation exercises, I was attempting to block out the existence of others around me and instead focus on just myself and my every movement. It became quite relaxing after a while, thus I was pretty sure I was doing something wrong. As we had immediately delved into coming up with a small performance piece to present in front of the others, my mind began racing. There were so many ideas that came into mind, one after the other but none of them felt right. How was I going to put a good performance when I did not even really know the p in performance? With all these heavy questions on my mind, I watched others perform. Some strong messages were conveyed through their works but the thing that stood out the most for me is that it was personal. The singular experience where the performer delves into a trance unveils her vulnerability during the piece, where no matter what situation she is in, as viewers, we visibly join her on the experience.

What was something personal about me that I would like to share? Deciding to present on the fact that despite being an open person, performing in front of others was something I was shy about, I stood up in front of everybody. Not having tried out whether the partitions in the space would work, I began my performance, moving the partition closer one step at a time. During my attempt to move the other partition, I realised it was stuck. At that point, I realised that there was two things I could do: turn around and reveal my embarrassment to the audience and break the atmosphere or impromptu. Picking up chairs, I began lining them up instead. At that very moment when I turned and stared at the audience and vanished behind the partition, my heart was racing. There was a nervous thrill that I was undergoing having been able to physically convey my feelings.

January 2014

Recollection of my first performance during the workshop

by Dione Lee



Photo Credit: Daniela Beltrani

From the moment you are asked to perform, everything around you suddenly changes. What were once just objects surrounding you transform into invitations for interaction. Being exposed to the terrifying yet liberating experience of performance art for the first time, this workshop opened my eyes to not just the world around me but to the different doors to emotions and thoughts inside me.

As an art student, I always think visually, whether it's trying to unscramble my thoughts or put to rest another vivid imagination of mine. But performing these thoughts, emotions, ideas using only the vocabulary of my body and the minimal objects in my surroundings, I found the process immensely challenging, especially because I often self-censor a lot of my artistic expressions.

But this experience just made performing a whole lot more satisfying when I did something that was close to my heart. The feeling of healing a wound by removing the long overdue plaster. It made me feel vulnerable, but with good reason, because I was making sense of it using my body and mind, placing it in front of myself, the stage and the audience.

So performance became a tool not only for understanding my own ideas and thoughts, but also for allowing me to express very raw emotions to an audience in a cohesive yet complex way. And as with every form of art, this highly visual, spatial and experiential way of expression is open for interpretation. Meaning, the audience would respond actively to performance in ways that would make me question my ideas in an open and engaging way.

Performance has made me comfortable in confronting what's outside in the world and what's inside of me. Though it was the very first performance in my entire life, I can be very sure that it will not be my last.

January 2014

Performances on Thursday 31 October 2013

by Natasha Wei

Making Space, Body as Woman, a title apt for a woman's show as a parallel event of the Singapore Biennale 2013. The crying out of "Making Space," literally means, "Excuse me" and "Please allow us", while "Body as Woman," asserts the physical presence necessary in performance art. A woman's show, in this context, sets up meaningful boundaries for these compelling performances. To emphasize the confines further, the event's venue is in a room of the Singapore Council of Women's Organization (SCWO).

A Room of One's Own by Virginia Woolf, often reminds me of denial and disregard for the woman because of her already disadvantaged position. Where streams of consciousness converge in this very space, struggle, hence, is the key framing for the discussion and lense of empathy through which these performances are viewed. More so, a struggle that presents itself, pertinent to woman in its most natural form.

Beneath the anxiety and anticipation that enveloped the first night, the atmosphere in the small room made one think that much preparation had been done both mentally and emotionally.

Malvina Tan, Struggle as it is felt



Malvina Tan's laying out of 51 disposable plates in grid-like order of rows and columns made one curious what she would be doing with the installation. There was meticulous planning and calmness in the way she handled the objects. The bread and butter suggested that she might be using food to execute her concept. The act of consumption itself is all-consuming, as she ultimately constructed new interpretations of the recent death of her spouse. The familiar butter-sugar bread breakfast made by her spouse is a lucid memory left by him to her, and the re-enacting of this action became ritualistic to her as a commemoration of the 51 days since his departure. The regularity of the grid-like structure unified the performance by balancing the organic quality of the butter-sugar bread and suggested a linear narrative of this widow's life. During the performance, she had also passed around the recipe on how to make the perfect butter-sugar bread. It makes me wonder as to what perfection Malvina is seeking. Is it that of what her spouse could offer? Or what she could master since he is gone?

As an observer, the preparation of the butter-sugar bread speaks about performance. For the fact that it cannot be re-enacted and every piece is not the same as the one before. The variations of the butter-sugar bread culminated to

form an excellent installation of butter-sugar bread on neutral white plates. The very simple act is in itself an everyday activity and is also the strength of this performance from the immense energy she invested in this modest affair.

Lisa Bauer, Struggle as it is traversed



Lisa Bauer's work was wittingly constructed with props of a string and lemon. Her physical presence enclosed the perimeters of the room and interacted with the audience in a quiet pride of being. What was engaging was that the unrolling of the yarn was determined by her slow strutting across the room. She made attempts at balancing herself in the space. The vulnerable body henceforth became subscribed to the objects that restricted her. The imagined sour taste of the lemon was unbearable and painful, made visual by the grimace on the artist's face. Could this work be a lemonade to one's soul as a result of life's adversities?

