

**Spotlight on Cultural Policy Series Twelve:
Roundtable on
*A Year of Living Precariously:
Artists on Surviving the Pandemic***

Wednesday, 3 March 2021
Online via Zoom

PROGRAMME

10.00 am – 10.10 am

Opening Remarks

Dr Carol Soon
Head, Society and Culture Department &
Senior Research Fellow
Institute of Policy Studies

Ms Michelle Goh
Director (Planning)
National Gallery Singapore
and
Singapore Art Museum

10.10 am – 11.30 am

A Year of Living Precariously: Artists on Surviving the Pandemic

Moderator

Dr Nazry Bahrawi
Senior Lecturer
Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
Singapore University of Technology and Design

Speakers

Dr Danny Tan
Chief Executive Officer & Founding Artistic Director
Odyssey Dance Theatre Ltd

Ms Salty Xi Jie Ng
Artist

Mr Leslie Tan
Founding Member
T'ang Quartet

Ms Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai
Actor, Singer & Voiceover Artist

Mr Edmund Wee
Publisher
Epigram

Ms Raka Maitra
Co-Artistic Director
The Substation

Respondent

Dr Alvin Tan
Director
Engagement and Participation
National Arts Council

11.30 am – 12.25 pm

Discussion

12.25 pm – 12.30 pm

Closing Remarks

Mr Tan Tarn How
Adjunct Senior Research Fellow
Institute of Policy Studies

12.30 pm

End

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Biographical notes

Michelle GOH is Director of Planning at the National Gallery Singapore (NGS) and Singapore Art Museum (SAM). She also manages International Partnerships for both institutions and leads SAM's programme office organising the Singapore Biennale and the museum's residency programme.

NAZRY Bahrawi is a literary critic, academic and translator. He is Senior Lecturer of Comparative and World Literature at Singapore University of Technology and Design. Dr Nazry serves on the board of the Intercultural Theatre Institute.

Salty Xi Jie NG co-creates semi-fictional paradigms for the real and imagined lives of humans within the poetics of the intimate vernacular. Often playing with the aesthetics of social relations and structures, her interdisciplinary work proposes a collective re-imagining through humour, care, subversion, discomfort, a celebration of the eccentric, and a commitment to the deeply personal, manifesting as brief encounter, collaborative space, performance, film, publication, meal and variety show.

Ms Ng has a Master of Fine Arts in Art and Social Practice from Portland State University. Recently she was Artist-in-Residence 2019-20 at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Artist Fellow at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, and Artist-in-Residence at Buangkok Square. She is currently Community &

Education Artist-in-Residence at the Singapore Art Museum and is editor of *Conversations On Everything*, an interview-based Portland OR publication on social forms of art.

RAKA Maitra is a dancer who defies the conventional dichotomy of “classical” and “contemporary”. She is a dancer simpliciter, exploring the notion of “Asian culture” through her own language of contemporary dance. The basis of her movement is classical Indian dance and martial arts. Ms Raka is a recipient of the Shringarmani, a national award for Odissi. She was an associate artist with The Substation from 2007–2011.

On top of her role as Artistic Director of Chowk Productions, which she founded in 2014 with the support of the National Arts Council’s Seed Grant, Ms Raka is also Co-Artistic Director of The Substation. Her works have been regularly commissioned by the Esplanade and have travelled extensively internationally. Her notable works include *The Hungry Stones*, *The Blind Age*, *The Second Sunrise*, *from: The Platform* and the *Pallavi Series*.

In the words of *Dance Europe*, “Maitra is without doubt a dancer of the 21st century”.

REBEKAH SANGEETHA Dorai is an actor, singer and voiceover artist. Her one-person show *Building A Character* was sold out at the Singapore Theatre Festival (2018), and featured as *The Business Times* “Top 3 Theatre Picks of the Year”. She also scored a Best Supporting Actress nomination at the Life! Theatre Awards Singapore for her multi-character turn in *Three Fat Virgins* (2019). Other credits include the National Day Parade 2020, “*Who’s There?*” (The Transit Ensemble), *Merdeka* (Wild Rice), *Miss British* (Art of Strangers, Esplanade), and *Eloquence* (Theatreworks).

