

**Spotlight on Cultural Policy Series Ten:
Roundtable on Art in the Time of Pandemic: Meaning, Relevance and Future**
Wednesday, 10 June 2020

Question report

Question Number	Question	Asked by	Answer(s)
1	The NAC digitisation grant limits works to G-rated though. This eliminates majority of present works.	Founder and associate artist at a social enterprise in Singapore	
2	How does this add or change the digitisation momentum?	Founder and associate artist at a social enterprise in Singapore	
3	From a layman perspective. On the question of finance and lack of income and the uses of digitalisation / ICT methods to create connectivity between the audience and artists performing. Could the lessons learnt from how football clubs are trying to reach out to their fans despite playing games behind closed stadium doors be useful for the performance arts pls?	Senior Research Fellow	
4	Apart from using media - digital channels to bring the games live to their fans, some of these football clubs have also acknowledged their absent fans by draping scarves on the empty seats to recognise them.	Senior Research Fellow	
5	This question is for the whole panel. Despite the disaster that is COVID-19 there has been no direct relief funding or disaster relief specifically for artists, arts companies or arts practice. There is no acknowledgement by the establishment of the particular pain of artists and arts companies. We are in the midst of a change that will devastate our capital - our knowledge, capabilities and resources. Yet this is not being recognised, except in most "generic" and uniform manner. This is a failure that must be addressed. What is the panel's view?	Co-founder and Director of an independent theatre school in Singapore	Live answered

6	<p>The Government and NAC have been pushing Arts groups to create digital work, this is the only financial grants available to us to encourage work during COVID-19. Theatre is meant to be watched communally, and many arts groups feel that digital work is not the only way forward during this period. Shouldn't we be supporting more than one way to present theatre safely during this period, and actually monetise our art again.</p>	Artistic Director of a theatre company in Singapore	
7	<p>Thanks Nabilah for that presentation. I'm intrigued by the notion of the artist's identity being tied to 'producing' art works. I'm wondering about the possibilities of creating without producing. Creating the unrealised script, the sketch, the doodle, the notes, as forms of self-care and articles of faith. That which is hidden. And glows in drawers.</p>	Resident Playwright of a theatre company in Singapore	Live answered
8	<p>I hear and resonate with Robin's perspective of theatre being a communal activity in a public space with shared communal consumption. However, we need to recognise that with 5G and technology developments this perspective that Robin had shared can be expanded to include a wider and new audiences. The delivery needs to be different but should be seen as an opportunity for our artists. Many of us in Singapore cannot be at an EPL stadium to support our own club every time they play. This is a 'theatre' that we are unable to go to each time our club plays but yet, we can be part of that community and enjoy the play on the field. We associate with our fellow fans and we bond. Perhaps we should reimagine how we can reach out and create new platforms to engage new communities.</p>	Director at a statutory board in Singapore	
9	<p>Referring to Marian's wonderful provocations, I would like to ask the panel their thoughts on this proposition of new ways of thinking and a policy that is more integrated between arts, science and civil society and could this be possible here in Singapore. It is understandable that a big part of what has been happening is reactive and about survival and this notion of "staying relevant" but this is an opportunity to radically change things for</p>	Lecturer at a local university	

	better. For a future reality where arts doesn't have to be constantly proving it's relevance because it is.		
10	The challenge to think about art in the age of the anthropocene with the COVID-19 pandemic as one of the crises that is being contended with. Apart from climate change, inequality, unjust systems and fear of tyranny is indeed deeply complex. Where notions of resources need to be rethought, whether material, financial, social, cultural or aesthetic. Thank you to the speakers for reminding us that we tend to think of capital and profit, use and utility. But we forget the waste and disposable - now more evident when human beings are also being treated as waste and disposable. What is the artistic challenge to engage and reckon with this? How to emphasise the 'value' of affective labour and develop new vocabularies for rethinking the human condition that is currently being encouraged to underline 'distance' when we need to get 'closer' in order to care?	Assistant Professor at a local university	
11	The arts must have ends beyond consumerist products, which is what the grants have promoted, because of the need for audience numbers and ticket sales. Question for Marian - what language (adjectives, verbs) do you use in policy proposals that widen the meaning of the arts for government to recognise, that takes it beyond what is easy to imagine and fix?	Director of a registered charity in Singapore	
12	This handbrake that was pulled by the COVID-19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to relook and rethink the relevance of Art and Art making beyond the capitalistic benefits of it. Question to the panel, perhaps we can discuss our current relevance of our Art Making in relation to the People, and the Land, and how we can potentially find an evolution of Art Making beyond our current modes.	Artistic Director of a performing arts group in Singapore	
13	Digitalisation is exacerbating already-existing inequalities. Independent theatre groups are struggling to establish a 'presence' online because, their archival recordings are not as 'professional', or are	Resident Playwright at a theatre company in Singapore	

	<p>sometimes even absent. And we see the larger companies almost trying to outdo one another by offering captions, Q&A's etc, all of which requires massive resources. Migration to the online sphere could have been a boon to Malay and Tamil language theatre, in terms of outreach and audience expansion, but they seem to be drowned out now by the English-language online offerings. What lifelines can we envision for the precarious?</p>		
14	<p>What Robin is saying are obviously part of what a venue like Esplanade is planning to do...pending MCCY's approval</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer of a performing arts centre in Singapore</p>	
15	<p>On Sasi's point, I think the direct relief is probably most critical or trades/practices such as technicians who are most affected, as their careers and lifestyles have been built around regular, casual work.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer of a performing arts centre in Singapore</p>	
16	<p>Digitisation deals with materials and their relationships are centred around the concept of materiality and reinterpretations of existing practices. These are the main contributions that uphold today's dysfunctional society, that reveal it's helplessness facing today's calamities. On these, don't you think you need more radical inputs to cultivate critical changes? How far would you go?</p>	<p>Director of a cultural organisation focusing on international cultural exchanges</p>	
17	<p>It seems many of the speakers are talking about what has / can be done via the digital platform in this time. What about the experience of art? The digital platform offer opportunities to create differently and reach out easily to anyone anywhere. But is this digital connection an even greater "distancing"?</p>	<p>Curator in Singapore</p>	
18	<p>Robin explored the possibilities of theatre when we move into Phase 2 - I've spoken to dance companies and one major concern they have is the uncertainty of future performances: when they can get back into studio, when they can hold performances again etc. A common refrain is the lack of direction from the Government with regards to such guidelines for artists, which is frustrating. Qn to panel: what can authorities do to</p>	<p>Journalist in Singapore</p>	

	soothe these worries and help practitioners plan for the future?		
19	<p>More of a respond than question. Transition, reflexivity, imagination, network. These are some of the concepts that strike me in the presentations. Thank you Marian for sharing the work of Latour, which I think point to the importance of network and ecology as a 'safeguard' in crisis- which is what the backbone of the internet is where it thrives on multiple nodes. The 'collapse' that we are experiencing may be pointing to the singular sight that we view and discuss art. The COVID-19 situation confronts us to reflect on ways that the arts have been used, perceived and imagined. I think it also presses us to consider what, where, and how art can be understood, perceived and imagined. This, perhaps, is a timely juncture to acknowledge the range of possibility with art practices.</p>	Assistant Professor at a local university	

Last modified on 18 June 2020