I recall a conversation with Lisa before the performance: she mentioned that in her performances, she is often self-contained and the space which she resides in is defined by non-interaction and non-existence. It became graphic and salient that despite so, Lisa is intricately connected to the landscape and the human element and how both are closely intertwined.

Daniela Beltrani, Struggle as it is tried



Daniela Beltrani's performance employed a green coconut as her very challenge in the process. Both the ability and inability to balance her body on the coconut show not only the success in overcoming, but also the struggle in keeping on trying. What makes it more agonizing is her effort to carry in her arms, specially chosen art books, by no way light. The many books were all related to woman and/or performance art. Her struggling reminds me in the texture of the sounds, that of a woman giving birth to a baby. The heavy breathing and irregular screams were exact reminders of childbirth. Amidst

the tension, of awaiting the final image of how she could manage to cradle the entire stack of books and balance her feet on the green cocconut, her son Luca encouraged her, "Mummy, don't give up!" The audience, on the other hand, did not give up watching and egging her on.

The coconut as a metaphor for the seed of life, and pearls of perspiration on the artist's body were indications of this annotated struggle of womanhood. The struggle is poetic and patient.

Arahmaiani, Struggle as it is hoped



Concluding the night, Arahmaiani's performance was visually powerful, as her shadow was enlarged on the wall and cloaked the room. Darkness added another dimension of obscurity to one's experience of her ghostly presence in the performance. To me, the colour red coded emotions of anger, bloodshed and pain; and, perhaps, of where Arahmaiani came from and what she had experienced. As she invited the participants to hold each of the 11 candles in the dark, and to express anything that they wished. This symbolic gesture is both of faith and struggle: the faith to articulate change and the struggle to keep the fire burning. It is a transcendence of the performance's temporal and kinetic qualities, where the ending is about all participants blowing out the fire of hope and change together as one.

The intentions of these performance pieces are governed by struggle, which evoke empathy that acted as a conduit for the audience to enter. At the same time, the space which they inhabited prompted the audience to ponder and question further about being a woman. The dialogue between her body, her spirit and her space must be on-going, intense and sensitive.

Performances on Friday 1 November 2013

by Jane Shishido

The event was a week-long affair with the highlight being three nights of performances by some of the current crop of artists who are seeking to expand the theories and practices of performance art, a contemporary art discipline which engages the audience through the artist's self.

The title of the event is a mere starting point to explore the depth and stories that performance art can propose. It may have become fashionable now with the global fame for once avant-garde artists such as Marina Abramović and Laurie Anderson, who are appearing in large museums around world and big ticketed commercial art festivals, but this is a good sign. A once neglected and misunderstood art form is given a new platform and re-examined for the goldmine of riches it holds as a positive force. Notably, on the Asian side, far from the stereotype of women as second-class and lesser creative in the 20th century, the classical, religious and historical narratives represent the female as goddess, giver of life, shaman, teacher and mother. There is no better time than now to bring performance art to a new generation of audiences.

Cristiana de Marchi



The performances on 1 November began with a surreal and shocking opener. Cristiana de Marchi gave a brutal and provocative display of the drama and anticipation that performance art at its most visual and impulsive can be. She is an old world romantic that resides in the modern world. We watched as a carnal, tribal and ritualistic act was being performed: the sewing and stitching together of four fresh, bloody, raw animal's hearts with a long needle and red thread. The act was part homespun backwoods surgery and part vexed lover in a post apocalyptic world, where reality becomes blurred with nightmares. It was an extraordinary scene and challenged the notions of where storylines begin between the audience and the artist. One viewer, perhaps subconsciously traumatized and confused, kept on suggesting the type of animal heart that was being used as a prop to reel in reason and daily order to his experience. There was something medieval about the visuals: a dark carnal beauty of the grotesque and seduction. We were taken to an uncomfortable territory, where our own logic and perception were put on hold, but the virtue and truth of mortality were revealed.

Chand Chandramohan



Since the mid 2000's Chand Chandramohan has sought to question the physicality of her own body and biology with explorations in a wide range of performance and group shows in Asia, such as the avant-garde group led by the influential Tang Da Wu, The Artist Village. Sometimes vexed, other times in earnest, Chand had even chosen to confront and ponder the process of death, then the decay of self. For *Making Space, Body as Woman* she selected to explore the conduit, manifestation and manipulation of body movement through continuous vocal sound scapes within an enclosed environment. As Chand crawled, slid and moved around the room, the audience reacted to the pure sensory triggers and eyed her directional path. There was a child-like and infant innocence in Chand's voice and unlike Cristiana's intimidating raw hearts, a softness and warmth were emanating. As art work, the performance became the artist's creative sketchbook: part theory, part test pattern, part sampler, but nonetheless absorbing to witness.

Natasha Wei



Natasha Wei is a multi-disciplinary Singaporean artist who explores the philosophical dilemmas of the human condition. Her artworks and performances have an intimacy and at times beautiful vulnerability, which creates a bittersweet, yet powerfully poignant vision. For this performance Natasha chose the iconic Frida Kahlo as inspirational starting point to present a work that harkens to the popular and significant image of a wedding bride and the melancholia of Shakespeare's quietly suffocating lover Ophelia from his classic tragedy *Hamlet*.