Following *Sangeetha Sings Sinatra — Live* at the Esplanade, her next concert is slated for 2021/2. She was recently seen in *7cm* (directed by K Rajagopal) and will next be starring in *Moonrise Sunset*, set to premiere globally in spring 2022. As a voiceover artist, she has lent her voice to pitches for DBS, AirAsia, Singapore University of Social Sciences, and CNA.

Follow her work @ms.dorai, and reels at www.msdorai.com.

Carol SOON is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies where she leads the Society and Culture Department. Her research interests are in false information, media regulation, digital inclusion, new media and activism, online public opinion sensing and public engagement. She has published her research in books and peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Asian Journal of Communication*, and *Public Integrity*. Dr Soon is also Associate Director of the Asia Journalism Fellowship, which is supported by Temasek Foundation. She is Vice Chair of Singapore’s Media Literacy Council and Principal Investigator at the Centre for Trusted Internet and Community, National University of Singapore (NUS). She has taught courses at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public

Policy and the University Scholars Programme at NUS. She speaks about her research frequently at international, regional and local forums. In 2015, Dr Soon received the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Research Excellence Award. She was also a recipient of the Australian Endeavour Award in 2012.

Alvin TAN is currently Director (Engagement and Participation) in the National Arts Council. In this role, he works with colleagues to create opportunities for people to have meaningful encounters in the arts and to ensure access, participation and inclusion in and through the arts.

He has served in various positions in the public and private sectors, as well as in academia. His last appointment was Director of the Disability Office in the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development, where he oversaw the development and review of policies, funding and programmes that support persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

Danny TAN is a renowned and prolific Singaporean artist. He has been recognised for his artistic excellence and dance curation worldwide. As a multi-talented arts practitioner and producer who is strong in crafting artistic direction and consultancy, dance making and production, and also an educator and consultant, Dr Tan has contributed extensively to dance education from 1994. Since 2010, he has authored and published more than 10 books. Dr Tan has transformed Odyssey Dance Theatre Ltd from a dance company to a notable dance institution in Singapore, providing holistic support towards a healthy dance ecosystem in Singapore and the region. As a pace-setting Singaporean Cultural Ambassador with his creative voice in various capacities, he is sincere in his dealings with others and has earned the trust of many local and international esteemed organisations, and across different sectors. In 2010, he was conferred the Doctor in Creative Industries at the Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Leslie TAN is a founding member of the T'ang Quartet and cellist of Red Dot Baroque, who has performed to critical acclaim in major venues and festivals worldwide. These include the Tanglewood and Aspen Festivals in the United States; the Melbourne and Port Fairy Folk Festivals in Australia; the New Zealand Festival; the Hong Kong Arts Festival; and the Prague-Vienna-Budapest Sommerakademie and the Edinburgh Festival in Europe.

A graduate of the Trinity College of Music in London at 19, Mr Tan returned to Singapore and embarked on a career with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. He continued his studies in the USSR, at the Tchaikovsky-Moscow State Conservatory with Natalia Shakhovskaya; and in the United States, working closely with chamber music experts Paul Katz and Norman Fischer; and with historical performance specialist, Kenneth Goldsmith.

Mr Tan is a champion of outreach activities, and musical and transformative education in the ASEAN region, teaching in different festivals and projects. He has also just

started a programme with the Singapore International Foundation to work with Afghan refugees.

TAN Tarn How is Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Policy Studies. He researches arts and cultural policy.

Edmund WEE is the founder of Epigram Books which was set up in 2011 to champion Singapore literature. Since then, it has published over 400 titles and is best known for *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*, the multiple award-winning graphic novel by Sonny Liew. Its authors regularly win the major book prizes in Singapore, including the Hedwig Anuar Children's Book Award, Singapore Literature Prize and Singapore Book Awards. It is also behind the country's richest literary prize, the annual Epigram Books Fiction Prize for unpublished novels, which in 2021 awarded \$50,000 to six writers from Singapore and the region. In an earlier life, he was a psychologist, journalist, and designer.

Last modified on 23 February 2021