The performance began with Natasha standing in front of the audience in her white wedding splendour. She then sat next to an empty chair with a white pillow. She unravelled a yarn of red thread and attached eight strands to herself. As we watched the artist untangle herself and again bond with the red

string and chair, I felt the urge to bolt upright, get to the space and pass her a pair of scissors to slay the empty chair phantom tug of war. The metaphors and symbolism during the performance came lightening fast: red roses, blood, unification, love, whiteness, loss of innocence and disillusion. After a few failed attempts Natasha finally forced the pillow to fall off the chair with her body controlling the red strings wrapped around her neck. She then knelt and began to empty the white pillow and scattered the wadding around. The pillow with a long gaping hole was placed back on the empty chair. The bride looked odd, as if she was sitting among small clouds no larger than a tennis ball. Roses in hand and the bridal veil back on, Natasha sat once again on the chair, but not until she had stuffed the roses into the pillow.

Yeh Tzu-chi



Yeh Tzu-chi is from Taipei, Taiwan and like many fellow performance artists she has the deft skills that transcend a single discipline and moves freely from writing to performing, directing, curating and teaching. The usage of the naked body as expression and unabashed vitality has been around for decades with notably the Asian iconic art stars Yoko Ono and Yayoi Kusama in New York at the height of hippy, free love, and pop art culture of the mid 1960s. Tzu-chi herself is highly influenced by the radical Japanese artist Seiji Shimoda and uses the bold and uncompromising unclothed body to define and confront physical discourse.

Tzu-chi's performance started with a whimsical peeling and eating of an onion. She then proceeded to hold up a pair of wine glasses full of water and examine the properties of the liquid. It was a sort of gender reversal, next, as a quick make-up fix made her face smeared with black to mimic a rough moustache and masculine facial hair. But as soon as the faux male character appeared in front of the audience, like a bored and antsy pre-schooler, Tzu-chi shed her clothing yanking her dress above her shoulders as she dragged herself around the room with lavender underwear showing. There was nothing glamorous or titillating taking place, but an almost amusing and restless ambiguity. The body is our last refuge of self and identity, it's a vessel for personal histories and as Tzu-chi had shown with her performance, it is literally hidden beneath layers and layers of mystifying complexity.

Performances on Saturday 2 November 2013

by Daniela Beltrani

SOTA students



The last evening of performances started with two extra-programme presentations by some School Of The Arts students, who had participated in Arahmaiani's workshop three days prior.

Arahmaiani had encouraged the participants to take up her offer of doing a presentation during the last evening of performances, in order to offer them the opportunity to test themselves in front of an audience, but only three young ladies accepted.

Klara and Yin Ying turned off the lights and immersed the space in deep darkness. They walked tentatively, seemingly following the lights being flashed from the cameras in the audience. Once they managed to locate the source of the light, they would ask the person to surrender the camera.

At the end of the performance, Klara and Yin Ying explained that they had wished to reverse the roles that the taking of photographs seemed to generate during a performance: from the vulnerability of the performer exposed to the control engendered by the camera, so intrusively entering the performer's space, to the control the performer rebelliously decides to exert by disclosing - through the apprehension of the cameras - that the entire performance was from the very onset a mere pursuit of the photographing audience.

Amrita performed alone. After having placed four chairs in a row facing the audience, she walked around them slowly. Clearly not interested in sitting down, she interacted with three of the chairs individually and in different manners, from dragging one away to throwing one onto the floor to playing with another, until only one chair was left. Calmly she sat on it, in fetal position and hiding her head into the knees she was hugging. This seemingly closing of her entire body to the surrounding space marked the end of her performance.

Amrita later explained that the performance was in reaction to four school mates of hers who only a short while prior to the workshop she had come to know would not be joining her in the following academic year due to a variety of reasons she expressed through her actions.

Lina Adam



For Lina Adam's performance, the audience was requested to leave the space in order to allow the artist and her assistants to prepare. After a short while, the audience was asked to enter back in small numbers. Each of us was greeted by a fully set table, dressed with a bright red cloth. Many carefully selected objects had been placed on the table: plates, bowls, candles, a pair of wedding bands, a mirror, earth, water, air, uncooked rice, milk, a clock, a black and white photograph of a couple on their wedding day, baby mittens were amongst the most notables. Lina invited each guest to come to the table and write the name of a person whom they would like to remember on a paper slip using a thin brush dipped in water. Of course, nobody could read the name written down and this silent affirmation paired with the secrecy preserved a sort of privacy in the memory of each participant.

Once this ritual was concluded, she turned off the lights and lit the candles. She then attached the slips of paper onto strings hanging from a number of helium-filled balloons. Lina was careful to weigh the slips so that the balloon would float mid air and therefore neither rose too high nor was weighed down. She then asked willing members of the audience to pick a balloon and walk outside on the courtyard of the SCWO Centre. She encouraged each person to burn the slips until the progressive weightlessness of the balloons pushed them upwards into the dark sky, making them disappear beautifully in the night.

Willis Turner Henry



Willis, wrapped in a little black dress, grey pumps and with several red and white balloons hanging from her body, approached random members of the audience and asked them to write anything they wished onto the balloons. She then sat in the middle of the room and deflated them, only to re-inflate them at great physical exertion. Once each balloon was ready, she secured it onto a plastic stick and place it inside a small metal vase, creating a sort of bouquet.

Once the vase was full, she spoke a single word, father, in different languages. The performance dealt with the physical gap between herself and her father: his inability to hug his daughter even on the occasion of his birthday.

Jacquelyn Soo



Jacquelyn emptied the contents of her rucksack onto a table in the middle of the room. She undressed and, in her black underwear, she proceeded to weigh each item carefully and take note of its weight. She then stepped onto the scales and emptied the contents of a black pouch. Coins started pouring onto herself and as they fell onto the floor, they decreased the final weight of her body. Jacquelyn's performance was a commentary on our capitalistic society obsessed with material possessions and measuring everything tangible and intangible in monetary terms.

Andrée Weschler



Andrée - her short blond hair lightly dipped in a reddish colour, barefoot and dressed in a simple sleeveless whiteish gown - concluded the evening and the entire event with a physical struggle illuminated by only a single powerful spotlight. She slowly unrolled a spool of black shiny plastic sheet and continuously wrapped it over her entire body, succumbing to the power of the material and the action. Eventually, when her entire body became wrapped by the material and blurred in the surrounding darkness and no more action was possible, she ended the performance.

First encounters with Performance Art

by Kong Yin Ying

Performance Art seems an anomaly in the realm of Visual Arts. It introduces a synesthesia in experience and an intimacy with one's being at a degree beyond its counterparts. In the better part of the week that I had participated in Making Space, Body as Woman, I was offered a glimpse into what art could be like for the audience participant: an unrelenting sequence, an agglomeration of sense and cognitive experiences.

Lisa Bauer

The smell of citrus becomes apparent in the room. Crimped fingers dig inexorably into the lemon's flesh and a rumour of the tension in the artist's hands seems to translate into your own. Your fingertips draw faint remembrances of the fruit's pulpy interior, and as you stare at the gaping mouth, full to the point of discomfort, an ache in your jaw seems to creep in as well. You watch and wait if the person can outlast the fruit.

Daniela Beltrani

The irregular coconut struggles in its place between an oppressive weight and the unrelenting ground. It wobbles on an undecided axis and as the artist's world seems to go off balance, you feel as if yours does too. Your hands sweat on their own volition, your body seems to know what to feel before your mind, and in that moment, you are not sure how to react. The heavy books sit impatiently in your damp palms and you really hope you pick the right moment to transfer them to the artist's already burdened arms.

Arahmaiani

You are cupping a fragile warmth in your hands and you are told to do something with it, but you are not told what. So you do something you are familiar with: you play with fire. The air conditioning unit to your right taunts you by running its own fingers through your precious flame. Then a camera click goes off, followed by a blinding flash that swallows the light in your hands. A reprimand bubbles to your lips, but it stays locked in. The darkness and the silence compel you to preserve their sanctity, and you listen.

Klara & Yin Ying

Two days later you discover you have an opportunity to issue that reprimand, and you take it. The camera flashes and clicks become the aesthetic "in-aesthetic" of your work, and still you work to reconcile your message and elements of performance. Without the people who were informed about your idea, it never would have worked. Your first official performance is coloured with failure and you are now determined to wash over that failure until it becomes success.

It was in these moments, among others, that I began to comprehend the various facets of Performance Art.

The space and object work in tandem with the person; the situation constructed from these elements prompts involuntary thought and action; the body vacillates between associating and dissociating with the mind; the individual's physical experience becomes a shared one by the human capacity for empathy; and finally, creation gives birth to further creation, where ideas transmute between artist and audience or participant.

There is so much possibility in Performance Art that even failures are rendered as potential for progress. Inconstancies, fallibilities and reactionary facets of the human character become the artist's arsenal; they are both subject matter and medium. The precariousness of its form is precisely where its appeal is borne, and there is relief to be found in the unplanned progressions, be they large or small.

Through these realizations, I have been spurred to further my studies on Performance Art, as a new avenue for exploring more dimensions of Visual Art as well as dimensions of my self.

January 2014

Recollection of my first performance in front of an audience

By Amrita Sridhar

"Would you like to do a short performance piece before the event starts?"

Even though I did not have any idea in mind, knowing that I could not let this performing opportunity to go, I decided to give it a chance. While brainstorming for possible ideas, I was going through events that took a very personal and emotional toll on me. As I had all that vent-up emotions in me, I decided to express myself through the performance. During the performance itself, I was so caught up in the moment that for the first time, I was able to forget that there were people watching, forget that this was art and instead delve into my emotional response to the event. Upon completing the piece, the moment of silence as I looked up from my position was complete. The satisfaction of physically letting everything out was divine. Everything that I had hidden within myself was out. I felt free, as though I had nothing to conceal.

From that experience, I learnt what performance art was about: it was not about revealing parts of one's body neither was it about putting the body through harmful actions. Unlike general assumptions, performance art is about expressing oneself through physical means and sharing that intimate moment with others. It is about entering a realm where the performer is alone, surrounded by her thoughts. It is about being the artwork rather than simply creating one.

January 2014



“For the project Making Space, Body as Woman each artist was asked to look at herself every day for 5 minutes for a two-week period in the hope that a physical self-reflection would bring upon a metaphysical one that could offer inspiration for a performance.

My reaction was immediately not to look at myself; I simply could not do it. I do not enjoy looking at myself; to me, it is vain.

Making my mini strike in silence, I built a performance about the opposite, which is not to look at myself at all.

In my black mirror, if you look at me, you will see yourself instead.

The present performance is part of the series of Black.”

Andrée Weschler's (b. 1963, France) artistic endeavours focus on using the physical body to explore the boundaries of acceptable social constructs. The performing body is used as a tool for discovery, often becoming material in itself. Her work also attempts to challenge the audience into reading her performance of bodily differences.

Andrée has been living and practicing her art in Asia since 1995. Her formative visual arts training were in Singapore, Australia and France. At Les Beaux Arts de Paris, she worked in the atelier of Annette Messager. Since 2000, she has been invited to participate in international art events and exhibitions in Asia and Europe, including the 4th Guangzhou Triennial (China 2011), Asian Pulse 10+1 (Bangkok Culture & Art Center Bangkok, Thailand 2011), The National Review of Live Art (Glasgow, Scotland 2009), "The Park -The Contemporary Artists in Asia 2008" Related Art Exhibition of Yokohama Art Triennale (Japan 2008), Eros-Arrows by the London Biennale (London, England 2004), International Eco-Environment Art Exhibition Seoul Arts Centre Art Gallery (Seoul, Korea 2002).

Her art practice encompasses Performance Art, Drawing, Video Art, Photography and Installation.



Black #02, 2010, Night Festival at The Substation, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)



“My performance is based on a previous work called *Violence No More*. I developed the idea further as giving a place to the other to express themselves.

In this interactive performance I invited 11 members of the female audience to be presented by holding the candle light and express anything they wished to express.”

Arahmaiani (b. 1961, Indonesia) is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

Her early performance works took place mostly in public spaces and dealt with social-political issues, during the early 80s, when the military regime was controlling and oppressing her country. Later she developed her original ideas and moved onto dealing with cultural and environmental issues. The interactive tendency in her performances shifted onto a “community base” approach. The reality and culture of body in the strong patriarchal society and global culture have remained a constant issue, though she has also dealt with other concerns. Her artistic practice includes performance art, video, installation, drawing and painting. She has received education and training in art in Indonesia, Australia & the Netherlands. Since 1996 she has been invited to international art events such as Asia Pacific Triennale (1996), Biennale of Havana Cuba (1997), Nippon International Performance Art Festival (1998), Festival de Winternacten, The Hague (1998), Asiatopia, Thailand (1998), Jakarta International Performance Art Festival (2000), Biennale de Lyon (2000), Werklietz Biennale (2000), Woman Performance Art Festival, Osaka (2001), Odense Performance Festival (2001), Sao Paolo Biennale (2002), Gwangju Biennale (2002), International Performance Manifestation, Brazil (2003), Biennale of Moving Image Geneva (2003), Venice Biennale (2003), Dadao Live Art Festival China (2004), Rapid Pulse International Performance Art Festival, Chicago (2013).



Memory of Nature, 2013, Art Stage, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)

Chand Chandramohan, *Untitled*, 1 November 2013



Chand Chandramohan (b. 1992, Singapore) is currently studying for the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Fine Arts in LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore. Through practice, she became aware of her inclination towards 2D with surrealistic tendencies.

With further introductions to various mediums, she explores all the facets she can get her hands on, from printmaking to installations.

Her main practice is exploring the visual relationships of the body and space through performance.

Chand has performed in various events in Singapore since 2011, including R.I.T.E.S., minimART, Night Festival, Future Of Imagination 8, Now!, Action Parties #3.



To Seek Comfort in Passing, 2013, minimART, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)



“Performance implies the use of a body, that of the artist by definition. Nevertheless, it engages a reaction in the audience and this reaction can be on different levels: mental, emotional and physical with various possibilities of contamination.

More than any other artistic practice, perhaps with the only exception of music, performance art is characterized by the possibility for the artist to become a mirror for the audience and to reflect and interact in multiple ways with their own perceptions, feelings, past experiences and expectations.

Love is a performance based on this very idea, where the fact of de-contextualizing the objects, in this case four lamb hearts, and to reposition them in a different environment, creates a short-circuit, a disconnection, a gap where the interaction starts and emotions are released.

A performance does not necessarily need to be understood or explained; rather it can simply be experienced, perceived, as it attempts to give body to the unconscious.”

Cristiana De Marchi (b. 1968, Italy) is a curator and artist based in Beirut and Dubai.

Cristiana De Marchi's work is minimalist in its essence. During the past few years she has been intensively working on embroideries using a variety of easily accessible objects and materials, which we deal with on a daily basis including kitchen utensils, light home furnishings and aliments. This long term and on-going project originated from her interest in words and their translation and in the correspondence between physical and nominal dimensions, between actions and wording. Her other recent projects focus on the controversial territory of language and messages of propaganda, in this case supported by a clear manipulative purpose; and on the theme of identity, treated by the artist from an ironic, acute and witty perspective. Performances and videos constitute the other direction of de Marchi's research, investigating the line between phrasing and acting, between the aura recognized in the former and the obviousness and self-evidence of the latter. Whereas the use of words is regulated by the contradictory and conventional reference to a set system of cultural (in the wider sense) rules, the use of the body eludes these rules, placing the communication on a hyper-real level and involving a fluid combination of both verbal and non-verbal languages.



Fish Market, 2010, Sharjah, U.A.E. (Photo courtesy of the artist)



For Example II is part of the series *I'm-mortal*, which I started earlier this year. Its two main underpinnings are creating the possibility of an intense physical/emotional engagement with the audience and the use of a form of communication that transcends language, culture and other forms of division and therefore appeals solely to humanity. As such, the series does not propound or favour a particular theme; rather it is the form of the performance that shapes the series. Real-life experiences I have contribute to build the fabric of the series and fill the thematic gap in a contextual manner.

I try to keep my body balanced on the young coconut, which in itself entails a great effort and struggle. The books on performance art given to me one by one add to that effort and struggle in a slow climax, causing me to lose balance over and over again in a draining repetition of almost expected failure. Conversely, my hope to keep still deteriorates in an inverse proportion to the physical exertion due to the heavy weight of the books. Towards the end my son Luca encourages me not to give up and so, finally, the balance with all the books is achieved for only an instant and determines the end of the performance after more than half an hour of physically exhausting struggle.

The departure point for *For Example II* is how I see many people in the art world view art itself. Words and concepts too often impede an engagement with art, which can be more wholesome than that which relies solely on our minds. Performance art is in my opinion a great opportunity to find resolution in our wholesomeness, if only we let our mind go and open up to the new territory in the process of being undisclosed in front of us."

Daniela Beltrani (b. 1968, Italy) is a performance artist based in Singapore. Since her first performance at PIPAF (Philippines International Performance Art Festival) in 2011, she has performed at many platforms in Singapore and worldwide, including Cambodia, Myanmar, Italy, Indonesia, Turkey, Finland. In June 2011 she set up a performance art platform by the name of SPAM (Self Performance Art Meetings), which offers its members opportunities for visceral and spontaneous explorations in exchange for commitment and openness to dialogue.

In her continuously developing practice, she considers Art and Life inextricably connected and ultimately her attempts as performance artist are aimed at uncovering this connection within a spirit of authenticity, including natural flaws, failures and imperfections.

Her consistent research in performance art is carried out with a self-imposed holistic methodology: not only as a keen practising artist, but also as an avid spectator, amateur photographer, passionate reader and knowledgeable writer.



My Body's Tears, 2011, SPAM, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)



“Weight of Burden describes the apparent conflict between the artist’s identity and the role she has to play out to society by adopting social constraints in carrying belongings that make up or are used to identify someone with. The use of a weighing scale to measure the weight of all objects that the artist carries with her daily and the measuring of her body weight question the symbol of statistics and numbering in our interaction with society. The pouring of coins on the artist’s face in the last action also denotes the refusal to a capitalistic system of practice and administration in our contemporary society.”

Jacquelyn Soo (b. 1982, Singapore) lives and works in Singapore. Jacquelyn is a multi-disciplinary artist with a background in sculpture as a student at LaSalle College of the Arts and a history of Gamelan Studies and Performance with a certificate from the Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta. Jacquelyn's works look at the effects caused by social changes to the geographical and psychological states due to 'cultural blindness' and persistent complexities in the social structure of society. 'Cultural blindness' is a term that Jacquelyn uses to navigate her works round looking at culture and the way it blinds us to an attachment of traditions and customs. Jacquelyn first performed in 1999 on the topic of disability as a taboo in Singapore, and subsequently moved onto themes of folklore, myth, taboo and oral histories from Southeast Asia. This direction brought her to collaborative projects beyond Singapore, in Indonesia, Malaysia, Sweden and the USA. Today Jacquelyn runs a non-profit society promoting contemporary art by young artists in Singapore (S.C.Y.A.) and continues to bridge her ideas and to work across globally.



The Vagina is a Secret, 2012, Your Mother Gallery, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)



“On a table, I laid some items:
baby mittens and booties for birth
eggs for purity
longevity noodles for a long life
a mirror for reflection
a table clock for time
a teddy bear for childhood
rice for sustenance
an old wedding photograph for memories
milk for mother
wedding rings with strings attached
and earth, air, water and fire

For this piece, I try vainly to share my experiences during the time when I exiled from my art practice. It was a very significant period for me and I hope to articulate through the performance the intangible aspects of our everyday experiences that shape our identity on becoming human.”

Lina Adam (b. 1971, Singapore) lives and works in Singapore.

Lina Adam is a performance artist and printmaker.

She is co-founder of Fetterfield, Singapore Performance Art Event, which is presented annually since 2006. She is co-founder of Your Mother Gallery, Singapore.

Her work involves the scope of dissecting agents of socialization and habits dealing with but not limited to memories, environment and systems of daily life. Her work deals with the notion of social political identity, involving the observation of constructions such as family, work, school, playground, shopping malls, supermarkets, offices, etc and its influence on people's behavior. She is interested in the idea of exploring structures of the existing frame of social reality.

She has exhibited extensively in Singapore and abroad since 1996.

She is a member of The Artist Village and the Printmaking Society.



Untitled, 2006, Fetterfield, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)



“My piece *Summer in Winter* is about concentration and focusing, on slowness and calmness, on wondering and absurdity. It is on the thin line between subtlety and nothingness and therefore on perception.

The slow action creates a feeling of boredom and the impression that the situation one is experiencing and perceiving is the normal, the not-to-be-questioned everyday.

Is it in this situation still possible to perceive and notice what is happening?

Is there still a feeling of surprise and wondering? Can one still think of the possibility of difference and change? Or will one involuntarily enter a state of non-concentration and wait for a climax and obvious change?

My performance *Summer in Winter* wants to pose these questions through the use of my body and therefore experience them. I expose my body to the happening, while not seeing it as contrary to the space surrounding it and the material used. Space and material become a part of my body or my body becomes part of the space and material. The limitation between body and non-body becomes fluent and therefore also the opposition of active and passive.”

Lisa Bauer (b. 1984, Germany) lives between Germany, Taiwan and China. Lisa is a performance artist and PhD candidate. She obtained her M.A. in Cultural Sciences and Aesthetic Practices from the University of Hildesheim, Germany. Between 2007 and 2008 she studied Fine Arts at the University Paris 8, France. She is also a founding member of 'Kunst im Kulturflur,' an alternative art space in a private apartment. Since 2008, after taking part in Jürgen Fritz's (Black Market International) workshop, her main artistic practice is performance art, which she has been pursuing since, whilst also learning with Chinese artist He Chengyao. She has performed in Germany and China.



Das Meer ist zu weit weg (The ocean is too far away), 2012, 13th OPEN International Performance Festival, Beijing, China (Photo courtesy of the artist)



How to make the perfect butter-sugar bread is a performance part of the artist's ongoing exploratory project, *130912* - a reflection of the artist's intimate collection of thoughts and memories of her late husband who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma on 13 September 2012. In this performance, the artist explores 51 different ways of making butter-sugar bread, which used to be a staple snack and breakfast for her and her late husband. She attempts to make the perfect butter-sugar bread following her late husband's instructions, but eventually examines other ways of perfecting this snack through personal discovery. Having performed on 31 October 2013, the artist created 51 different butter-sugar bread versions for the previous 51 days, in which her late husband was unable to prepare for her due to his death 51 days prior to the date of the performance. Through this performance and in coming to terms with reality, the artist sees herself as trying to fulfill her role as a widow instead of a wife. A tug of war that exists between preservation and destruction after the death that occurred, the artist desires to find a balance between by reflecting on memory, ephemerality, preservation and letting go.

How to make the perfect butter-sugar bread

1. Use a knife, shave some butter off the slab of butter and spread it on the bread, using many short and light strokes while holding the knife at a 30-degree angle.
2. If it seems like you are using too much butter despite using short strokes, hold the knife at a 90-degree angle and scrape the bread once or twice to remove unwanted butter.
3. Ensure that you have completely covered the entire surface area of the slice of bread with butter, without missing out any spot and leaving it unbuttered.
4. Use a teaspoon, scoop a teaspoon of fine sugar, and drizzle the sugar all over the buttered slice of bread.
5. Ensure that you drizzle the sugar evenly without missing out any spot and leaving it un-sugared.
6. Fold the bread in half and press the bread down with your fingers so that each half sticks closely to each other.
7. Clean up your mess and enjoy.

Malvina Tan (b. 1988, Singapore) held her first solo exhibition in 2008 at 'House' at Dempsey Hill, Singapore, as part of their 'Adopt an Artist' programme.

Since then, she has participated in numerous exhibitions, such as Pantone My Art at The Coffee Connoisseur Singapore; Back to Nostalgia at the Left foot store organised by Singapore Contemporary Young Artists and more recently at TranSport, held in both Madrid, Spain and Singapore.

Her work, in collaboration with Singapore based artist Shubigi Rao, was featured on an art reality TV series, Watch This Space on Mediacorp's OKTO Channel.

Malvina explores performance art too and presented works at NOW! Performance Art Event held at Nanyang Technological University, at the Night Festival 2010, The Substation and Fetterfield 2012.

A diploma graduate from the School of Technology for the Arts at Republic Polytechnic, Malvina is currently preparing her degree studies in Interactive Media at Nanyang Technological University's School of Art, Design and Media.



10,000 hours to perfection, 2012, Madrid, Spain (Photo courtesy of the artist)



"I lost my hair,
I lost my mind,
I was very attached."

Sophia Natasha Wei Junhao (b. 1982, Singapore) lives and works in Singapore.

Natasha Wei is drawn to performance art for its inexplicable beauty and its ability to delve into questions of the human condition and to reach audiences at a more intimate level.

Her performances often address the human condition of beliefs and customs. She has travelled abroad to perform and to attend performance art festivals. She contributes actively to the local art scene and believes in creating art that penetrates the heart of the community. She often engages the public in her art-making and merges the visual language of her own practice in her art teaching career.



After Andy Warhol's Stamped Lips, 2012, Vue Privée, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)

Willis Turner Henry, *Happy Birthday, Pa! (Feeling Home series)*, 2 November 2013



“This performance is dedicated to my dad and my father...

How could I wrap you when you doesn't want me to? But I will still raise the flag for you, no matter what...”

Willis Turner Henry (b. 1989, Indonesia) is a visual artist, whilst working full-time as a lighting designer. Her practice includes photography, performance art and mix media.

She researches the notion of intermediate condition, which includes the issues of identity, sense of belonging and lifestyle/cultural differences.

She materializes her ideas with strong emphasis on visceral elements and emotional experiences through metaphorical scenarios. Her works always embark from her personal experiences, which also aim for a visual language open to both universal and personal interpretation.

Performance art is the latest medium in her artistic practice. She discovered it coincidentally during her intensive study in photography. Since then she has been actively experimenting with it and this has assisted her process in making visual works.

Willis has taken part in the Singapore International Photography Festival in Singapore and other selected exhibitions from Indonesia, Korea, China, the Philippines, United Kingdom. She also has received some distinguished awards, such as Clifton Art Prize and ASEAN-Korea Multimedia Award.



Yellow Dots and Thread, 2012, Minimart 3.0, Singapore (Photo courtesy of the artist)



“Last summer I was invited to perform at the opening of the solo exhibition *Anonymous Future* by a Taiwanese woman artist, Lin HuiRu. She showed abstract paintings full of circles from which the paint sometimes naturally had dripped down.

To me, a circle represents something really condensed, whilst the dripping down, dispersion. This became the inner logic or spirit of my performance. The way I dealt with the onion, the yarn, the paint, my hair and the dress was thus highly influenced by this inner logic. In this performance I cared more about colour, materials, action, as well as the process of transitions between different movements. I didn't think so much about the meaning itself. Perhaps, this performance also became something quite abstract in the end. The meaning might not be so clear or so important, though it doesn't mean that the audience couldn't find meanings in it.

I did this performance again in Singapore. It differed in some ways from the first one due to the different venue of course and some unconquerable problems with the body paint and colour of yarn.”

Yeh Tzu-chi (b. 1961, Taiwan) lives and works in Tainan, Taiwan. She majored in Western literature. She has been editor of a literary magazine, full time English lecturer in college, coordinator of film festivals, as well as a freelance translator and writer. When preparing to write and direct a small-scaled theatrical piece *My Body, My Song* in 1999, she came across performance art. She started her performance practice in 2002, when she joined a performance art workshop by Seiji Shimoda. Since then, she has participated in many events and festivals held in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, China, Myanmar, Thailand, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Finland, Israel, and United States. In 2003 she founded ArTrend Performance Group. She has organized local and international performance art events, most notably the 2004 Taiwan Asia Performance Art Meeting and *On The Way: 2009 ArTrend International Performance Art Meeting*.



Kimchi Kimchi, 2012, Incheon Art Platform, South Korea (Photo courtesy of the artist)

ABOUT THE WRITERS



Daniela Beltrani is an independent curator based in Singapore. Enriched by classical education and artistic sensibility, she obtained a Master of Arts in Contemporary Asian Art Histories in 2011 from LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore.

Since 2010 Daniela has curated many exhibitions and written articles and essays for art publications and catalogues. She tries to stay focused on her intent to promote an experience of art that on one side is non-elitist and yet probing and on the other can offer opportunities for alternative and more visceral readings and reflections. Ultimately her efforts tend to encourage the audience of her exhibitions and writings into a more holistic experience of art as a means to cultivate their own individual aesthetic sense and to recover their humanity beyond the flimsy parameters of a decadent and commodity-driven society.



Jane M. Shishido is an independent art advisor, writer and publicist based in Singapore. She works with artists, curators, gallerists and publications from Asia, UK, USA and the Asia-Pacific region. Originally from Honolulu, Hawaii she is an American citizen, but permanent resident of Singapore. Her Asian ethnic heritage is Japanese, but believes that art is humanistic and universal to all.

Sabrina Koh has received an MA in Contemporary Practice, a BA(Hons) in Fine Art with Contemporary Writing and a Diploma in Interior Design. She has performed in several art events in Germany, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. She has become recognized for her works, which explore the paradox and inherent contradictions in society. Her works often centre around the human body as an ergonomic tool in contrast to existing sites/spaces as her main mode of expression. She has also contributed a range of articles and essays on interior design and architecture for S.I.A Journal and iSH magazine; and poems for her personal collection. Sabrina continues to develop a merged identity as a multi-disciplinarian artist taking an ambiguous artistic stance in order to create a web of complex associations and questions for the viewer. Founder of creative label bang.and.sew, Sabrina builds on statement pieces in collaboration with forbidden communities and individuals to provoke, re-position, celebrate and excuse the public.



Sophia Natasha Wei Junhao is an active contributor to the local art scene as a visual art practitioner and art educator. She conducted workshops; shared on her art and teaching experience at various platforms; travelled to art festivals and teaching exchange programmes overseas. As a mixed media and performance artist, her works often address the human condition of beliefs and customs. She plays the role to create art that penetrates the heart of the community, engages the public and merges the visual language into her teaching.

By no means a prolific writer, her thoughts, often in streams-of-consciousness, are penned in her blog www.sophianatasha.blogspot.com since 2005. Existential thoughts of being, she would say. She published articles for Vignettes Arts Education Forum by World Prime, Sentap! Visual Arts Magazine in 2006, CreateLeVoyage Magazine and Pipeline Magazine. She has participated in the performance art forum Tupada Xing: Social Contact in 2007; was one of the speakers in Vignettes Arts Education Forum in 2006; took part in MOE Art Conference in 2009; was guest editor of The Substation in 2007; was NAGA STAR Associate Educator and STAR leader in 2012.

Amrita Sridhar, Dione Lee and Kong Yin Ying are students at SOTA (School Of The Arts), Singapore.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With the support of



Special thanks to hotel partner



Editor

Daniela Beltrani

Texts

As specified

Photographs

Nel Lim, unless otherwise specified

Publication design

Nel Lim

ISBN: 978-981-07-8870-4

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About the Singapore Biennale

The Singapore Biennale was established in 2006 as the country's pre-eminent platform for international dialogue in contemporary art. It places Singapore's artists within a global context, and fosters productive collaborations with the international arts community. In this way, the Biennale provides new opportunities for local visual artists, arts organisations and businesses, and cultivates deeper public engagement with the arts. It complements achievements in other areas of arts and culture, collectively enhancing Singapore's international profile as a vibrant city in which to live, work and play.

The 2006 and 2008 editions of the Biennale were organised by the National Arts Council. As with the 2011 edition, Singapore Biennale 2013 is organised by the Singapore Art Museum of the National Heritage Board, and supported by the National Arts Council.

